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An Extended Inverted Allusion to Psalm 22 in Mark 15: Reading Reversal in the Markan Passion

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Abstract

The Markan Passion narrative alludes to Ps 22 (LXX Ps 21) in reverse, culminating with Jesus' cry: 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Mark 15.34; cf. Ps 22.1). I argue that this 'extended inverted allusion' was an admired literary technique. Through select examples of this technique in the writings of the Hebrew Bible and Greco-Roman literature, I demonstrate its various functions—it can be employed to reverse meaning, to dissociate causation or to create new narrative trajectories. Reading Mark 15 in light of the literary functions of inverted allusion reveals new interpretive possibilities. In the Septuagint, Psalm 21 suggests that the psalmist's suffering was merited because of transgressions, but the inverted allusions to this Psalm in Mark 15 reinforce that Jesus' suffering is unmerited (cf. Mark 15.10, 14) by decoupling the suffering from the transgressions. Additionally, in LXX Ps 21, the psalmist moves from forsakenness on account of transgressions toward divine deliverance. By alluding to this Psalm in reverse, Jesus travels the psalmist's journey in reverse. Rather than move from forsakenness toward divine deliverance, Mark's Jesus moves toward forsakenness, precisely to bring about divine deliverance.

Keywords: intertextuality; inverted allusion; Mark 15; passion narrative; Psalm 22; rhetoric

1 Introduction

The passion narrative in the Gospel of Mark alludes to several passages from LXX Ps 21 but arranges them in reverse order.¹ The Psalm, attributed to David, begins with a cry of forsakenness (Ps 21.2). The psalmist then describes his suffering: he is considered a 'reproach' (Ps 21.7), those who mock him 'shake their heads' and imply that his God is powerless to save him (Ps 21.8–9), and others cast lots to divide his garments among themselves (Ps 21.19). When Mark alludes to this Psalm in his narrative of Jesus' death, he begins with the casting of lots to divide Jesus' garments (Mark 15.24; cf. Ps 21.19), then Jesus is mocked by those who 'shake their heads' (Mark 15.29; cf. Ps 21.8–9), after which he is 'reproached' (Mark 15.32; cf. Ps 21.7), and lastly he cries out in forsakenness just before he dies (Mark 15.34; cf. Ps 21.2).² This extended inverted allusion to LXX Ps 21

¹ For the Greek of Mark's Gospel, I rely on Nestle-Aland 28; and for LXX Ps 21, I rely on Alfred Rahlfs, ed., *Psalmi cum odis* (Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum 10; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979) 109–12. There are no significant textual variants identified in the relevant sections of these volumes that would undermine the arguments of this study.

² While Mark 15.24 and 15.34 can be confidently identified as allusions to LXX Ps 21.19 and 21.2 respectively, some have proposed other potential sources for Mark 15.29 and 15.32 besides LXX Ps 21.8–9 and 21.7. For

in Mark 15 disrupts the causality implied in LXX Ps 21.2, in which suffering is caused by sin. Additionally, by alluding to this Psalm in reverse, Mark depicts Jesus travelling the psalmist's journey in reverse. In its proper order, one follows the psalmist away from sin and danger towards deliverance. In this extended inverted allusion, however, we will see Jesus moving towards forsakenness and suffering to bring about deliverance.

Scholars have discovered and rediscovered the reversal of Ps 22 in Mark 15 since at least 1985.³ Yet the interpretive implications of this inverted allusion have not been fully explored, primarily because descriptions of the reversal of Ps 22 in Mark 15 have been tangential to scholars' main arguments.⁴ For instance, the majority of Vernon K. Robbins's article, 'The Reversed Contextualization of Psalm 22 in the Markan Crucifixion: A Socio-Rhetorical Analysis', is devoted not to explaining the rhetorical function of reverse allusions but to reading Mark's passion narrative through the intertextual lens of a much later text by Dio Chrysostom.⁵

Ironically, one of the sharpest scholarly engagements with the inverted allusions to Ps 22 in Mark 15 comes from Holly J. Carey's critique of Robbins.⁶ Carey rejects Robbins' argument for two reasons. First, she argues that the inverted order of Ps 22 in Mark 15 is interrupted by the centurion's affirmation of Jesus' identity as the Son of God (Mark 15.39), which she identifies as a 'faint allusion' to Ps 22.27 where Gentiles worship the Lord.⁷

instance, scholars have proposed that passages such as Lam 2.15, Ps 108.25 (LXX), or Wis 2.17 may be the evoked text in Mark 15.29—Trocmé insists that Mark 15.29 is alluding solely to Lam 2.15, see Étienne Trocmé, *L'évangile selon saint Marc* (CNT 2; Genève: Labor et Fides, 2000) 368. Nevertheless, the strong allusions to LXX Ps 21 in Mark 15.24 and 15.34 prime the reader to see Mark 15.29 and 15.32 as allusions to the same Psalm; see C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966) 456–7; Rudolf Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium II. Teil* (Freiburg: Herder, 1977) 486–87; Donald Juel, *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) 95; Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20* (WBC 34B; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989) 504–5; Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994) 2:988–9; Stephen P. Ahearne-Kroll, *The Psalms of Lament in Mark's Passion: Jesus' Davidic Suffering* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 73–4; Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007) 749; Joel Marcus, *Mark 8–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AYB 27B; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009) 1051; Holly J. Carey, *Jesus' Cry from the Cross: Towards a First-Century Understanding of the Intertextual Relationship Between Psalm 22 and the Narrative of Mark's Gospel* (LNTS 398; London: T&T Clark, 2009) 140–3; Kelli S. O'Brien, *The Use of Scripture in the Markan Passion Narrative* (LNTS 384; London, T&T Clark, 2010) 108–10.

³ The earliest acknowledgement of this reversal of Ps 22 in Mark 15 that I have found is Jean-Noël Aletti, 'Mort de Jésus et Théorie du Récit', *RSR* 73.1 (1985) 147–60; see also Daniel Guichard, 'La reprise du psaume 22 dans le récit de la mort Jésus: Mark 15:21–41', *Foi Vie* 87 (1988) 59–65. The best-known study is Vernon K. Robbins, 'The Reversed Contextualization of Psalm 22 in the Markan Crucifixion: A Socio-Rhetorical Analysis', in *The Four Gospels, 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck*; Vol. 2 (ed. F. Van Segbroeck, C.M. Tuckett, G. Van Belle, and J. Verheyden; BETL 100; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992) 1161–83.

⁴ For examples of publications that cite Aletti, Guichard, or Robbins favorably, see William Sanger Campbell, 'Engagement, Disengagement and Obstruction: Jesus' Defense Strategies in Mark's Trial and Execution Scenes (14.53–64; 15.1–39)', *JSNT* 26.3 (2004) 299; and H.J. Bernard Combrink, 'Salvation in Mark' in *Salvation in the New Testament: Perspectives on Soteriology* (ed. Jan G. van der Watt; SuppNovT 121; Leiden: Brill, 2005) 57. Robbins's article is cited but not discussed in Trocmé, *L'évangile selon saint Marc*, 334.

⁵ Based on the context developed from his reading of Dio Chrysostom's *Oratio* 4, Robbins concludes by suggesting that the literary reversal of the Psalm signifies a subversion of its 'rhetoric of confidence'; see Robbins, 'Reversed Contextualization', 1164.

