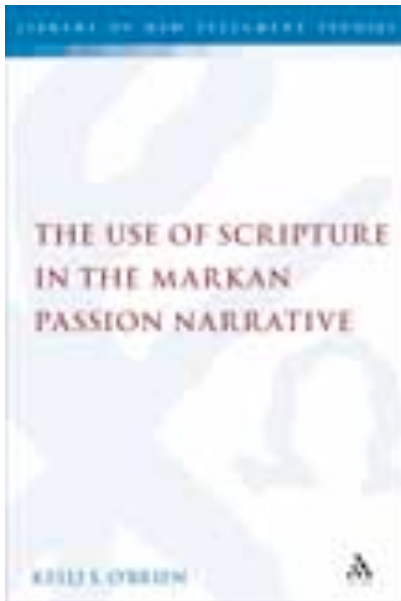


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**O'Brien, Kelli S.**

***The Use of Scripture in the Markan Passion Narrative***

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This study (a revised and enlarged version of a dissertation done at the University of Notre Dame) aims at establishing and interpreting the allusions to Scripture in Mark's passion narrative. It starts with two methodological chapters. The first one concerns the right way to establish allusions; the second concerns the right way to interpret them. In the next three chapters, O'Brien applies her methodological findings to the scriptural allusions in Mark 14–15. The five chapters are preceded by an introduction in which O'Brien sketches her program and gives a survey of previous studies (among them those of C. H. Dodd, A. Suhl, and D. H. Juel). She emphasizes that her interest is not historical but literary: "the first concern will be the interpretation of the Markan passion narrative as it now exists and the effect of Scripture on that interpretation" (19).

Because the book is on the use of *Scripture*, chapter 1 ("Methodology: Identifying an Allusion," 20–46) starts by defining Scripture. O'Brien prefers a broad definition for Mark: "all authoritative texts for Jewish communities in the first century" (21). She then defines an allusion as "a reference made by the author to a previous work that is indicated by verbal correspondence and that has interpretive value" (22). This is again a broad definition: it includes quotations and all other kinds of conscious references to specific texts. The element of authorial intention goes together with recognition by the

(competent) reader. Referring to R. B. Hays, O'Brien gives some guidelines to establish allusions: availability of the source text, recurrence of allusions to the same passage, clarity, thematic coherence, and distinctiveness. Authorial intent is shown by verbal correspondence, ranging from exact quotation to a single distinctive word. Common ways of changing the source text in an allusion are ellipsis, rearranging sequence, insertion, and substitution of words. A complicating factor in establishing Mark's allusions is the textual fluidity of the Hebrew and especially the Greek Old Testament at the beginning of the era. On the basis of Mark's quotations, one may assume in his case a preference for the LXX, perhaps occasional independent use of the Hebrew.

The element of "interpretive value" from the definition is discussed in chapter 2, "Methodology: Interpretive Impact" (47–66). Apart from instances of mere display, the alluding text plays with the text alluded to. Types of play include straight reading, extension and transcendence, shift in context or speaker, analogy and typology, dissimile and reversal, irony, the linking of texts, and the reading of a text through traditional Jewish interpretation. The extent to which the original context of the text alluded to comes into play may differ from case to case. Guidelines for evaluating the interpretive value of an allusion are (again derived from Hays): historical plausibility, the history of interpretation, and the satisfaction it brings to the interpretation of the alluding text. We do not know to what extent ancient readers recognized scriptural allusions; probably some did, some did not. As early readers of Mark, the Evangelists Matthew and Luke provide some clues, and we must not forget that in antiquity communal reading of texts was often practiced.

Chapter 3 ("Testing Proposed Allusions," 67–112) starts with a list of almost 270 suggested allusions derived from commentaries and other studies. The list has been arranged in three columns: the first column contains the allusions with a correspondence greater than one common word, the second one the allusions with a correspondence of one common word, and the third one the allusions without significant verbal correspondence. O'Brien retains only a few allusions from the first column; all the rest are eliminated. All suggested allusions to Isa 53 in Mark 14–15 (and the one to Isa 53:10 in Mark 10:45) are rejected, mainly on account of a lack of significant verbal correspondence. Allusions to Old Testament passages on a suffering righteous one are found in Mark, but that does not mean that such passages may be supposed to be alluded to in Mark without sufficient verbal agreement or that there was a "conventional figure" of the suffering righteous one in Mark's time. In addition to the quotations in Mark 14:27 (Zech 13:7), 14:62 (Ps 110:1; Dan 7:13), 15:24 (Ps 22:19), and 15:34 (Ps 22:2), O'Brien accepts the following allusions: to Hos 6:2 in Mark 14:1, to Exod 24:8 in 14:24, to Pss 42:6, 12; 43:5 in 14:34, to Ps 37:32 in 14:55, to Exod 20:16//Deut 5:20 in 14:56–57, to Isa 36:21

and Ps 2:7 in 14:61, to Isa 50:6 in 14:65, to Ps 22:8–9 in 15:29–30, to Amos 8:9–10 in 15:33, and to Ps 69:22 in 15:36. Verbatim agreement is the main argument for acceptance.

