Neither God nor Ghost

Rhetorical Spectrality in the Gospel According to Mark

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Phaedo and a Ghostly Grammar

In *Phaedo*, Plato (c. 428–c. 348 BCE) allows us passage into an ancient discourse on ghosts in Greco-Roman antiquity. In the dialogue between Socrates (c. 469–399 BCE) and Cebes (c. 430–350 BCE), souls too attached to the corporeal are believed to result in ghosts hovering around their tombs:

> You must suppose, my friend [Cebes], that this corporeal element is weighty and heavy, earthy and visible. Indeed such a soul that has this is weighed down and dragged back to the visible world by fear of both the invisible and Hades, so it's said, circling aimlessly among the tombstones and graves (τοὺς τάφους), among which indeed some shadowy apparitions of souls have actually been seen (περὶ ἃ δὴ καὶ ὤφθη ἄττα ψυχῶν σκιοειδῆ φαντάσματα), the kind of images that such souls produce that have not been released in a pure state, but having a share in the visible can thus be seen.[1]

Plato's spectral theory posits that the soul (ψυχή) can create a phantom presence (φάντασμα) when involved in unhealthy clinging to the corporeal (σωματοειδής) in its previous life, which in turn hinders the reincarnation

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1. Plato, *Euthyphro; Apology; Crito; Phaedo; Phaedrus*, Cambridge, MA 2017, 389.

of the soul.[2] The sighting of souls is centred around monuments and tombs (μνήματά τε καὶ τοὺς τάφους). In short, Plato here develops a theory of the popular belief that ghosts, for various reasons, were particularly active around (their own) tombs. When turning to the New Testament archive with *Phaedo*'s spectral grammar in the background, a handful of loci stand out as more haunted than others. The Gospel According to Mark in particular looks promising as spectral themes appear through its use of a rhetoric of paradox.[3] The entire Markan text can be thought of as drawing out a diagram of the empty tomb that early theologians, and in particular the anonymous scribes of antiquity, can be seen encircling in different ways.[4]

This paper will focus on (a) the uses of apparition (φάντασμα) in the New Testament archive and Jesus walking on water in Mk. 6 and Mt. 14, and the appearance of Jesus in the shape of a phantom.[5] Further, (b) the site of the empty tomb (τάφος) and the enigmatic (non-)resurrection of Jesus in Mk. 16 emerges as a possible spectral site. Not only is (the oldest version of) the Markan ending centred around a frightening occurrence around the empty tomb, but in contrast to the other canonical gospels, Jesus never appears as resurrected. But most importantly, (c) early Christian scribes and copyists (theorized under the moniker of "ghostwriters") would not stop

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2. Daniel Ogden, *Magic, Witchcraft, and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Sourcebook*, New York 2002, 147–148.

3. I will in this paper use "the Gospel According to Mark" when referring to the ancient, living, textual text tradition in early Christian manuscripts, rather than "Mark's Gospel". (I will, for the sake of the readability, however, use "Markan" and "Lukan" when citing or referring to specific portions of the textual traditions texts.) It is more or less a consensus among scholars that the gospels initially circulated as anonymous and without authors, which in the case for the Gospel According to Mark is significant with relation to its multiple endings, as well as other textual issues. The main reasons for the current non-standard abbreviation are (1) to highlight the actual paratextual titles used by the textual tradition's ghostwriters and scribes to describe the Markan text in late antiquity (as κατὰ Μᾶρκον) and (2) to emphasize the fact that the Gospel According to Mark during its early transmission, prior to Irenaeus of Lyon (c. 130–202), was transmitted *without designation to a single authority*. In a sense, the Gospel According to Mark was originally authorless. In short, the ghostwriters of the Gospel According to Mark are as close as one possibly can get to a textual indication of "authorship" in this period. The fact that the Gospel According to Mark was originally read without an original author allows the textual tradition to provide a space or invitation for the ghostwriters, and ghost-writerly activity. For a discussion on the importance of not using "Mark" or "Mark's Gospel" as referring to a stable text of "book" in antiquity, see Matthew D.C. Larsen, "Correcting the Gospel: Putting the Titles of the Gospels in Historical Context", in Abraham J. Berkovitz & Mark Letteney (eds.), *Rethinking "Authority" in Late Antiquity: Authorship, Law, and Transmission in Jewish and Christian Tradition*, London 2018, 78–103.

4. Jakub Zdebik, *Deleuze and the Diagram: Aesthetic Threads in Visual Organization*, London 2012, grounds the use of diagram as coming from διάγραμμα, meaning "a figure marked out by lines". The Gospel According to Mark's figure and image-of-thought is found with the lines drawing out the empty tomb.

5. The notion of the New Testament as archive derives from Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse of Language*, London 2002.

re-writing this particular section of the gospel. The ghostwriters and their activity point to the larger question of the Gospel According to Mark as a spectral text *en toto*. An image of thought in the Gospel According to Mark is that of a tomb that the ghosts encircle. In conjunction with the ghostwriters (c), Mk. 6 (a) and Mk. 16 (b) raise the problem of a phantom Christ, as well as other spectral overtones in relation to its oldest and perhaps primary readers.

Under the rubric of "larval Christ" a rhetorical spectrality of the Gospel According to Mark (a–c) will be explored through the paradoxical rhetorical make-up of its Jesus and the nomadic theology that follows. Spectrality of the Gospel According to Mark is at present primarily approached through the means of rhetoric, and in the way that the stylistic obscurity and porosity of the text conjure ghosts and ghostwriters.

The New Testament Archive and Ghosts

The spectrality of Jesus the Nazarene in general and the resurrection in particular seems to have simultaneously troubled and enthralled theologians of second- and third-century Christianity. One can perhaps approach the issue of the resurrection in much of early Christian discourse as standing in antagonistic tension to the idea of "the ghostly".[6] In Κατὰ Κέλσου ("Against Celsus"), Origen of Alexandria (c. 184–253) reports that "[Celsus] supposed Jesus to have been a phantom [φάσμα] when he appeared to his disciples after his resurrection from the dead, as though he had merely made an appearance to them in a stealthy and secretive manner".[7] Tertullian of Carthage (c. 160–c. 225), on his end, repeatedly blames Marcion of Sinope (c. 85–c. 160) for using the term phantom (in Marcion's own version of the Gospel According to Luke: φάντασμα) when describing the resurrected Jesus.[8] In light of the overall sparse use of ghost-language in the New

6. In this paper, I will look at Jesus' resurrection and stories of the resurrection of Jesus as separate and distinct from ancient ghost stories, following the clear resistance that many early theologians had to their juxtaposition. One could, of course, equally approach the same topic by underlining the concepts' similarity and how they overlap. This would, however, miss the interesting suspension of a "phantom Jesus" that the Gospel According to Mark, in particular, allows to hover over its narrative. The distinction between the ghostly and resurrected is therefore made for the sake of pointing to aspects of the Markan text rather than saying something general about the nature of the resurrection.