⁶ Carey, *Jesus' Cry from the Cross*, 13–14, 164–6; and Holly J. Carey, 'Psalm 22 in Mark's Gospel: Moving Forward' in *New Studies in Textual Interplay* (ed. Craig A. Evans, B. J. Oropeza, and Paul T. Sloan; LNTS 632; London: T&T Clark, 2021) 121–37; see also Ahearne-Kroll, *Psalms of Lament in Mark*, 208 n92; idem, 'Challenging the Divine: LXX Psalm 21 in the Passion Narrative of the Gospel of Mark', in *The Trial and Death of Jesus: Essays on the Passion Narrative in Mark* (ed. Geert van Oyen and Tom Shepherd; Leuven: Peeters, 2006) 142 n. 54.

⁷ Carey, *Jesus' Cry from the Cross*, 165.

Carey calls this a ‘faint allusion’ because the parallel is only conceptual—there are no direct verbal parallels between Mark 15.39 and Ps 22.27 as there are between the other passages of Mark 15 and Ps 22. I am not convinced, however, that the appearance of a ‘faint allusion’ to Ps 22 necessarily disrupts a reader’s ability to recognise the order of the ‘strong [verbal] allusions’ to that same Psalm.⁸

Carey’s second argument is that the order of allusions to the Psalm is coincidental, determined by events in the plot of Mark’s passion narrative.⁹ But authors are rarely, if ever, so constrained by their source material. For instance, in the account of Christ’s passion from the Odes of Solomon, Carey identifies allusions to Ps 22.9–10, 16, and 18 in Ode 28.2–3, 14, and 18 respectively.¹⁰ Although Carey does not discuss the order of these allusions, the odist clearly presents an account of Christ’s passion that maintains the original order of Ps 22. Based on this example, it seems equally likely that an author could maintain the order of Ps 22 in a passion narrative or reverse that order. The order of the allusions is, therefore, worth our consideration.

Given that previous arguments for the inverted allusion to Ps 22 in Mark 15 have been tangential to scholars’ main arguments, what is needed is a more thoroughgoing study of this phenomenon in its ancient context. For this reason, I will begin with a careful examination of how ‘inverted quotation’ and what I will call ‘extended inverted allusion’ functioned in the context of rhetorical training and more broadly within ancient literary works.¹¹ This review will help delineate the interpretive possibilities available to Mark and his early readers. In particular, I will show how Mark could employ a Psalm that laments suffering as a result of sin in order to depict Jesus as ‘a ransom for many’ (Mark 10.45).

2 Quotation, Allusion, and the Greco-Roman Rhetoricians

The study of quotations and allusions in the text of the New Testament as a form of intertextuality has developed into a sub-field of scholarship on the New Testament.¹² Yet quotation and allusion were also topics of interest to the ancient rhetoricians and writers of preliminary exercises for rhetorical training. Since the ‘greatest orators’ of the past had drawn ‘upon the early poets to support their arguments or adorn their eloquence’ (Quintilian, *Institutio* 1.8.10), Quintilian and others recommended a course of study that

⁸ Carey distinguishes between ‘faint allusion’, ‘strong allusion’, and ‘citation’; see Carey, *Jesus’ Cry from the Cross*, *passim*.

⁹ Carey, *Jesus’ Cry from the Cross*, 165.

¹⁰ Carey, *Jesus’ Cry from the Cross*, 118–19.

¹¹ The term ‘inverted quotation’ was coined in Pancratius C. Beentjes, ‘Inverted Quotations in the Bible: A Neglected Stylistic Pattern’, *Biblica* 63 (1982) 506–23; Pancratius C. Beentjes, ‘Discovering a New Path of Intertextuality: Inverted Quotations and Their Dynamics’, in *Literary Structure and Rhetorical Strategies in the Hebrew Bible* (eds. Regt L.J. de, Waard J. de, and Fokkelmann J.P.; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1996) 31–50. In Hebrew Bible studies, inverted quotation is often called ‘Seidel’s Law’. Bernard M. Levinson summarizes Seidel’s Law as follows: ‘Citation within the Hebrew Bible frequently reverses the elements of the source text. As such, quotation is marked chiastically with the original text AB often cited as B’A’; Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) 19; summarizing Moshe Seidel, ‘Parallels between Isaiah and Psalms’, *Sinai* 38 (1955–6) 149–72, 229–40, 272–80, 335–55, at p.150; reprinted in idem, *Hiqrei Miqra* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Rav Kook Institute, 1978) 1–97. I prefer the term *inverted quotation* over Seidel’s Law for two reasons: (1) it is more descriptive of the phenomenon, and (2) Beentjes demonstrated that inverted quotation functioned in literature to accomplish more than merely mark a quotation (see below).

¹² Academic interest in the use of Ps 22 in Mark 15 predates the development of intertextuality as a sub-field in New Testament studies—see the review of literature above. The beginning of the study of intertextuality as a New Testament studies disciplinary sub-field is often attributed to Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); see Steve Moyise, ‘Intertextuality and Biblical Studies: A Review’, *VeEc* 23 (2002) 418–31.

would prepare students to do the same.¹³ So, from the earliest stage of education, children were to dedicate considerable time to the memorisation of passages ‘selected from the orators or historians or any other works that may be deserving of such attention’ (Quintilian, *Institutio* 2.7.2). Aelius Theon prefaces his treatment of preliminary exercises similarly, by suggesting that the instructor ‘collect good examples of each exercise from ancient prose works and assign them to the young to be learned by heart’ (*Progymnasmata* 65–6).¹⁴

The process of memorisation entailed recitation and then adaptation of the assigned passages. It was a matter of dispute whether students should be taught to paraphrase, but numerous examples of students’ periphrastic exercises have been discovered on papyri in Egypt.¹⁵ Both Quintilian and Aelius Theon encouraged the practice, and they suggested different exercises to help students to develop their skill (Quintilian, *Institutio* 10.5.3–8 and Aelius Theon, *Progymnasmata* 62–4). The most basic exercise was a simple rewording of a familiar text, such as one of Aesop’s fables, but after some practice, the student was encouraged ‘to abridge’ or ‘embellish the original’ (Quintilian, *Institutio* 1.9.2; 10.5.5–8). This early work granted the student an ‘intimate acquaintance with the best writings’ and provided a ‘treasure-house’ to draw from in later composition (Quintilian, *Institutio* 2.7.3–4).¹⁶ Later exercises taught students how to draw upon that ‘treasure-house’ by employing a quotation or paraphrase in support of an anecdote or a maxim (see Aphthonius, *Progymnasmata* 3–4).¹⁷ Ultimately, students learned to weave literary allusions into their own compositions so as to produce a ‘single idea’. Pseudo-Hermogenes, in his discussion ‘On the Use of Verses in Prose’, describes this form of allusion as adaptation (παρωδία): ‘It is adaptation whenever, after quoting part of the verse, one in his own words expresses the rest in prose and then quoting another verse adds something of his own, so that it becomes a single idea’.¹⁸ Adaptation was often preferred over full quotation, especially when it was expected that the audience would be familiar with the allusion. Menander Rhetor, discussing the use of passages from Euripides or of such stories as that of Cleobis and Biton in Herodotus, insists: ‘You should not, however, quote the whole passage, since it is generally familiar and well known, but adapt it’ (*Treatise* 2.9.413.25).¹⁹ So, students progressed from memorisation and imitation of treasured texts to the adoption and adaptation of those texts in their own writing.

Various types of paraphrase and adaptation were possible, including inverted quotations and allusions. Aelius Theon, in his categorisation of four types of paraphrase, describes one form in the following way: ‘we keep the same words but transpose the

¹³ All translations of Quintilian are from H. E. Butler, LCL.