The meaning of the allusions is the topic of chapter 4: “Interpreting the Allusions” (113–54); the allusions in Mark 14:61b–62 are studied in a separate chapter on account of their complex history and their christological impact. All Markan passages just listed are discussed according to the same pattern: early Jewish interpretation, other early Christian uses, Markan use. The allusions “portray Jesus’ suffering” and “indicate his obedience and an expectation of God’s vindication and judgement on his enemies”; all this is “set in an eschatological context” (154). I mention some of the more salient results at which O’Brien arrives when discussing individual allusions. Through Mark’s passion predictions, the “two days before the Passover” of Mark 14:1 are linked to the “two days” after which God “will revive” his people of Hos 6:2. There are points of similarity between Mark’s reading of Ps 37 in the allusion to Ps 37:32 (“The wicked watch for the righteous and seek to kill them”) in Mark 14:55, on the one hand, and the interpretation of Ps 37 in 4Q171, on the other. Concerning Mark 14:61 (“He [Jesus] was silent and did not answer anything”), O’Brien proposes that there is an allusion to Isa 36:21; there, it is said of the inhabitants of Jerusalem that “they were silent and no one answered a word,” when the rabshakeh, who is besieging the city, blasphemes the God of Israel. The allusions to verses from Pss 22 and 69, both ascribed to David, identify Jesus as the Davidic Messiah and function on the assumption that God will save him.

Chapter 5 (“Are You the Christ?” 155–90) concerns the allusions to Ps 2:7; Dan 7:13; Ps 110:1 in Mark 14:61–62. The pattern of discussion of the three allusions is the same as in chapter 4. Allusions to Ps 2:7 are present in Mark’s stories of Jesus’ baptism (1:11) and his transfiguration (9:7), in the parable of the wicked tenants (12:6–7), and in the trial by the high priest (14:62). The allusion to Ps 110:1 in Mark 14:62 conveys Jesus’ royal power at his future coming for judgment. “Mark also partakes in the interpretive tradition on Daniel 7” (181), in 13:26–27, in 8:38–9:1, possibly in 10:45, and evidently in 14:62. There Jesus identifies himself as the Son of Man who “ushers in the Eschaton, subjugating his enemies and rewarding the elect” (189), suffering as their representative head.

In the conclusion (191–202), O’Brien formulates the impact of the allusions to Scripture on the meaning of Mark’s passion narrative. Mark does not emphasize the innocence of Jesus, but his allusions point to an emphasis on the guilt of the Jewish leaders and on Jesus’ exaltation, which comes through suffering. Jesus suffers and is exalted as the representative head of the community of his followers, and he will bring them eschatological salvation. O’Brien finally proposes some topics for further study, including the theological problem of how to deal with Mark’s expectation that Jesus would return soon to bring final salvation.

The book contains three appendices. Appendix A is a “Textual Analysis of Quotations and Near Quotations in Mark” (203–14). It is based on what is marked as quotation in NA<sup>27</sup> and constitutes a basis for parts of chapter 1. It gives the impression that O’Brien considers LXX readings that match Mark’s wording as possible sources of Mark’s quotations. Appendices B (“Textual Analysis of Mark 14,” 215–64) and C (“Textual Analysis of Mark 15,” 265–89) constitute the basis for the arrangement of the 270 possible allusions in three columns at the beginning of chapter 3 and for the retention of sixteen of them from the first column. Relevant texts are given here, and verbal correspondences are noted and assessed. The study ends with a bibliography (291–305), an index of ancient sources (307–17), and a general index (319–28).

O’Brien has written a clear and in several respects convincing study. To my mind, she is generally right in requiring for an allusion at least some distinctive verbal correspondence to a specific Old Testament passage. This requirement has the salutary effects that far-fetched allusions are rejected and that many supposed allusions turn out to be thematic parallels instead of allusions. Her view that the influence of the original context of the text alluded to should be judged from case to case is balanced. O’Brien confirms the position adopted by M. D. Hooker in 1959 that there is much less influence of Isa 53 on Mark’s passion narrative than commonly assumed. Her proposal that the words “he was silent and did not answer anything” in Mark 14:61 allude to the silence of the people of Jerusalem in Isa 36:21 is novel and worth considering.

There are also aspects of the book that are less convincing. O’Brien’s definitions of “Scripture” and “allusion” are too broad and too much divergent from common use to be effective. She underestimates the chances that LXX readings that agree with Mark’s quotations and allusions have been influenced by Mark’s Gospel and too easily assumes in such instances that Mark made use of a variant reading of the LXX text. The most problematical aspect of the book is, to my mind, her rather mechanistic use of verbal links to establish allusions. Take, for instance, the supposed allusion to Hos 6:2 in Mark 14:1: O’Brien links Mark’s *μετὰ δύο ἡμέρας*, “after two days,” with the identical words in Hos 6:2 LXX (“After two days he will revive us”) and considers them to constitute an allusion (100–103). She overlooks, however, that in Mark this indication of time does not concern Jesus’ resurrection. It may be true that in the LXX the expression *μετὰ δύο ἡμέρας* is only found in Hos 6:2, but the differences between Hosea and Mark in reference and context of the expression make it hard to perceive here an allusion. Another example is the allusion to Ps 41:10 in Mark 14:18, Jesus’ prediction of betrayal by “one who is eating with me.” O’Brien rejects this allusion on account of the minimal verbal agreement (91) but neglects the agreement in situation between Ps 41 and Mark (an intimate friend turning against the speaker) and the fact that the Fourth Evangelist, a reader of the tradition also

used by Mark, introduced at this stage of his story a quotation from Ps 41:10 (John 13:18). Clearly, verbal agreement cannot be the exclusive criterion in establishing allusions.

Too often establishing and interpreting allusions seems to be a matter of a commentator's intuition. O'Brien has shown in her book that such intuitions are not useless but should be controlled by well-considered methods.