7. Origen, *Contra Celsum*, Cambridge 1980, 423. For more on the resurrection, see pp. 112–114.

8. Judith Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic: God and Scripture in the Second Century*, Cambridge 2015, 374–375. For an interesting connection between Jesus' resurrection, christology, and Marcion's use of phantom/φάντασμα, see the fourth book of Tertullian's *Adversus Marcionem* in Arthur Cleveland Coxe (ed.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: 3. Latin Christianity. Its Founder, Tertullian*, Buffalo, NY 1885, 354–355. The entire chapter is full of anti-phantom christology.

Testament archive, the second- and third-century popularity of a spectral Christ is somewhat surprising. Does the New Testament archive supply resources for the second-century production of a phantom theology of Jesus and the resurrection?

It is primarily within the Gospel According to Mark, and the passage of Jesus' walking on water in 6:45–52, that we encounter explicit ghost-language (φάντασμα) and the possibility of a spectral christology.[9] The other synoptical gospels recontextualize this usage of spectral terminology and thereby disarm the problematic idea. The Gospel According to John, with its so-called "High Christology" emphasizing Jesus' divinity, is never really interested in a spooky Jesus. The Gospel According to Luke in a similar manner avoids this terminology altogether.[10]

It is primarily with the rhetorical mixture of paradox, irony, and obscurity in the Gospel According to Mark that the New Testament canon conjures something like a phantom christology. And as will be seen, this remains more of a possibility than anything like a developed theology. Following a spectral line-of-flight offered by Celsus and Marcion above, this paper follows a ghostly larvae detected within Mk. 6 and the haunting absence of Jesus' resurrection in the earliest manuscripts of Mk. 16, asking the question, does the Gospel According to Mark produce a spectral theology of Jesus' resurrection?

Returning to Celsus once more, is his reading of resurrection-accounts in the canonical gospels credible? What may lie behind it? In order to evaluate Origen's discussion above, we need to look closer at what the New Testament archive has to say about ghosts. There are only rare sightings of ghosts in the New Testament archive. Following a Homeric index and vocabulary

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9. Marcion's use of φάντασμα in relation to the resurrected Jesus relies on his own textual variant of Lk. 24:37, interestingly shared with Codex Bezae, but ultimately replaced with the less menacing "πνεῦμα" in stronger witnesses. For more on Marcion's text and φάντασμα from the perspective of text criticism, see discussions in Daniel A. Smith, "Marcion's Gospel and the Resurrected Jesus of Canonical Luke 24", *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum/Journal of Ancient Christianity* 21 (2017), 41–62; Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic*, 372–380. The lower-case c of christology here and elsewhere is intentional.

10. The current article does not take into account Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) as a resource for looking at the Gospel According to Mark. From a Derridean perspective, Andrew P. Wilson, *Transfigured: A Derridean Re-Reading of the Markan Transfiguration*, New York 2007, has looked at Mk. 9 and the transfiguration. Peter N. McLellan, "Specters of Mark: The Second Gospel's Ending and Derrida's Messianicity", *Biblical Interpretation* 24 (2016), 357–381, is yet another example of a Derridian analysis of spectrality, looking specifically at Mk. 16. Matthew James Ketchum, "Haunting Empty Tombs: Specters of the Emperor and Jesus in the Gospel of Mark", *Biblical Interpretation* 26 (2018), 219–243, also works within the same theoretical tradition, yet with a clearer focus on the ancient ghost grammar, and touching on the same Markan texts as the current article. Ketchum looks specifically to the figure of the Emperor to define Jesus' spectrality, but along the way makes many observations about a more general spectrality in the Gospel According to Mark, not least in chapters 6 and 16.

for ghosts,[11] σκιά (shadow) occurs in the New Testament archive a handful of times, but never comes close to a ghostly situation. Εἴδωλον, sometimes used to denote a phantom, is employed by Paul in 1 Cor. 8:10, but here refers to food devoted to "idols" and false gods. This is the only time Paul comes close to the term ghost. The common noun ψυχή (life, soul) is never employed as ghost, nor is δαίμων (god/godess, and sometimes: ghost). Celsus' term φάσμα (apparition, phantom) never occurs in the New Testament archive. The cognate, φάντασμα (phantom) does, however, appear in the synoptic gospels, and in the aforementioned passage of Mk. 6 (with its parallel in Mt. 14). The only case of a real ghost story in the New Testament archive thus seems to occur in the Gospel According to Mark where Jesus walks on water.[12]

In Mk. 6:45–52, Jesus wants to be alone, in the wake of the miraculous feeding of five thousand followers (6:30–44). After commanding the disciples to take a boat to Bethsaida without him, Jesus prays on a mountain-hill nearby. However, as the night approaches, Jesus watches as the disciples fight winds and waves in the middle of Lake Tiberias, and decides to help them out. At the fourth watch, just when the first rays of the morning sun hit the landscape, the disciples see Jesus walking over to them, on the water, and scream out of fear, believing Jesus to be a phantom (ἔδοξαν ὅτι φάντασμά ἐστιν).[13] Jesus tells them to have no fear and reassures them that it is truly him (ἐγώ εἰμι· μὴ φοβεῖσθε).[14] However, as Jesus gets into the boat with them "they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand [...] their hearts were hardened" (6:52). Although Jesus seems to reveal crucial aspects of his identity and messianic role, confirmed with the "I AM-saying" (ἐγώ εἰμι) in the wake of the unfolding event, the disciples are unable to shake the idea of the Nazarene as a φάντασμά, it seems.