¹⁴ All translations of Aelius Theon come from George Alexander Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (WGRW 10; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).

¹⁵ See Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (CCSt; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 198–226.

¹⁶ It was hoped that the students would ‘unconsciously reproduce the style of the speech which has been impressed upon the memory’ (Quintilian, *Institutio* 2.7.3). ‘They will have a plentiful and choice vocabulary and a command of artistic structure and a supply of figures which will not have to be hunted for, but will offer themselves spontaneously from the treasure-house, if I may so call it, in which they are stored’ (Quintilian, *Institutio* 2.7.4).

¹⁷ Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, 97–101.

¹⁸ Pseudo-Hermogenes, *On Method of Forceful Speaking*, 30 (447–8) in *Invention and Method: Two Rhetorical Treatises from the Hermogenic Corpus* (ed. George Alexander Kennedy; WGRW 15; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005) 255.

¹⁹ Translation from D.A. Russell and N.G. Wilson, ed., *Menander Rhetor: A Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981) 162.

parts, which offers numerous possibilities' (*Progymnasmata* 15).²⁰ Although he does not provide any examples of those 'numerous possibilities', an inversion of key elements from the quotation would fit this category. In fact, Teresa Morgan, in her review of the papyrological remains of students' work, describes an 'example in rhetorical schooltexts where the chronology of the story is allowed to go backwards'.²¹ In her example 'the periphrast regresses from the anger of Apollo to Chryses' embassy to Agamemnon'.²² Morgan expresses some surprise that the periphrast 'analyses it, cuts it and reorders the narrative, but he does not embellish it, nor incorporate stylistic features from other types of literature'.²³ Yet, this is precisely the style that Aelius Theon presented: one is to 'keep the same words but transpose the parts' (*Progymnasmata* 15).

That an inversion of narrative elements would be employed as a mode of paraphrase is not surprising since such reversal was practised from an early age. The alphabet was first learned from beginning to end and then backwards.²⁴ Quintilian recommends that as soon as children can speak, they should be taught to memorise narratives forwards and backwards: 'I would make him tell his story from the end back to the beginning or start in the middle and go backwards or forwards' (*Institutio* 2.4.15). The ability to recite large amounts of text in reverse was often touted as the prime example of a powerful memory. The elder Seneca boasted that, when he was young, his memory was so sharp his classmates could each supply 'a line of poetry, up to the number of more than two hundred, [and he] would recite them in reverse' (*ab ultimo incipiens usque ad primum recitabam*).²⁵ Centuries later, Augustine recalls an occasion when he asked his friend Simplicius to recite 'the last lines but one of all the books of Virgil' (*De Anima* 4.7(9)).²⁶ When Simplicius complied, Augustine 'then asked him to repeat the preceding lines', which he did. From this demonstration, Augustine avers, 'And I really believe that he could have repeated Virgil line after line backward'.²⁷ Although some of these examples may be exaggerated, together they attest to the commonality of paraphrasing or quoting texts in reverse. Moreover, it is clear that inverted quotation was an admired form of rhetorical strategy and, for some, an example of superior rhetorical intellect.

3 Inverted Quotation and Extended Inverted Allusion

Inverted quotations can be found in a variety of literature. The rhetoricians reviewed above intended to provide guidelines for students and teachers but developed their advice from a careful reading of classical authors. The information these rhetoricians provide, therefore, must be understood as not only prescriptive but also descriptive. Inverted quotations appear in Greek and Latin texts, as well as in the literature of the ancient Near East. Pancratius Beentjes, who coined the term 'inverted quotation', first identified the phenomenon in an article on Ben Sira.²⁸ Ten years later, he published a second article which expanded his original study to include examples from the Hebrew Bible, Dead Sea Scrolls, Egyptian and

²⁰ Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, 70. Although Aelius Theon labels this 'Syntactical paraphrase', it is clear from the context that he is not actually describing a change in syntax but in the position of 'parts'; see Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, 70 n208.

²¹ Morgan, *Literate Education*, 210.

²² Morgan, *Literate Education*, 210.

²³ Morgan, *Literate Education*, 210.

²⁴ Henri Irénée Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956) 269–70.

²⁵ Seneca, *Controversiae* 1.2; translation and Latin from Michael Winterbottom, LCL.

²⁶ Translations of Augustine are from Peter Holmes, *NPNF1.5*.

²⁷ 'Similarly in prose, from any of Cicero's orations, which he had learnt by heart, he would perform a similar feat at our request, by reciting backwards as far as we wished', Augustine, *De Anima* 4.7(9).

²⁸ Beentjes, 'Inverted Quotations in the Bible', 506–23.

Sumerian literature as well as Greek and Latin writings.²⁹ For Beentjes, ‘inverted quotation’ was limited to the inversion of word-pairs, cola, or phrases, but I will show how some authors extended their employment of inverted quotation to include lengthier excerpts and even entire plot lines—I call this phenomenon *extended inverted allusion*. Using Beentjes’s study as a starting point, I will describe the function of inverted quotation in examples from Zechariah, the Gospel of Mark and Maximus of Tyre. Then, building on that foundation, I will examine some examples of what I am calling *extended inverted allusion* in Maximus of Tyre and Virgil. I use these four texts—Zechariah, Mark, Maximus of Tyre, and Virgil—because they represent well both inverted quotation and extended inverted allusion and because they illustrate the range of texts that employ these techniques.

Several images in Zech 8.12 have been adopted from Hag 1.10. Haggai explains that the people suffer because they have neglected rebuilding the temple: ‘Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce’ (1.10; NRSV). Zechariah reverses this statement with his promise that ‘the earth will give its produce, and the heavens will give dew’ (8.12).

Hag 1.10	Zech 8.12
כלאר שמים מטל והארץ כלאה יבולה	והארץ תתן את־יבולה והשמים יתנו טלם

Here the cola are inverted as ‘Zechariah is reversing the negative formulation of Haggai’.³⁰ It should be clear, however, that the form of the inverted quotation does not alone signal the reversal of fortune for the people; that was made clear in the previous verse: ‘But now I will not deal with the remnant of this people as in the former days, says the LORD of hosts’ (Zech 8.11; NRSV). Rather, as Beentjes has explained, ‘the inverted quotation reinforces stylistically the expression of the change from negative to positive’.³¹ The significance applied to the inverted quotation in this case—the change in the rhetorical tone from negative to positive—is similar to the explanation that Robbins gave to the reversal of Ps 22 in Mark 15: i.e., that Mark 15 changed the rhetorical tone of Ps 22 from hope to despair.³² This is not, however, the only meaning an inverted quotation can convey. We find another possibility in Beentjes’ interpretation of Mark 12.1.

Beentjes identifies the beginning of the Parable of the Wicked Tenants in Mark 12.1 as an example of the inverted quotation of Isa 5.2.³³ ‘In Mark’s passage parts of the sentences from Isa 5.2 (LXX) have changed places mutually (the sequence a-b-c-d in Isa 5.2 has become b-a-d-c in Mark 12.1). But that is not all, the sequence of words has been changed.’³⁴

²⁹ Beentjes, ‘Inverted Quotations and Their Dynamics’, 31–50.

³⁰ Beentjes, ‘Inverted Quotations and Their Dynamics’, 38. See also Al Wolters, *Zechariah* (HCOT; Leuven: Peeters, 2014) 243. For more on the allusions to Haggai in Zechariah, see Michael R. Stead, *The Intertextuality of Zechariah 1–8* (London: T&T Clark, 2009) 238–41; but Stead does not discuss the inversion.

