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The Text and the Meaning of Gospel of Mark in Its First Greek Commentary.
A Study of Theophylact's of Ohrid "Explanation of the Gospel of Mark"

Summary

The subject of this dissertation is the analysis of the first Greek commentary on the Gospel of Mark: *Explanations to the Gospel of Mark* by Theophylact of Ohrid. Mark's text included in it belongs to the Byzantine type.

The text of the Gospel of Mark is included in the commentary by Theophylact of Ohrid. First, the Bishop of Ohrid quotes all the fragments of the Gospel of Mark before commenting on them. Although the manuscripts of the Theophylact's commentary are later, the cited texts of Gospels before explaining the pericopes could have been adapted by the copyists to the most widely popularized text (existing in the manuscripts classed as Mehrheitstext). After having quoted the fragments of Gospels Theophylact once more makes a reference to the commented text: he cites single words, expressions or sentences, he quotes them directly and interprets in such a way that you are able to reconstruct with no doubt lots of fragments of the commented text of Gospels. It is unlikely that the copyists could have changed the version of the commentary by Theophylact in order to adapt it to the Mehrheitstext, the variants of which could have been found in the fragments of Gospels cited before the actual commentary. This kind of character of the commentary has a deciding meaning for dating the variants. The combination of the text really commented and the text quoted in fragments allows singling out the variants of Byzantine type. The first goal of the research is to distinguish the variants representing this type. Theophylact comments on Mark's text in Greek so it is possible to qualify the character of the text by comparing the variants with the references to them in the commentary alone. The present study stresses the need of critical edition of Theophylact's *Explanation*. This is going to enable the reconstruction of the Byzantine type of the text of the Gospel of Mark used by him in the second half of the XI century, so in the shape preceding the significant majority of the manuscripts of the type.

The second objective of the research is to examine Theophylact's motivation to deal with the Gospel uncommented before as well as to establish the attitude to Mark's text in his interpretation. Paying attention to the text alone proves the originality of *Explanations*. Such a synchronic approach precedes by eight centuries the exegesis of the New Testament. Theophylact distinctively differs Mark's theology from other Gospels, admitting their theological unity at the same time. The

meaning attributed by Theophylact to the un-commented before Gospel is revealed in the preface to *Explanations* by delimitation of its fragments, their frequent comparisons with parallel texts in the other Gospels, constant reference to the pericopes interpreted before, and especially by using the exegesis of the Antioch type. Theophylact as the first one reaches the decision of commenting Mark, although he earlier gave his interpretation of all Matthew's pericopes. Although in the commentary on Mark, analyzing parallel pericopes, he appeals to what he has already written in the commentary on Matthew, he yet notices the differences between the texts. This way he differs from both preceding him commentators who skipped Mark, limiting themselves to Matthew alone, and many others further who commented the second Gospel through referring to the first Gospel. Theophylact doesn't skip any pericopes and for every fragment he tries to find explanation corresponding the contents suitable for the commented biblical text. He is therefore the first author who, differing Mark's theology from other Gospels' theologies, presents the commentary justifying this difference.

The third goal of the research is – by comparing Theophylact's commentary with the interpretations of the pericopes of the second Gospel that are found in earlier authors – precise verification of the judgements about his dependence on the commenting earlier. Common belief about the influence on Theophylact's *Catena in Marcum* as well as John Chrysostom's interpretations of Matthew results in the fact that the value of The Bishop of Ohrid' commentaries is not appreciated, and he is accused of lack of originality of thoughts and creating compilations. Meanwhile, nobody before Theophylact had ever explained the whole Gospel of Mark or did it in a continuous way. Comparative analysis of the homilies by John Chrysostom and *Catena in Marcum* with the partly dependent interpretations by Theophylact together with the profile of his exegesis, are going to precisely establish the degree of this dependence as well as, unrecognized so far, his originality as the commentator of the second Gospel.

The commentary by Theophylact as the testimony of early tradition of the Byzantine text has not been examined at all so far. The results of the present study broaden the knowledge in terms of biblical hermeneutics, and especially the interpretation history of the Gospel of Mark. It has not been spotted so far that the first one to comment on Mark – not because of the values for the diachronic exegesis, but for the values appreciated by synchronic and theological approach – was just Theophylact. His recognition of equal rank of the Gospels enabled leaving the privilege of Matthew and John over Mark. The research results also help to differ him from the commenting earlier as well as define his influence on later development of the exegesis of the Gospel of Mark.

Key words: Gospel of Mark, Biblical commentaries, Theophylact of Ohrid, Wirkungsgeschichte