This story bears many marks of a Greco-Roman ghost story. Jason Combs has summarized the overlaps between Mk. 6:45–52 and the essential features of ancient ghost stories as follows: "(1) ghosts appear at night; (2) though difficult to see, they look as they did in life, yet pale or shadowy; and (3) they cause fear and terror for the living whom they encounter."[15] And even though the story does not stick to the script of a ghost story, certain aspects of the phantom Jesus lingers on, as the narrative continues. For instance,

11. N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, London 2003, 43.

12. For an interpretation of the passage as ghost story in antiquity, see Jason Robert Combs, "A Ghost on the Water? Understanding an Absurdity in Mark 6:49–50", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127 (2008), 345–358.

13. Mk. 6:49 reads: οἱ δὲ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης περιπατοῦντα ἔδοξαν ὅτι φάντασμά ἐστιν, καὶ ἀνέκραξαν. The New Testament texts in this paper is taken from NA28.

14. Other Markan ἐγώ εἰμι-sayings: 13:6; 14:62.

15. Combs, "A Ghost on the Water?", 350.

Mk. 6:45–52 results in a suspension of Jesus' identity. The would-be Messiah appears to the disciples as a phantom walking on water. This messianic "apparition" is integrated into the overall collection of stories about Jesus in the Gospel According to Mark, without a further explanation of its relation to an overarching idea of Jesus' identity, and more specifically, of a purported messiahship. Jesus assures his followers that it is him, and no one else, but the disciples are not able to process this experience fully, or translate the apparition into their horizon of understanding. Jesus' powers are presented as spectral and eerie, and yet the Christ cannot be a ghost, can he?

In the Matthean parallel of the same material, chief ambiguities are exorcized from the passage, as the disciples in this version do not believe or hold to be true that Jesus is a phantom (ἔδοξαν ὅτι), but instead in fear says that he is one (λέγοντες ὅτι φάντασμά ἐστιν).[16] A spectral grammar is only momentarily put in the minds and mouths of the disciples as a fleeting fear, which in the end subverts this event by shifting the focus to a defusing occurrence. Instead of ending the scene like the Gospel According to Mark, with a clear focus on the ignorance and ambivalence of the disciples, the Gospel According to Matthew has Peter walking out to Jesus on the water, the rest of the disciples worshipping "the Lord" and in chorus chant (the Markan centurions' confession of) Jesus as the Son of God.[17] The Gospel According to Matthew therefore effectively short-circuits Markan obscurity and paradox, attempting to exclude anything like a spectral christology.

However, even after this theological fortification and revision of the Markan material of a ghostly Jesus, i.e. with a clearer christology and not to mention Matthean robust resurrection account, second-century philosopher and critic of emerging Christianity – Celsus – was still able to attack Jesus' resurrection as the result of a spectral Christ. The Gospel According to Matthew, along with the other canonical gospels, seemed to have failed to convincingly erase the possibility of a spectral christology for the emerging Christianity. Why is this?

If attention is briefly turned towards to the Gospel According to Luke, and in particular Marcion's version of the Lukan text, we are perhaps given a glance into how the canonical gospels tried to resist Celsus' reading. In most ancient textual witnesses of Lk. 24:36–43, a resurrected Jesus appears in the midst of the disciples and is "mistaken" for a πνεῦμα (spirit), as they are frightened "and supposed that they saw a πνεῦμα". According to Tertullian, Marcion's early edition of the Gospel According to Luke has the

16. Mt. 14:26: οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης περιπατοῦντα ἐταράχθησαν λέγοντες ὅτι φάντασμά ἐστιν, καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ φόβου ἔκραξαν.

17. Mt. 14:33 "And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God'."

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disciples echo Mk. 6, believing Jesus to be a φάντασμα, a phantom.[18] Tertullian forcefully attacks this reading and overall tendency, claiming that Marcion is using this terminology of a ghost grammar to conceptualize Jesus' resurrection, only to end up with an illusory and deceptive take on the risen Christ.[19] Ghosts are, according to Tertullian, false copies of real bodies and the Gospel According to Luke avoids all forms of mimicry of Jesus, emphasizing how the resurrected Jesus ate and broke bread, for instance. There was nothing fictive about Jesus post-mortem, Tertullian proclaims. Either way, Marcion's version of Lk. 24 is outmatched by a plethora of ancient manuscripts exorcizing any ghost grammar form the section, and pointing to the conclusion that the transmission of the Gospel According to Luke either erased the use of a ghost grammar of the resurrection, or that it was never a prominent reading, even in Marcion's day and historical context. Further, with or without Marcion's use of φάντασμα, the passage is probably to be paralleled to Mk. 6 (and Mt. 14) and thus seen as derivative, since the Gospel According to Luke curiously omits the episode of Jesus walking on water, yet still includes many of the same elements of this story in Lk. 24:36–43.[20]

In the end, Mk. 6:45–52 comes out as the single contender for a proper ghost story in the New Testament archive. We do not, however, get a phantom christology from the Gospel According to Mark, since Jesus does not appear or rise from the grave. Further, the Markan text leaves this "phantom-passage" and its implication for an understanding of Jesus' identity and mission silently hovering above, or perhaps within, its story line. This ghost story is not really a ghost story, but a spectral, rhetorical echo. The pericope does point the way to how the Gospel According to Mark as a whole is a haunting literature of sorts, and ghostly on another level. On this note, one interesting feature of the Gospel According to Mark's peculiar end is how it seems to have attracted textual creativity from its most ancient audience: some developed and elaborated the entire gospel (the Gospels According to Matthew–Luke) and at other times simply added new material to the already existing Markan manuscripts.

The Gospel According to Mark as Ghost Story

In contrast to the other canonical gospels, there is something "off" about the Gospel According to Mark. In terms of rhetoric, the text seems more interested in ambivalence, paradox, and irony than the narrative linearity

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18. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed., Stuttgart 1994, 187.

19. Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic*, 374.

20. Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic*, 375.

of developing a single, overarching idea of Jesus the Nazarene. Ideas, too many ideas, are often allowed into the same passage or section. As we already noticed in Mk. 6, this text has no problem leaving its audience with conflicting notions of Jesus, the disciples utterly confused, and the meaning of Jesus' entire ministry hovering in the air.

In what ways does the text use paradox, irony, and obscurity? One need only to think of the paradoxical portrayal of the disciples as ignorant, and Peter as most thoughtless of all. Or the mysterious tendency illuminated through William Wrede's (1859–1906) idea about a "Messianic secret", correctly noting that the Markan Jesus is consistent in refusing the title of Christ throughout the text.[21] Or the ironic scene of a Roman centurion, standing at the foot of the cross, declaring Jesus' divine sonship, post-mortem.