³¹ Beentjes, ‘Inverted Quotations and Their Dynamics’, 38; emphasis added. See also the reversal of Ezekiel 22.26 in CD 6.17–18: ‘Whereas Ezek 22:26 describes the situation in the land in a negative way, the Qumran text has altered these prophetic words into a relatively positive statement or command’; Beentjes, ‘Inverted Quotations and Their Dynamics’, 41–2.

³² Robbins, ‘Reversed Contextualization of Psalm 22 in the Markan Crucifixion’, 1161–83.

³³ Beentjes, ‘Inverted Quotations and Their Dynamics’, 44–5.

³⁴ Beentjes, ‘Inverted Quotations and Their Dynamics’, 44. For more on the allusion to Isaiah 5.2 in Mark 12.1, see Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, 224–8; Collins, *Mark*, 545; Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 802, 811.

Isa 5.2	Mark 12.1
καὶ φραγμὸν περιέθηκα καὶ ἐχαράκωσα καὶ ἐφύτευσα ἄμπελον σωρηχ καὶ ὀκοδόμησα πύργον ἐν μέσῳ αὐτοῦ καὶ προλήνιον ὄρυζα ἐν αὐτῷ	ἀμπελῶνα ἄνθρωπος ἐφύτευσεν καὶ περιέθηκεν φραγμὸν καὶ ὄρυξεν ὑπολήνιον καὶ ὀκοδόμησεν πύργον

Beentjes does not explore the significance of the resulting text in Mark, but a few observations are important.³⁵ Isaiah had begun his ‘Song of the Vineyard’ with the building and fortification of a surrounding wall and then mentioned the planting of the vineyard. Mark, however, omits the extra fortifications (καὶ ἐχαράκωσα) and reverses Isaiah’s words such that the vineyard (ἀμπελῶνα) is mentioned first and the wall (φραγμὸν) last. Next, Isaiah had described the building of a tower and the digging of a vat for a winepress in that order. But Mark reverses those two actions. This reversal, combined with the omission of the locative expressions (ἐν μέσῳ αὐτοῦ and ἐν αὐτῷ), dissociates the tower from the winepress. Moreover, the reversal of only the word-pair προλήνιον ὄρυζα, rendered as ὄρυξεν ὑπολήνιον in Mark, aligns the ‘winepress’ and the ‘tower’ with the previously postponed ‘wall’. The effect in Mark is that the ‘vineyard’ of Isaiah’s song is prioritised over all other objects. At the conclusion of the parable, Jesus asks, ‘What will the owner of the vineyard do?’ (τί [οὖν] ποιήσει ὁ κύριος τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος; Mark 12.9). Commentators have seen in this question an allusion to Isaiah 5.5: ‘And now I will proclaim to you what I will do to my vineyard’ (νῦν δὲ ἀναγγελῶ ὑμῖν τί ποιήσω τῷ ἀμπελῶνί μου).³⁶ In Isaiah, the owner’s response was to remove the wall and allow the vineyard to be destroyed. In Mark, however, it is the tenants who are destroyed, and the vineyard is given to others.

What then is the significance of Mark’s inverted quotation that prioritises the vineyard? Differing from the inverted quotation of Haggai and in Zechariah, Mark’s inverted quotation of Isaiah does not suggest a reversal of circumstances—the vineyard remains in trouble, and its destruction still comes. The inverted quotation does, however, dissociate elements of the original narrative from each other and foreshadow changed circumstances. In Isaiah, the wall was built and fortified first before the vineyard was planted; and it was the removal of the wall that caused the destruction of the vineyard. In Mark, the ‘wall’ has already been literarily (re)moved, and the vineyard, which is planted first, is preserved at the end. We will see a similar function of disassociating key narrative elements in an extended inverted allusion from Virgil’s *Aeneid* below.

Beentjes also identified an inverted quotation in the writings of the late second-century CE philosopher Maximus of Tyre, but he did not discuss the extended inverted allusion in the same passage.³⁷ After Maximus affirms one’s limited ability to understand God through reason, he laments the lack of direct access to the divine. If it were possible for him to have access to the divine through an oracle, he would ask important philosophical questions regarding the nature of the divine. Maximus contrasts his questions with those of King Croesus, who, according to Herodotus, had sought an oracle to ascertain the length of his reign. Croesus devised a plan wherein his messengers would each ask

³⁵ Beentjes, after noting that Mark typically ‘quotes rather accurately from the Septuagint’, concludes that ‘it is not yet clear why he did not do that in Mark 12:1’, but insists that ‘there must be a very special reason for it’; Beentjes, ‘Inverted Quotations and Their Dynamics’, 45.

³⁶ E.g., Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, 236; Collins, *Mark*, 547; Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 805; see also Beentjes, ‘Inverted Quotations and Their Dynamics’, 44 n42.

³⁷ Beentjes, ‘Inverted Quotations and Their Dynamics’, 47–8.

a different oracle to discern the king's actions at the precise time that he was doing something unexpected: cooking tortoise meat with lamb in a bronze kettle. The Delphic oracle, who proved knowledgeable of the king's curious actions, began her response: 'I know both the sand's number and the measurement of the sea.'³⁸ When Maximus contrasts his questions with those of the king, he says, 'I would ask the god, not about the kettle of Croesus, the most ignorant of kings and most unfortunate of cooks, and not about the sea's measurement or the number of the sand.'³⁹ Beentjes identifies in this final phrase an inverted quotation of the oracular response.

Herodotus, <i>Hist.</i> 1.47	Maximus of Tyre 11.6
ψάμμου τ' ἀριθμὸν καὶ μέτρα θαλάσσης	οὐδὲ θαλάττης μέτρα, οὐδὲ ἀριθμὸν ψάμμου

'Not only the cola of the parallelismus membrorum itself, but also the internal sequence of the word pairs have been inverted.'⁴⁰ Beentjes does not note, however, that in the previous lines, Maximus had alluded to the rest of the oracle also in reverse. After affirming her knowledge of the sand and the sea, the Pythia describes what the king was cooking and then concludes by describing the kettle (*Hist.* 1.47). Maximus, as seen in the quotation above, mentions first the kettle, then the cooking, and concludes with the oracle's opening statement. Beentjes presents these passages as an example of how the positive message of an original text can be converted into a negative one through the use of inverted quotation.⁴¹ That Maximus intended to disparage the inquiries of Croesus is clear from the context. Recognising the larger reversal of allusions to the oracle, however, reveals another possibility. The oracle in Herodotus progressed from the grandiose to the mundane, from knowledge of the nature of the world to awareness of a particular pot. In Maximus of Tyre, the reversal of this oracle points in the opposite direction: from the mundane to the lofty. Here, therefore, the inverted quotation forms a new trajectory and foreshadows the topic that Maximus is about to address.

An extended inverted allusion, not included in Beentjes's survey, is found in Book 6 of Virgil's *Aeneid*. In the middle of this book, as Michael von Albrecht has shown, Aeneas delivers a speech that reverses events described previously in Book 4.⁴² Virgil, in the *Aeneid* 4, tells of Dido, the Carthaginian queen, and her love affair with Aeneas. Her first husband, Sychaeus, had been murdered by her brother (4.20), and she doubted she could ever love again. Through the intervention of the gods, however, Dido falls in love with Aeneas. Yet, before they could be married, Aeneas is commanded by Hermes to depart (4.219–278). Despite Dido's warnings that his departure would cause her death (4.307, 324; cf. Ovid,

³⁸ Οἶδα δ' ἐγὼ ψάμμου τ' ἀριθμὸν καὶ μέτρα θαλάσσης. Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.47; Greek from N.G. Wilson, ed., *Herodoti Historiae* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) 1:27.

