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Codicological continuities and discontinuities at the end of Mark in the Greek witnesses before the ninth century

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Abstract

During the course of the *Paratexts of the Greek Bible project* (PTB, PI: Martin Wallraff), we described the contents of 38 Greek witnesses of Mark which date from before the ninth century. 14 of these witnesses contain words from at least three chapters of Mark, but only six have preserved, if not the end of Mark, then at least part of the text of Mark 16.

It is remarkable, however, that only one of these six manuscripts presents a situation which may be considered “normal” according to what was becoming a standard for the end of Mark, if one takes into consideration issues regarding the quire composition, the layout, the ending and the order of the Gospels. My paper addresses the question of this high degree of “abnormality”, which calls for an explanation.

This presentation will be divided into four parts. I will begin by quickly presenting these six manuscripts and their peculiarities. Then, I will show why I do not think this peculiar situation can be explained by the presence of the short ending of Mark in some of these witnesses. Thirdly, I will offer another possible explanation for it. Lastly, will briefly discuss another interesting observation; out of the 14 manuscripts with a substantial part of Mark, there are once again six manuscripts which are mutilated shortly before the ending part of the Gospel, i.e. shortly before the beginning of chapter 16.