During the second and third centuries, Markan rhetoric for various reasons became problematic, and the existence of the entire gospel text came into question. Contemporary gospel writers (the Gospels According to Luke–Matthew) and patristic theologians (for example Irenaeus) for different reasons all recognized the Markan tendency to include paradox, irony, and mystery as producing potential, theological problems. At least if the Gospel According to Mark was left to stand on its own, as an independent and self-sufficient record of Jesus' ministry and mission. As a result, the Gospel According to Mark was for instance not well received among the influential second- and third-century patristic theologians, and can as a result be described with Michael Kok as a "marginal gospel". The Gospel According to Mark was, however, still included in the emerging canon. In contrast to the Gospels According to Matthew and John, the Gospel According to Mark only received minimal attention in defining theological discourses of late antiquity (in terms of citation). Kok phrases the marginality of the Gospel According to Mark in the following manner: "Given Mark's lackluster reception in the patristic period, it is astounding that it survived at all once its contents were almost completely reabsorbed in Matthew and Luke. It could have disappeared without a trace like the other Synoptical sources lost to the dust of antiquity."[22]

The text did survive late antiquity. What does the reception of this gospel text tell us? It was locked in the attic of the New Testament archive and left to howl in the wind. Partially as an effect of Irenaeus's argument of a "four-fold gospel", the Gospel According to Mark survives as part of the

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21. William Wrede, *The Messianic Secret*, London 1971. I do not subscribe to Wrede's results, but agree with the problem description grounding this classic study. The Markan Jesus is not interested in the title "Christ", preferring "Son of Man" instead.

22. Michael J. Kok, *The Gospel on the Margins: The Reception of Mark in the Second Century*, Minneapolis, MN 2015, 11.

canon.[23] What would happen to the text's Matthean incorporation, consisting of approximately eighty to ninety per cent of the Markan material, or the Lukan inclusion of about sixty per cent of the same text, if this particular gospel version became heretical? A clear rift or tension exists in the biblical archive between the synoptical gospels and the Gospel According to John, on the one hand, and the Gospel According to Mark on the other, where the presence of the Gospels According to Matthew and Luke reduces the Markan text into something like a material source, and the Gospel According to John into an instance of undeveloped theologizing.

At the same time, scribal activity surrounding manuscripts of the Gospel According to Mark reveal a slightly different story. In fact, the Gospel According to Mark and, in particular, its ending gathered an ensemble of nameless writers, all trying to salvage and possibly finish this story. The Gospel According to Mark is quite unique in the New Testament archive, in the sense of having a number of different endings circulating, all responding to the non-resurrection of Mk. 16:1–8. The Markan text was an empty tomb haunted by ghostwriters and their attempts to raise Jesus.

The Ghostwriters of Antiquity and the Endings of the Gospel According to Mark

Violence and a grammar of suffering are never far away when one speaks of death. This is true of Jesus' death and Christ's resurrection. On one level, the production of Jesus' resurrection in the Gospel According to Mark is a form of hidden grammar of suffering, since ghostwriters returning to this locus, struggling with the task of finishing this text, often see their efforts completely forgotten or ignored. In a sense, ghosts wrote about Jesus' resurrection, and in particular the multiple Markan endings.

Individuals of Greco-Roman antiquity tasked with the role of writing up documents and composing text held a variety of positions in society. A scribe could be found in different administrative positions and for instance writing legal documents or marriage contracts, or for that matter writing literary texts in a private household or copying similar texts for a bookseller.[24] Kim Haines-Eitzen writes, "scribes in Hellenistic Greek or Roman

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23. For more on "the four-fold gospel" and Irenaeus, see Francis Watson, *Gospel Writing: A Canonical Perspective*, Grand Rapids, MI 2013.

24. On the Greco-Roman scribe as bookseller, see William A. Johnson, *Bookrolls and Scribes in Oxyrhynchus*, Toronto 2004, 159: "The problem seems to be that terms like 'book trade' or 'bookseller' carry with them a sort of creeping anachronism. In antiquity, a 'bookseller' engaged in the 'book trade' need be no more than a scribe on a public corner with his chest (*scrinium*, Catullus 14). Shops also existed that maintained a certain number of master copies (cf., e.g., Horace *Ep*. 1.20 for an early example, Martial 1.117 for a later), but these too surely made most of their profit not from pre-made copies, but from making copies to order. The centrality of the scribe in the idea of a 'bookseller' is encapsulated in the Latin word *librarius*, which continues to signify both copyist and bookseller throughout classical Latin."

antiquity did not [...] constitute a distinct and recognizable 'scribal class' with significant prestige". Due to how it was used the rival cultures of ancient Mesopotamia or Pharaonic Egypt, where a scribal-class held a respected societal position, the term "scribe" can be deceptive. Haines-Eitzen refers to Peter Parson, and that "the book-transcriber of Roman Egypt has a low profile: anonymous, uncommemorated in art, featureless expect in the rare aside to the reader".[25] In short, the faceless and nameless scribe of late Greco-Roman antiquity was more or less a ghost: a ghostwriter.

This is equally true of the writers copying the New Testament archive from the first to the fourth centuries. Although these ghosts of the New Testament archive left few traces of their social identity, they most probably either acquired their skills as writers from both informal and private (formal) schooling, or from apprenticeship, preparing for the work of a professional scribe or bookseller.[26] The majority, if not all, of these ghosts were slaves, or freed slaves, and/or came from the very lowest strata of Greco-Roman society.[27] Textual transmission and scribal activity of this period was often grounded in different forms of slavery, and thereby actualizing the importance of Orlando Patterson's use of "social death" in describing and defining this antique form of labour and existence.[28] In the end, textual

25. Kim Haines-Eitzen, "The Social History of Early Christian Scribes", in Bart D. Ehrman & Michael W. Holmes (eds.), *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis*, 2nd ed., Leiden 2013, 482–483.

26. As such, they were trained to master different styles of handwriting and so-called "bookhands". The biblical ghostwriters were familiar with "the bookhand appropriate of literary books", since the New Testament archive over all is a literary collection of texts. Haines-Eitzen, "The Social History of Early Christian Scribes", 483.