³⁹ ἥρῳμην ἂν τὸν θεόν οὐ τὸν Κροίσου λέβητα, τοῦ βασιλέων ἀνοητοτάτου καὶ μαγεῖρων δυστυχεστάτου, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ θαλάττης μέτρα, οὐδὲ ἀριθμὸν ψάμμου. Maximus of Tyre 11.6; Greek from Michael B. Trapp, ed., *Maximus Tyrius: Dissertationes* (BT; Stuttgart-Leipzig: Teubner, 1994) 92.

⁴⁰ Beentjes, 'Inverted Quotations and Their Dynamics', 47. Trapp notes the allusion but not the inversion; see M.B. Trapp, *Maximus of Tyre: The Philosophical Orations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) 100 n24.

⁴¹ Beentjes, 'Inverted Quotations and Their Dynamics', 48.

⁴² See Michael von Albrecht, *Roman Epic: An Interpretive Introduction* (MnemSup 189; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 123–9. For more on allusion in Virgil, see Wendell Clausen, *Virgil's Aeneid: Decorum, Allusion, and Ideology* (BzAlt 162; Leipzig: Saur, 2002)—Clausen does not address internal allusions.

Heroides 8), Aeneas sets sail (4.393–449). Book 4 concludes with Dido throwing herself upon the sword Aeneas had left behind and dying in agony (4.630–667, 888–924).

In Book 6, Aeneas encounters Dido's ghost in the underworld and delivers a speech in which he attempts to explain the necessity of his departure. He begins where Book 4 had ended by mentioning her death (6.457). 'He then speaks of his departure (6.450 [*sic*, see 6.460], cf. 4.361) and after this of the divine commands which urged him to leave (6.461–3, cf. 4.356–9).'⁴³ Afterward, Aeneas alludes to their love (6.463–4), and, before he can convince her of his love, she returns 'to her first love Sychaeus.'⁴⁴ Here, in Aeneas' brief speech to Dido, the entirety of Book 4 is recapitulated and reversed. Albrecht's explanation is insightful: 'From the point of view of rhetoric, Aeneas' speech is an exceptional example of artificial order in a *narratio*: reverse chronology dissociates the facts from each other and leaves open the problem of causality and guilt.'⁴⁵ It is clear that the intent of Aeneas' speech was to absolve him of guilt in Dido's death. The rhetorical function of the extended inverted allusion supports that purpose by dissociating the fact of Dido's death from the fact of Aeneas' departure. In this retelling, it is no longer clear that Aeneas' departure led to Dido's death; in Book 6, Dido's death (6.457) precedes his departure (6.460).⁴⁶

From this brief review of inverted quotations and extended inverted allusions in Zechariah, the Gospel of Mark, Maximus of Tyre and Virgil, some general observations can be made. These quotations and allusions have a particularly strong association with the original context of the evoked text. One example examined above, Zechariah's adaptation of Haggai, revealed a reversal of the meaning of the evoked text in a way similar to Robbins's argument regarding Mark's use of Ps 22.⁴⁷ Inverted quotation could, indeed, invert the tone of the immediate context of the evoked text, but that was not its only function. In the case of Maximus of Tyre, the extended inverted allusion created a new trajectory towards a topic that was the logical progression of the quotation in its inverted form. Additionally, inverted allusion could dissociate elements of the evoked text. In the Gospel of Mark, the author rearranged elements of Isaiah's Song of the Vineyard in a way that dissociated some of the original narrative elements and spared the vineyard from destruction. Similarly, in the final example, Virgil's *Aeneid*, the rearrangement of facts in an extended inverted allusion served to dissociate the original narrative elements from each other so that the causality of the original context was disrupted. It is clear that inverted allusions can function in several ways, and a reader familiar with this practice would be attuned to these possibilities, given what we know about ancient rhetorical training.

4 Reading Psalm 22 in the Time of Mark

We can now return to the extended inverted allusion in Mark 15, beginning with the narrative flow of Ps 22 (LXX Ps 21). In the following summary of Ps 22, I emphasise those aspects of the Psalm that are evoked in Mark's passion narrative by quoting them in

⁴³ Albrecht, *Roman Epic*, 126.

⁴⁴ Albrecht, *Roman Epic*, 126. Regarding the return to Sychaeus, Albrecht notes: 'This movement (*Aen.* 6.472) is anticipated in 4.389'; Albrecht, *Roman Epic*, 126n2.

⁴⁵ Albrecht, *Roman Epic*, 128.

⁴⁶ Albrecht, *Roman Epic*, 128. Albrecht is not the only scholar to identify this inversion. Horsfall notes, 'students of these vv. have long realised that [Virgil] executes at the same time a number of more or less significant inversions of the earlier narrative'; Nicholas Horsfall, *Virgil, Aeneid 6: A Commentary*, vol. 1 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013) 338–9.

⁴⁷ See Robbins, 'Reversed Contextualization of Psalm 22 in the Markan Crucifixion', 1161–83.

full.⁴⁸ The narrative flow of this Psalm is the same in Hebrew and Greek with some minor but important variations.⁴⁹ Over the course of the narrative journey of Ps 22 (LXX Ps 21), the psalmist, introduced in the superscript as David, details the struggles he faces and simultaneously expresses hope that God will come to his rescue as God has done for Israel in the past. The Psalm begins with the cry, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ (Ps 22.1–2; LXX Ps 21.2–3). The psalmist continues by addressing God, declaring that God is holy—or dwells in holy places (LXX)—and that, in the past, Israel trusted God and was delivered by him (22.3–5; LXX Ps 21.4–6). But the psalmist insists that he himself is not worthy of such deliverance—he is a worm (Ps 22.6; LXX Ps 21.7).⁵⁰ He is ‘reproached by the people’ (Ps 22.6)—or is ‘a reproach’ (LXX Ps 21.7). Those who revile him ‘shake their heads’ and, in mockery, say, ‘Let [the Lord] deliver him!’ (Ps 22.7–8; LXX Ps 21.8–9). The psalmist then acknowledges that the Lord has been with him since birth—or, in the LXX, it is the Lord on whom the psalmist has relied since birth—and he again pleads with the Lord to help him (Ps 22.9–11; LXX Ps 21.10–12). This pattern then repeats itself. First, the psalmist states his dilemma: he is surrounded by opposition (Ps 22.12–13, 16; LXX Ps 21.13–14, 17); he is internally exhausted and on the brink of death (Ps 22.14–15, 16–17; LXX Ps 21.15–16, 17–18); and he is treated as if already dead: ‘they divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots’ (Ps 22.18 NRSV; LXX Ps 21.19). Then, the psalmist cries out to the Lord for help (Ps. 22.19–21; LXX Ps 21.20–22).⁵¹ At this point, the tone of the Psalm shifts. The remainder of the Psalm is full of praise to God, either thanking God for having acted to rescue the psalmist (Ps 22.22–31) or promising praise for the deliverance he anticipates (LXX Ps 21.23–32). In this Psalm of Individual Lament, there is a general movement from distress toward redemption and praise.⁵²

The early history of interpretation of Ps 22 (LXX Ps 21) suggests that the voice of this Psalm could be read in different ways. By the time that Mark was composing his gospel, David was understood to be the primary author of the Psalms.⁵³ Since David was the presumed author, Ps 22 could be read as David’s own words in response to a particular episode from his life (e.g., Ps

⁴⁸ The only verbal allusions to Ps 22 in Mark 15 come from the lament section. In fact, the first allusion to Ps 22 in Mark 15 comes from the very end of the lament section of the Psalm (Ps 22.18; LXX Ps 21.19), just before the tone of the Psalm shifts to praise (Ps 22.21; LXX Ps 21.22).

⁴⁹ There are no textual variants in the Old Greek that would significantly change my reading of the LXX and its use in Mark; see above, n. 1. For current views on Ps 22 in its original context, see Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 2nd ed (WBC 19; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004) 194–203; Ellen F. Davis, ‘Exploding the Limits: Form and Function in Psalm 22’, *JOT* 53 (1992) 93–105; see also Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (trans. Keith R. Crim and Richard N. Soulen; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1981); and Amy C. Cottrill, *Language, Power, and Identity in the Lament Psalms of the Individual* (New York: T&T Clark, 2008).

⁵⁰ See Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 186; cf. Amy C. Cottrill, *Language, Power, and Identity in the Lament Psalms of the Individual*, 72.

⁵¹ The MT of Ps 22.21b could be read as affirming that the Lord has already acted to rescue the psalmist: ‘From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me’ (Ps 22.21b NRSV). This then functions as an explanation for the psalmist’s transition from lament to praise. In the LXX Ps 21.22, however, the entirety of the verse is a plea, not a statement of past events. In the LXX, then, the praise forms part of the plea. It is the promise that praise will be offered, if God acts to save the psalmist; see Ahearne-Kroll, *Psalms of Lament in Mark*, 50.

⁵² Psalms of Individual Lament, along with the related Psalms of Communal Lament, follow this pattern: ‘Address (and introductory petition), Lament, Turning toward God (confession of trust), Petition, Vow of Praise’; Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 170. Among the Psalms of Individual Lament attributed to David, Watts sees Ps 22 as ‘uniquely progress[ing] from the deepest distress and suffering (vv. 1–21b ET) to the farthest-reaching praise and thanksgiving for deliverance (vv. 21c–31)’; Rikk Watts, ‘The Psalms in Mark’s Gospel’, in *The Psalms in the New Testament* (ed. Steve Moyise and Maarten J.J. Menken; London/ New York: T&T Clark, 2004) 25–45, here 42.

⁵³ Philo, Josephus, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Paul, the authors of the Gospels and Acts all affirm that David was the author of the Psalms, attesting to the prominence of this belief: Philo, *Plant.* IX, 39; Josephus, *Ant.* VII, 305; *11QPsa* XXVII, 2–11; Rom. 4.6–8; Mark 12.36//Matt 22.43//Luke 20.42; Acts 1.16; 2.25, 31, 34. For discussion of these

51 (LXX Ps 50); cf. 2 Sam 12; and LXX Ps 142; cf. 2 Sam 15).⁵⁴ Alternatively, the Psalm could be read as the words of another biblical figure, of all Israel, or of any individual within Israel.⁵⁵ That is to say, Psalm 22 could and did function as the words of many.

Our evidence for the history of interpretation of Ps 22 suggests that there was an important distinction between the interpretation of the Hebrew and the Greek. Both the Hebrew and the Greek editions of this Psalm begin with a passionate plea to God that laments the author's forsakenness, but only the Greek identifies the cause of that forsaken state: 'the accounts of my transgressions are far from my salvation' (LXX Ps 21.2). As Stephen Ahearne-Kroll has demonstrated, the Septuagint suggests that the suffering of the psalmist is merited.⁵⁶ This distinction between the Hebrew and the Greek is also evident in the ways that Ps 22 / LXX Ps 21 was interpreted: the Hebrew Psalm is appropriated as the lament of a righteous sufferer and the Greek as the penitent prayer of a sinner. For instance, a midrash on Esther as she approaches the king (Esther 5.2) portrays her praying the words of Ps 22.1—'My God, My God, why have you abandoned me?'—before asking:

Do You perhaps judge an involuntary violation like an intentional one, or a forced sin like a willful one? Or perhaps [You are angered] because I called him a dog, as is said, "Save my life from the sword, my only [life] from the dog" (Ps 22.21)? She changed and called him a lion, as is said, "Save me from the mouth of the lion" (Ps 22.22).⁵⁷

Here, Esther speaks the words of Ps 22 as one at risk of suffering innocently—or, at most, suffering for an 'involuntary violation'.⁵⁸ By way of contrast, the Greek pseudepigraphic work *Joseph and Aseneth* portrays a penitent Aseneth pleading with God to forgive her

passages, see Margaret Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel: The Johannine Reception of the Psalms* (Leiden: Brill, 2000) 110–11; Ahearne-Kroll, 'Challenging the Divine', 126.

⁵⁴ Yuzuru Miura provides a complete list of Psalms that begin with a historical setting in David's life: 'Pss 3; 7; 17; 33; 50–51; 53; 55–56; 58–59; 62; 141 in the MT and LXX, and Pss 26; 28; 30; 70; 92; 95–96; 142–143; 151 in the LXX only'; see Miura, *David in Luke-Acts: His Portrayal in the Light of Early Judaism* (WUNT 2. 232; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007) 36–7, 125; see also Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 110–11; Ahearne-Kroll, 'Challenging the Divine', 126. For more on David in the LXX Psalms, see Albert Pietersma, 'David in the Greek Psalms', *VT* 30 (1980) 225–6.

⁵⁵ For Ps 22 as David prophesying about Queen Esther, see *Midrash Tehillim* 22.1–2, 7 in William G. Braude, *The Midrash on the Psalms*, vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale, 1959) 297–8. For Ps 22 as the words of Esther herself, see *b. Meg.* 15b; cf. *b. Yoma* 29a; see also Braude, *Midrash on the Psalms*, 1:297–326. For a discussion of this midrash, see Juel, *Messianic Exegesis*, 100–1; O'Brien, *Use of Scripture in the Markan Passion Narrative*, 148–9. For the biblical Aseneth speaking the words of Ps 22, see *Joseph and Aseneth* 12.9–11; cf. LXX Ps 21.14, 22 and *Joseph and Aseneth* 13.9; cf. LXX Ps 21.16; see Carey, *Jesus' Cry from the Cross*, 120. For Ps 22 as the words of all Israel, see Braude, *Midrash on the Psalms*, 1:315–16; and Adela Yarbro Collins, 'The Appropriation of the Psalms of Individual Lament by Mark', in *The Scriptures in the Gospels* (ed. C.M. Tuckett; Leuven: University Press, 1997) 223–41, here 236. Psalm 22 could also be employed as the words of anyone in Israel who had cause to lament; for instance, in the Dead Sea Scrolls, *IQHodayot*, the Teacher of Righteousness cries out in words that echo Ps 22.14–15, see *IQHa* col. 13, ll 31–3 and col. 16, ll 32–5. See Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992) 178–9; Yarbro Collins, 'Appropriation of the Psalms of Individual Lament by Mark', 225–7; Mark George Vitalis Hoffman, 'Psalm 22 (LXX 21) and the Crucifixion of Jesus' (Ph.D. Diss., Yale University, 1997) 85–9; and Carey, *Jesus' Cry from the Cross*, 120–3; pace O'Brien, who contends that 'there are no clear interpretations of Ps 22 at Qumran'; O'Brien, *Use of Scripture in the Markan Passion Narrative*, 149 n. 104.