27. Johnson, *Bookrolls and Scribes*, 159–160: "In terms of book production, the proper distinction seems then not between individual and 'trade', or between 'private' and 'public', but between 'private' and 'professional'. Even here, the lines of demarcation are not as sharply drawn as we might like. Large estates of the culturally ambitious did undoubtedly sometimes have freedmen or slaves who were trained as scribes in the art of making a bookroll, and who were then 'private' in the sense of belonging to a personal estate, but 'professional' in the sense of having gone through the necessary apprenticeship. Perhaps the best distinction would then be between 'trained' and 'untrained' copyists, where the training implies a level of attainment suitable for guild membership." Haines-Eitzen agrees: "While the scribes of the Roman Empire operated at a number of different socioeconomic levels and within a variety of social and cultural contexts, scribes can most often be found among slaves – who, according to Roman law, were forbidden to own anything – and lower to middleclass professionals." Kim Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters: Literacy, Power, and the Transmitters of Early Christian Literature*, New York 2000, 7. See the entire introduction (pp. 3–20) of the same book for more on the identity of scribes and slavery in early Christianity.

28. Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*, Cambridge 2018, 38, defines social death in the following manner: "If the slave no longer belonged to a community, if he had no social existence outside of his master, then what was he? The initial response in almost all slaveholding societies was to define the slave as a socially dead person. [...] The slave is violently uprooted from his milieu. He is desocialized and depersonalized. [...] [Claude] Meillassoux writes: 'The captive always appears therefore as marked by an original, indelible

transmission was usually a form of slave work, and as such belonged to the realm of the socially dead.

In a fundamental material sense, the New Testament archive would not exist without the labour of this anonymous multitude, without its ghosts.[29] One cannot find a record of who they were. And even though the ghosts' identities are most often completely absent from early Christian memory,[30] scribes always leave marks for those with eyes to see. When looking closer at the available manuscripts of the period for instance, textual critics now emphasize the copyist-scribe as invested users of texts, and their function as "interested readers, exegetes and writers"[31] and marking out the produced copies through wording, commentary in the margins, and their readings as interpretation of previous copies. Most interesting for the present purposes is that one of the most intense sites for ghostly remains of this multitude is the Gospel According to Mark, and in particular its endings. And again, the possibility of a spectral christology hovers above this story line.

In the following section I will very briefly review the contents of the different endings to the Markan gospel and different versions of the resurrection, of which there are (at least) four:

1. The abrupt ending of 16:1–8;
2. Codex Bobiensis (it^k) expanding 16:1–8 with a "Short Ending" (SE), via interpolation after 16:4 and adding on a verse to 16:8;
3. The "Longer Ending" (LE) seen in 16:9–20, and finally;
4. Codex Washingtonianus (W) and what is known as the "Freer Logion" expands the Longer Ending by interpolation after 16:14.[32]

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Two of the oldest Greek codices, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus (c. 325–350), the Old Latin Codex Bobiensis, the Sinaitic Syriac manuscripts of different age, the approximately one hundred Armenian manuscripts, and the two

defect which weighs endlessly upon his destiny. This is, in [Michel] Izard's words, a kind of "social death". He can never be brought to life again as such since, in spite of some specious examples (themselves most instructive) of fictive rebirth, the slave will remain forever an unborn being (non-né).'"

29. Regardless whether one presumes a Christian identity or not, the New Testament ghosts should be thought of as ὄχλος or a multitude, rather than a people (λαός) or a distinct group.

30. As an exception to the rule, Rom. 16:22 records the name of its scribe: "I Tertius, the writer of this letter, greet you in the Lord."

31. Haines-Eitzen, "The Social History of Early Christian Scribes", 489.

32. One could also include the Gospel According to Matthew in this list, since it includes some eighty to ninety per cent of all Markan material, and revises Mk. 14–16 in order to ensure that Jesus would rise and show himself to his disciples, post-mortem.

oldest Georgian manuscripts, all show no knowledge of a Markan ending beyond Mk. 16:1–8. Further, Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–c. 215) – as well as Origen – are unaware of a continuation of the Gospel According to Mark beyond this point, and joined by Eusebius of Caesarea (263–339) and Jerome of Stridon (c. 345–420) they "attest that the passage was absent from almost all Greek copies of Mark known to them".[33] There is at present a consensus among critical biblical scholars that the abrupt ending with Jesus' non-resurrection presents itself as primary.

<div align="center">2.</div>

Four Greek seventh- to ninth-century manuscripts, and other manuscripts in Latin, Harclean Syriac, Sahidic, Bohairic, and Ethiopian,[34] continue from 16:8, and its enigmatic ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ ("For they were afraid") in the following manner: "And all that had been commanded them they told briefly/promptly to those around Peter. And afterwards Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation."[35]

However, while the other manuscripts above continue with the Longer Ending, Codex Bobiensis (it[k]) alone stops after this expansion. Bobiensis' Markan end is known as the Shorter Ending. Interestingly, it[k] also adds the following to 16:4: "But suddenly at the third hour of the day there was darkness over the whole circle of the earth, and angels descended form the heavens, and as the [Lord] was rising in the glory of the living God, at the same time they ascended with him; and immediately it was light."[36]

There are many features of the passages above worth spending time on, for instance the introduction and meaning of theological vocabulary otherwise foreign to the Markan matrix, which I will return to below. Worth pointing out is also how it[k] displays a synthetic, single event out of the separate happenings of the resurrection and ascension.[37] The passages both have the character of summarizing and paraphrasing.

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33. Metzger, *Greek New Testament*, 122–123.

34. Metzger, *Greek New Testament*, 123.

35. Translation by James A. Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission: The Authentication of Missionaries and Their Message in the Longer Ending of Mark*, Tübingen 1999, 1, n. 3. Πάντα δὲ τὰ παρηγγελμένα τοῖς περὶ τὸν Πέτρον συντόμως ἐξήγγειλαν. Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς καὶ ἄχρι δύσεως ἐξαπέστειλεν δι᾽ αὐτῶν τὸ ἱερὸν καὶ ἄφθαρτον κήρυγμα τῆς αἰωνίου σωτηρίας. ἀμήν.

36. Translation by Metzger, *Greek New Testament*, 121–122.

37. Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament*, New York 1993, 232.

A very large number of ancient manuscripts, most notably the fifth-century codices Alexandrinus and Bezae, along with patristic sources in Irenaeus and the *Diatessaron*, give reason to date the Longer Ending sometime to the first half of the second century.[38] James Kelhoffer argues that Justin Martyr "points to the existence of the LE at the time he wrote the *First Apology* (ca. 155–161 CE)" and therefore dates the Longer Ending "within a range of a few decades in the first half of the second century. The author of the LE wrote after the NT Gospels were collected – probably not before 110–120 – but before Justin's *First Apology*. With confidence one may thus date the LE to ca. 120–150 CE".[39] Irenaeus's interest in the Longer Ending tells us something about the popularity of this addition to the abrupt ending, which in many regards saves the Gospel According to Mark from the ruins of marginality:

> Now after he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. She went out and told those who had been with him, while they were mourning and weeping. But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it. After this he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them. Later he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were sitting at the table; and he upbraided them for their lack of faith and stubbornness, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover." So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.[40]

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38. David C. Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels*, Cambridge 1997, 132.
39. Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission*, 175.
40. Translation from the New Revised Standard Version.

The first sentence summarizes 16:1–8 while also harmonizing the Gospel According to Mark with the other synoptic gospels.[41] At the same time the ghostwriter(s) add unique elements, such as details about exorcisms of Mary Magdalene and the signs of God's kingdom bursting forth by drinking of poison and handling snakes and so on. The Longer Ending also adds other foreign elements to the Gospel According to Mark, such as glossolalia and the phrase lord Jesus (κύριος Ἰησοῦς).[42]

4.

The fourth- or fifth-century Codex Washingtonianus stands out through its dialogical character:

> And they excused themselves, saying, "This age of lawlessness and un-belief is under Satan, who does not allow the truth and power of God to prevail over the unclean things of the spirits [or, does not allow what lies under the unclean spirits to understand the truth and power of God.] Therefore reveal your justice now" – thus they spoke to Christ. And Christ replied to them, "The term of years of Satan's power has been fulfilled, but other terrible things draw near. And for those who have sinned I was delivered over to death, that they may return to the truth and sin no more, in order that they may inherit the spiritual and incorruptible glory of justice which is in heaven."[43]

This resurrection-elaboration is more speech and argumentative than narrative,[44] breaking with the other ghosts' attempts to add a resurrection appearance.

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41. See Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission*, 243–244.

42. In the Gospel According to Mark, Jesus is never referred to as Lord, with the exception of Mk. 2:28 where Jesus uses the title about the Son of Man as the lord of the Sabbath. And here, Jesus emphasizes the validity of healing on the Sabbath rather than claiming divinity. I consider that Mk. 2:28 proves how careful the Gospel According to Mark is about the title of κύριος, essentially reserving it to the Lord of lords, God. If one claims that the Gospel According to Mark only uses Lord as a christological title, it is only through mediation and as a sub-category of the Son of Man's authority to heal on the Sabbath, and never as directly as the Gospel According to Matthew, where the disciples openly call Jesus Lord long before his resurrection (for example in Mt. 14:28).

43. Translation by Metzger, *Greek New Testament*, 124.

44. Larry Hurtado claims that one should read this as an interpolation, and consider the texts as unsuccessful, since it only survives in Codex W. It gives witness to textual fluidity as failure, readings that did not convince readers to keep copying. But it is also a strange argument from near-silence, because we do have this reading, which did survive. In light of the sparse amount of literature surviving antiquity, I would deem Codex W a successful failure. To speak of it as unsuccessful is to try to undermine its existence as periphery and keep it on the margins, as if there was a reading of the Gospel According to Mark that was absolutely

Ghostwriters and Spectral Theology

Do the ghostwriters of Mk. 16 construct a spectral christology out of their resurrection accounts? In a discussion on the Longer Ending and Shorter Ending as responding to Mk. 16:1–8, Bart Ehrman states that "what we have in these traditions […] are corruptions that emphasize the physical character of Jesus' ascent, useful material for proto-orthodox Christian bent on opposing docetic forms of Christology".[45] The endings are not capable of or interested in expanding the ghostly possibilities of Mk. 6. The abrupt ending (i.e. the "original ending" 16:1–8) is more of a story about the angelic visitation than a ghost story. As mentioned above, this is perhaps to be categorized as eerie rather than spooky. Angels are terrifying, as they represent the mouth of God, but they are not ghosts. With the Shorter Ending's interpolation to 16:4, "suddenly at the third hour of the day there was darkness over the whole circle of the earth", the passage becomes more spooky, indeed. Yet nothing is said about Jesus other than that he "sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation" (16:8).[46] This is more of a summary, and a bringing together of what the ghostwriter(s) thought was unconnected Markan themes, in the "originary" version. This writer introduces new theological terms to the Markan story, such as "the imperishable" (ἄφθαρτον), "kerygma" (κήρυγμα), and "salvation" (σωτηρία); all attempts of suturing the story into a rich, unified theological texture. Instead, rather the opposite is achieved as the attentive reader notices that something new is happening with this closing passage. A spectral theology is still, however, nowhere to be found.

Codex Washingtonianus' dialogue is not very spooky in itself, and seems more doctrinally invested in eschatology than spectrality. However, with the Longer Ending's 16:12–13 ghostly intensity increases: "After this he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country." These ghostwriters come close to a ghostly apparition, even if something is missing. I will return to the spectrality of the Longer Ending in the next section.

In light of the ghostwriters activity above, the dead are not interested in burying the dead. Yet, the ghostwriters of Mk. 16 are not able to bring the dead back to life. They display exegetical creativity and theological innovation, and therein a unique contribution. Without going too far into issues of the textual history of the canonical gospels, one can without too much

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normative. Larry Hurtado, "Introduction", in Larry Hurtado (ed.), *The Freer Biblical Manuscripts: Fresh Studies of an American Treasure Trove*, Leiden 2006, 6.

45. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, 232–233.

46. See note 35.

effort notice the plethora of theologies and christologies that emerges from the ghostwriters attempt to finalize this text and give it a respectable ending.

What exactly is a lasting effect of the ghostly production of the Markan endings? First, the Longer Ending, Codex Bobiensis, or Codex Washingtonianus would not, and possibly even could not, "fully" enter into the mode of pseudo-epigraphy. That is, the texts are not shy of the fact that they do not attempt to write in "the persona" of a particular Markan writer(s), in contrast to the Pauline pseudo-epigraphic literature for instance. Including new terminology, or story lines, was not out of bounds.