⁵⁶ See Ahearne-Kroll, *Psalms of Lament in Mark*, 93. This alternate Septuagint reading makes Ps 22 (LXX Ps 21) similar to Ps 51—a description of a penitent David seeking reconciliation. Cf. Hoffman, 'Psalm 22', 113 n66.

⁵⁷ *b. Meg.* 15b; cf. *b. Yoma* 29a; translation from Jacob Neusner, *The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary*, vol. 10 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995) 77. See also Braude, *Midrash on the Psalms*, 1:297–326. For a discussion of this midrash, see Juel, *Messianic Exegesis*, 100–1; O'Brien, *Use of Scripture in the Markan Passion Narrative*, 148–9.

⁵⁸ For other examples of Ps 22 read in Hebrew as the prayer of a righteous sufferer, see Braude, *Midrash on the Psalms*, 1:315–6; and *IQHodayot* col. 13, ll 31–3 and col. 16, ll 32–5; cf. Ps 22.14–15; see above, n. 55.

idolatry in words that echo LXX Ps 21. She cries out to be rescued from the mouth of the lion (12.9–11; cf. LXX Ps 21.14, 22) and professes that her lips are ‘as a potsherd’ and her ‘entire strength has left’ (13.9; cf. LXX Ps 21.16).⁵⁹ In contrast to Esther, Aseneth’s allusions to LXX Ps 21 present the suffering of the psalmist as merited.

Which of these traditions does Mark follow? The verbal allusions to Ps 22 (LXX Ps 21) in Mark 15 correspond closely with the Septuagint.⁶⁰ In Mark 15.34, Jesus cries out the words of Ps 21.2 (LXX) first in transliterated Aramaic and Hebrew, then in Greek.⁶¹ Mark’s ὁ θεός μου ὁ θεός μου, εἰς τί ἐγκατέλιπές με (Mark 15.34), is nearly identical to the Septuagint: Ὁ θεὸς ὁ θεός μου ... ἵνα τί ἐγκατέλιπές με (LXX Ps 21.2).⁶² Since Mark also provides a transliteration of the Hebrew/Aramaic before providing a Greek translation, one may justifiably question whether Mark or his Vorlage was quoting from the LXX directly or whether he was familiar with a Hebrew/Aramaic textual tradition. Regardless, as Howard Clark Kee has shown, for the majority of biblical passages quoted in Mark 11–16, ‘the force of the argument or the specifics of the statements depend on the text as preserved in the LXX’.⁶³ Furthermore, regardless of whether Mark had access to a Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek version of the Psalm, it is safe to assume that early readers of Mark’s Greek gospel would be more familiar with the Septuagint than any Hebrew or Aramaic textual tradition. Mark’s dependence on his readers’ familiarity with LXX Ps 21 suggests familiarity with this interpretation of merited suffering, of suffering caused by sin.

5 The Extended Inverted Allusion to LXX Psalm 21 in Mark 15

Mark had good reason to rework LXX Ps 21 using extended inverted allusion. A traditional reading of LXX Ps 21 does not fit Mark’s message about Jesus’ suffering innocently (see Mark 15.10, 14) and does not depict a sufferer offering himself as ‘a ransom for many’ (Mark 10.45). Yet, by employing extended inverted allusion, Mark was able to disrupt the causality implied in LXX Ps 21.2, in which suffering is caused by sin. Additionally,

⁵⁹ See Christoph Burchard, ‘Joseph and Aseneth: A New Translation and Introduction’ in vol 2. of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1985) 221–3. Pace Carey who dismisses the significance of Joseph and Aseneth for understanding Mark or Ps 22. Since Carey had already determined that the Psalmist must be read as a righteous sufferer, she concludes that ‘the circumstances between the two speakers (Aseneth and the Psalmist) are clearly different, the most obvious being that Aseneth’s condition of discomfort is self-imposed’; Carey, *Jesus’ Cry from the Cross*, 120. That the Psalmist could be understood as suffering because of his sins is suggested by the Septuagint reading of Ps 21.2b: μακρὰν ἀπὸ τῆς σωτηρίας μου οἱ λόγοι τῶν παραπτωμάτων μου; see Ahearne-Kroll, *Psalms of Lament in Mark*, 93.

⁶⁰ Mark 15.24 (διαμερίζονται τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ, βάλλοντες κλῆρον ἐπ’ αὐτά) alludes to LXX Ps 21.19 (διεμερίσαντο τὰ ἱμάτια μου ἑαυτοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν ἱματισμόν μου ἔβαλον κλῆρον); Mark 15.29–30 (κινουῦντες τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν καὶ λέγοντες ... σῶσον σεαυτὸν) alludes to LXX Ps 21.8–9 (ἐλάλησαν ἐν χεῖλεσιν, ἐκίνησαν κεφαλὴν ... σοσάτω αὐτόν); and Mark 15.32 (ὠνειδίζον αὐτόν) may allude to LXX Ps 21.7 (ἐγὼ δὲ εἶμι ... ὄνειδος).

⁶¹ Marcus notes the combination of Hebrew and Aramaic in the transliterated verse; Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 1054–5.

⁶² As Marcus notes, ‘This is identical with the LXX except that the latter has *hina ti* (lit. ‘in order that what’) rather than *eis ti*’; Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 1055. For a more detailed explanation of the changes and comparison with the Aramaic/Hebrew and Greek see Collins, *Mark*, 730–1, n.d–g; and Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 1054–5. Neither scholar discusses the additional ‘my’ (μου). Although it is present in the Masoretic text (יָהוָה יְהוָה) and in the transliterated Aramaic that Mark provides (εἰλοι εἰλοι), the Septuagint begins Ὁ θεὸς ὁ θεός μου; only including the personal pronoun μου after the second θεός. Mark’s dependence on the Septuagint suggests that the alteration was intentional, either to represent more accurately his transliteration or to emphasise Jesus’ relationship with God through the repetition of ‘my God’. On Jesus’ relationship with God in Mark, see Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 1051.

⁶³ Howard Clark Kee, ‘The Function of Scriptural Quotations in Mark 11–16’, in *Jesus und Paulus: Festschrift für Werner Georg Kümmel zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. E. Earle Ellis and Erich Gräßer; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975) 172.

by employing extended inverted allusion, Mark could connect Jesus with the psalmist, understood to be King David or anyone suffering for their sins, while simultaneously portraying Jesus as ‘a ransom for many’ (Mark 10.45).

The psalmist begins with a question and then provides the answer: ‘Why did you [God] forsake me? The accounts of my transgressions are far from my salvation’ (ἵνα τί ἐγκατέλιπές με; μακρὰν ἀπὸ τῆς σωτηρίας μου οἱ λόγοι τῶν παραπτωμάτων μου—LXX Ps 21.2). The state of the psalmist is emphasised again a few verses later when he contrasts the ‘fathers’ who in times past had cried to God and were saved (LXX Ps 21.5–6) with himself who is a ‘worm’ (σκώληξ) and a ‘reproach’ (ὄνειδος) (LXX Ps 21.7).⁶⁴ The psalmist receives no immediate reprieve from those who mock him ‘shaking the head’ (LXX Ps 21.8–9) or from those ‘dogs’ who ‘divided [his] garments’ (LXX Ps 21.17–19). This suffering is presented in the Septuagint as a consequence of his transgressions.⁶⁵ Certainly, the Greek readers of Mark 15 familiar with the Septuagint of Ps 21, would not think of this psalmist as a righteous sufferer.⁶⁶ It is here that Mark’s extended inverted allusion to the Psalm first becomes significant.