Following Michel Foucault's (1926–1984) distinction, the Gospel According to Mark can be theorized as lacking an author and displaying a non-standard form of literature written by a writer rather than an author.[47] The question of authority is here not attached to a named person of the past, but to a nameless tradition. This idea has been developed recently by Matthew D.C. Larsen, arguing for the possibility of considering the activity of the Gospel According to Mark in its many shapes and forms as that of a particular kind of living, "unfinished" tradition.[48] Following Larsen, the ghostwriters' will to obtain the "authority" of an original author was never then an option in the first place, as the Gospel According to Mark is something like an authorless text. Further, there is a conceptual link in the obscurity of the originary nameless writer(s) of the Gospel According to Mark and its many ghosts, but that remains a question for another time.

Secondly, the Longer Ending, Codex Bobiensis, and Codex Washingtonianus also do not shy away from writing in their own distinct, rhetorical styles and introducing new (non-Markan) key theological terms, christological titles, and occurrences to the overall story. In terms of finishing the Markan story or closing the gaps left by a primary ending (Mk. 16:1–8), the ghostwriters failed. Instead of actually sewing shut the wound of Markan obscurity, the attempt to re-write Jesus as resurrected ironically only unsutures the Markan texture even further. The many attempts by the ghostwriters reveal the impossibility of convincingly adding a final, risen Christ to the Markan story. And as an effect, the Gospel According to Mark remains unfinished as a gospel because of the discrepancy produced by their non-linear attachment to Mk. 16:1–8, and each other.[49]

The Gospel According to Mark functioned as a site of gathering for ghost-activity, precisely because this gospel text seems to avoid the finality of a resurrection. A particular theology of resurrection or phantoms does

47. Michel Foucault, "Authorship: What is an Author?", *Screen* 20 (1979), 13–34.

48. Matthew D.C. Larsen, *Gospels Before the Book*, New York 2018, especially 1–10.

49. The theme of unfinished potential of the Gospel According to Mark is developed at length in Larsen, *Gospels Before the Book*, 99–120.

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not surface. Attracted by the empty tomb, ancient ghostwriters attempted to sow on multiple resurrection appearances onto the Markan text. As we have seen, some succeeded only to reveal that the story of a resurrected Jesus in the Gospel According to Mark resists fixation.

Rhetorical Spectrality and the Larval Christ

When Apuleius (c. 124–c. 170 CE) in *De Deo Socratis* develops a taxonomy of ghosts, one section contrasts between spectres affiliated with homes or the homely, and a post-mortem vocation of watching over relatives, with a type of ghost who "has no fixed abode and is doomed to aimless wandering in a kind of exile, a bogeyman powerless against good people but dangerous to wicked ones, the traditional name for his class is often 'larva'".[50] In light of Apuleius's taxonomy, it is the wager of the current paper that the unfinished character and marginal nature of the Gospel According to Mark's rhetoric summons a spectral christology, in the form of a "larval Christ". In line with Apuleius's interesting class of phantasma known as "larva", Jesus' ministry and mission according to the canonical gospels is defined precisely by an *unheimlich*, nomadic existence. Jesus simply does not have a place to lay down his head. In the words of Apuleius, Jesus is doomed to "aimless wandering in a kind of exile". Particularly in the Gospel According to Mark, a nomadology of Jesus translates into a restless theology and rhetoric, where theological lines travel unhindered by coordination from a hierarchical christology, for instance.[51] In contrast to the other New Testament gospels, Markan portrayal produces paradox, irony, and obscurity to the degree that it results in an unsutured texture and theology of the Christ. Theology in the Gospel According to Mark is here spectral, in the sense that it portrays a larval Christ, destined to roam within the multiplicity that is Markan textuality and theologizing. As discussed above, this nomadology was certainly uncanny for early readers of this text in one way or another.

What happens when the rhetorical larval Christ of Mk. 6:45–52 (of a phantom-Christ) is allowed to wander off and interact with the ghostwriters' larval Christ of 16:9–20? Mk. 6:45–52 is often defined through the category of "epiphany" in line with the revelatory "Take heart, it is I: have no fear" (θαρσεῖτε, ἐγώ εἰμι· μὴ φοβεῖσθε).[52] This "I-am saying" of Mk. 6:50 is often considered to be echoing the power of YHWH to control the

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50. Apuleius, *Apologia; Florida; De Deo Socratis*, Cambridge, MA 2017, 377.

51. Again, one needs only here to think of the aforementioned suspense of Jesus' identity, known as the "Messianic secret". It is never presented in a clear manner just how the audience is to respond to Jesus' unwillingness to the titles of Christ and the self-designation as Son of Man.

52. Combs, "A Ghost on the Water?", 345.

chaotic primal ocean of Genesis 1. However, the disciples' reaction point in a different direction, with their φάντασμα-exclamation: the apparition of Jesus is ghostlike to them, not theophany. Interestingly, gods and demi-gods (heroes) were believed to have the ability to walk on water in Greco-Roman mythology. This was not the case with ghosts or the spirit of a deceased person.[53] Combs frames this tension in the following manner:

> Mark, then, has set the scene for a classic tale of a hunting specter through the word φάντασμα, the nighttime hour, the faint light of an approaching dawn, and the disciples' fearful response. Yet Mark diverges drastically from one component of ancient ghost stories that involve water: ghosts cannot walk on water.[54]

When Jesus walks on water he is, in strict terms, neither god nor ghost. What is then affirmed when Jesus says "Take heart, it is I"? A sense of paradox, uncertainty, and secrecy. The rhetoric of the Gospel According to Mark here presents some spectral traits, seen in a Markan fondness of nomadology of a "larval Christ".