When Mark employs these same passages from LXX Ps 21, he begins not with a mention of transgressions but with the suffering. Jesus’ garments are parted (Mark 15.24; cf. Ps 21.19), then he is mocked by those who ‘shake their heads’ (Mark 15.29; cf. Ps 21.8–9), but Mark provides no reason to suspect that Jesus merited this suffering. In fact, Pilate’s realisation that the chief priests had handed Jesus over out of jealousy (Mark 15.10) and his questioning about what Jesus had done wrong (Mark 15.14) reinforces that Jesus’ suffering was unmerited. So, Jesus is ‘reproached’ (ὠνειδίζον) unjustly, whereas the psalmist was ‘a reproach’ (ὄνειδος) because of his transgressions (Mark 15.32; cf. LXX Ps 21.7).⁶⁷ By concluding the direct verbal allusions to LXX Ps 21 with its beginning (21.2a) and by omitting the ‘transgressions’ (21.2b), Jesus’ cry of forsakenness comes as a result of suffering rather than sin. Just as Aeneas’ reversal of the account of Dido’s death had obscured the causal relation between his departure and her demise, so too Mark’s inverted allusions to the psalmist’s suffering change the causal relationship between the reason for forsakenness and the suffering.⁶⁸ By reversing the Psalm, the results of the psalmist’s transgressions in the Septuagint have become the cause of Jesus’ suffering in Mark. And whereas the psalmist’s suffering was merited, Jesus’ forsakenness is unmerited.⁶⁹

Mark’s extended inverted allusion to LXX Ps 21 may also have soteriological implications. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus’ suffering and death is ‘a ransom for many’ (λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν—Mark 10.45), and his blood is poured out ‘for many’ (ὑπὲρ πολλῶν—Mark 14.26). This is quite different from the message of LXX Ps 21. In the Psalm, read as the words of King David, David laments: ‘I am poured out like water’ and ‘you brought me down into the dust of death’ (LXX Ps 21.15–16). In fact, he is treated as if he were already dead: ‘They divided out my garments for themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots’ (LXX Ps 21.19; cf. Mark 15.24). Yet this suffering is his alone; it is not ‘for many’. Moreover, the psalmist expresses hope that God would rescue him (Ps 21.9–10, 19–22)—

⁶⁴ Cf. LXX Ps 38.9 which suggests through a synonymous parallelism that being a ‘reproach’ (ὄνειδος) is the result of one’s transgressions (ὀνομία).

⁶⁵ That Psalm 22 could be read as a lament over one’s transgressions was seen previously in Joseph and Aseneth. Even the midrash on Esther, based on the Hebrew, acknowledges the possibility of suffering caused by transgression in the context of quoting Ps 22; and Hoffman suggests that the author of 1QHodayot also read the suffering in Ps 22 as partially merited; Hoffman, ‘Psalm 22’, 89, 163.

⁶⁶ See Ahearne-Kroll, *Psalms of Lament in Mark*, 93; Hoffman, ‘Psalm 22’, 113 n66.

⁶⁷ That they have no grounds to reproach Jesus is emphasised by their status as ‘co-crucified’—συνεσταυρωμένοι (Mark 15.32).

⁶⁸ See above.

⁶⁹ Contrast LXX Ps 21.2 with Mark 15.10, 14.

passages that are absent from Mark 15. In the time of Mark, a reader of this Davidic Psalm would have assumed that God, indeed, would act to rescue the king. For this reason, Joel Marcus sees contradiction, a paradox, in Jesus speaking from the cross the supposed words of a forsaken King David.

This last abandonment contradicts conventional notions of royalty; kings were supposed to have God as their helper, not their foe (cf. Matt 27.42–43; Josephus, *Ant.* 17.195). As throughout the rest of chapter 15, therefore, the narrative's assertion of Jesus' kingship occurs in the teeth of circumstances that seem to call it radically into question ... Paradoxically, then, the cry of dereliction becomes good news ... [T]hrough identifying with human lostness, the Son of God points a way out of it ... With his cry, and with the death that follows, Jesus has achieved the purpose of his mission: complete identification with humanity's slave-like, accursed condition, and a corresponding form of decease, 'even death on a cross' (cf. Phil 2.7–8).⁷⁰

Mark's extended inverted allusion to LXX Psalm 21 reinforces this point. As seen above, Psalms of Individual Lament follow a general pattern that begins with suffering and supplication, then concludes with salvation (or anticipated salvation) and praise (or promised praise).⁷¹ Mark's extended inverted allusion to LXX Ps 21, like the allusion to Herodotus in Maximus of Tyre, creates a new trajectory. In its proper order, one follows the psalmist away from sin and danger toward deliverance. Jesus' journey through the same Psalm takes him in the opposite direction. For Mark, the Messiah was not exactly like King David or a son of David (see Mark 12.36–7). For Mark, the Messiah had come to give his life as 'a ransom for many' (Mark 10.45)—perhaps including for King David. So rather than travelling the narrative path in the same direction as King David, Jesus meets David at the beginning of his journey out of sin (LXX Ps 21.2; cf. Mark 15.36). Jesus' words of utter abandonment on the cross join with David's words—the words of many—of abandonment and distance from God caused by sin. Jesus meets King David and others at the moment of greatest forsakenness.

6 Conclusion

Inverted quotation and extended inverted allusion were literary techniques that ancient authors employed to incorporate others' works into their own texts. Recognising that Mark reshapes LXX Ps 21 by employing this literary technique provides additional insight into how he also reshapes Davidic messianic identity for Jesus. The Septuagint translation of Ps 21 suggests that David deserved his suffering because of his transgression, but the extended inverted allusion to this Psalm in Mark 15 reinforces that Jesus' suffering is unmerited by decoupling the suffering from that cause of forsakenness. Additionally, in the Septuagint translation of Ps 21, David moves from forsakenness and suffering on account of his 'transgressions' toward divine deliverance. By alluding to this Psalm in

⁷⁰ Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 1064; cf. Cranfield, *Gospel According to Saint Mark*, 458. For a summary of theological treatments, see Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001) 399.

⁷¹ Ahearne-Kroll contends that twenty-six out of thirty-one total Psalms of Lament 'do not have a clear answer by God to the psalmist's pleas'. He argues that the lament and praise sections of the Psalm are united instead in 'the psalmist's effort to elicit response from God'. 'The "thanksgiving" or "praise" section is not *actual* thanksgiving or praise *after* being heard by God'; Ahearne-Kroll explains, 'Instead, it is a promise to do these things *if* God responds to the psalmist'; Ahearne-Kroll, *Psalms of Lament in Mark*, 50. Regardless of whether one reads actual or anticipated deliverance in the conclusion of these Psalms, the trajectory of the Psalm as a whole is toward salvation. One is closer to salvation at the end of the Psalm than at the beginning.

reverse, Jesus travels David's journey in reverse. Jesus, whom Mark suggests is not guilty of any transgression meriting death (see Mark 15.10, 14), begins with David's torture and then ridicule, before ultimately meeting David at the beginning of this Psalm—at the moment of David's greatest desperation. Jesus, who gives his life 'for many' (Mark 10.45), cries out with David: 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Mark 15.34). Rather than move from forsakenness and suffering toward divine deliverance, in this extended inverted allusion, Jesus moves through suffering toward forsakenness precisely in order to bring about divine deliverance.

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