If we look at the same question through the lens of the ghostwriters' account of Jesus' resurrection in the Longer Ending, the body of Christ is for them haunting for the same reason. Christ's body is threatening because of the lack of rhetorical clarity the apparition produces. Considering 16:12–13 as a spectral passage, and Jesus appearing *ex nihilo* in the midst of two of the disciples "walking into the country", the question of corporality intensifies this passage and highlights larvae of paradox and obscurity. In contrast to the parallel of this story in the Gospel According to Luke (that the Longer Ending most likely is paraphrasing: the "road to Emmaus" passage in 24:12–34), Jesus is not described in clear, corporeal terms such as sitting down with the disciples, or breaking bread and eating with them (Lk. 24:30). Rather, the specific larval Christ of the Longer Ending never breaks with Plato's description in *Phaedo* of the ghost as a shadowy simulacrum of a living body, punished for the unnatural, pre-mortem clinging to the body (σωματοειδής). In passages of Lk. 24, Jesus is explicitly described through a post-mortem physicality, and here moves away from identifying Jesus with the category of ghost.[55] In this sense, the ghostwriters create a resurrection

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53. Combs, "A Ghost on the Water?", 349.
54. Combs, "A Ghost on the Water?", 353.
55. In Deborah Thompson Prince, "The 'Ghost' of Jesus: Luke 24 in Light of Ancient Narratives of Post-Mortem Apparitions", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 29 (2007), 287–301, one sees an argument that Luke uses ancient, available literary tropes of ghosts (disembodied post-mortem apparitions) and revenants (embodied post-mortem apparitions),

that is uncanny but not specifically spectral, and in effect sustains a nomadic tendency of the Markan text.

Although the ambition of the Longer Ending, and the addition of Jesus' resurrection and ascension, could have re-territorialized a paradoxical and abrupt Markan ending, the end result of their juxtaposition is a continuation of the Gospel According to Mark's nomadology of Jesus. The larval Christ of Mk. 6 meets the ghostwriters' resurrection stories of Mk. 16:9–20, which allows this Christ-tendency to roam even further, through paradox and uncertainty. The question of the corporeal capacity of Jesus and the ultimate identity of Christ is not answered.

Jesus is spectral in the Gospel According to Mark in the form of a nomadic, larval Christ, too restless to find any particular home anywhere.[56] The Gospel According to Mark does not present itself as a clear-cut ghost story (if there ever existed such a thing). Instead, the Gospel According to Mark's account of Jesus is spectral through rhetorical paradox and obscurity, pushing against any attempt to give a concrete account of Jesus' identity, before and after death. The "neither god nor ghost" is spectral in its pushing away of any presence of a linear, christological reasoning.

Conclusion

For the sake of clarity, the ghostly aspects of the Gospel According to Mark above are thought under the category of nomadological tendencies, resulting from the aimless wandering of Jesus through the *rhetorical* terrain of mystery, suspense, and secrecy. The Gospel According to Mark does not follow the structure of a Greco-Roman ghost story. It spooks on a different level. It is the "neither–nor"-tendency of Mk. 6 (neither god nor ghost) and Mk. 16:1–8 (neither resurrected nor in the grave) that probably inspired ghostwriters to allow Jesus to wander further into more text. The nomadology of the Markan Jesus constructs the empty tomb for Christ to resurrect from, yet does not go there itself. Or at least not in a linear and straight forward manner.

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and ends up subverting them both. The point is that the Gospel According to Luke claims a "Christian superiority" of Jesus as resurrected, that overcodes the literary techniques used by Luke to describe the resurrected life of Jesus.

56. A similar sense of spectrality in the Gospel According to Mark, but from a rather different angle, can be seen in the work of George Aichele, *The Phantom Messiah: Postmodern Fantasy and the Gospel of Mark*, New York 2006, 139: "Jesus is not a ghost or phantom in the popular sense of a restless spirit or soul of a dead person – that is, a clearly supernatural being. Jesus is a living, human being, but he is an uncanny one, continually stretching or even breaking accepted bounds of humanity, perforating the borders between the natural and the supernatural."

The spectral character of the Gospel According to Mark's nomadic, larval Christ is something like a transcendental condition for the production of the resurrected Christ in other gospel versions, along with the work of anonymous scribes of late antiquity. The possibility of a phantom-Jesus exists, or perhaps subsists, only as a Markan larva. The particular "larval Christ" is never developed in the New Testament textual archive, neither by the Gospel According to Mark nor in any of the attempts to rehash the Gospel According to Mark. Yet this larva inspires and crawls in the theological imagination of friend and foe of this gospel version. A different larva, equally underdeveloped in the gospel, overcodes any "phantom-Jesus" in the New Testament archive through the resurrection accounts of the canonical gospels. Texts about the resurrected Jesus do not use terms of an ancient spectral appearance, a choice that should be seen as quite deliberate. In the end, "Jesus the ghost" and a spectral christology remains an unactualized line of flight and a virtual possibility.

On the other hand, the Markan Jesus is intensively spectral, in a different sense. It is clear from ancient reception that this particular gospel text was highly problematic for an ancient audience. Jesus virtually hovered around the Markan empty tomb. The ending was abrupt, producing ghost-like literature about a resurrected Messiah. Passages like Mk. 16:1–8 haunted early readers and writers into producing a multiplicity of accounts of a resurrected Jesus. The empty tomb and non-resurrection of Mk. 16:1–8 was not accepted as an endpoint. Death could not be the end. The unfinished character of the Gospel According to Mark's abrupt ending both bothered and inspired its audience into conjuring forth a re-appearance of the crucified Christ. ▲

SUMMARY

In this paper, the Gospel According to Mark is investigated in search for its ghosts and phantoms. In particular, Mk. 6 and the scene of Jesus walking on water, as well as the story about the empty tomb of Jesus in Mk. 16, are considered as haunted sites. However, rather than finding straight forward ghost stories, following Greco-Roman standards of late antiquity, we are confronted by a different sort of spectrality. In this study the activity of ancient scribes are explicitly thought of as ghostwriters, and connected to their intense hovering around Jesus' tomb, which I see as the production of numerous alternatives to the most original Markan ending (codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus and Mk. 16:1–8.) The ghostwriters' unwillingness of letting Jesus remain among the dead is then theorized from Apuleius' *De Deo Socratis* and the ancient ghost category "the

Larva". Jesus can be treated as a "larval Christ", haunting early Christian writers, which thereby opens up a kind of spectral theology in the Gospel According to Mark. The aforementioned obsession of the ghostwriters with Jesus' death highlights how the nomadic tendency of the Markan Jesus can be seen as having a theological valency, and that Jesus' death is as paradoxical and enigmatic as his life. In the end, Jesus' ghostly activity in the Gospel According to Mark is found in the unwillingness of the larval Christ to be fully present and available for the Markan audience to fixate on as a static identity or clear theological position.