

JESUS'S TEMPLE PROPHECY IN MARK 14:58

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ABSTRACT

While scholarly attention has focused on reconstructing the tradition history of Jesus's temple prophecy in Mark 14:58, comparable analyses of its traditional Aramaic structure are harder to locate. This article uses form, redaction, literary, and structural criticism to uncover the tradition history of the prophecy and reconstruct its original Aramaic formulation. Our analysis supports the historicity of the prophecy and identifies a four-two beat kīnā metre (poetic meter) typical of laments, warnings, and threats.

WITH THE RISE OF HISTORICAL-CRITICAL METHODOLOGY in the late 1800s, the theory that Mark 14:58 preserves Jesus's actual prediction against the temple became commonplace. This theory has remained either substantially unchanged or unmodified.¹ Scholars have continued to propose various reconstructions of the prophecy, and this article offers a reconstruction of the tradition history as well as a fresh translation of the original Aramaic. In the first section we identify methodological presuppositions and explain some historiographical principles. Then we offer our historical assessment of the prophecy. Next we present our source, form, structural, literary, and redactional findings. We conclude with our suggested Aramaic translation. Our hypothesis is that the original form of the prophecy follows a four-two beat *kīnā metre* (poetic meter) typical of laments, which is perhaps the most

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¹ For a list of researchers, see Maurice Goguel, *The Life of Jesus*, trans. Olive Wyon (London: Allen & Unwin, 1958), 509. A more recent survey is found in E. Earle Ellis, "Deity-Christology in Mark 14:58," in *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ: Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology*, ed. Joel B. Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 192–203.

fitting form for Jesus's prediction of the temple's destruction. Our reconstruction is corroborated by a similar lament in Luke 23:31, which preserves a prophetic judgment against Jerusalem and the temple.

THE HISTORICAL-CRITICAL METHOD AND CRITERIA OF AUTHENTICITY

Approaching the question of historiographical method, our discussion assumes the priority of Mark and the independence of John from the Synoptics.² In order to explain the double tradition common to both Matthew and Luke but not Mark, our discussion assumes the Q hypothesis. Hence, it also assumes the two/four source theory and utilizes form, redaction, literary, and structural criticism. Namely, the pericopes in the Gospels originally circulated as independent units undergoing formal development through three life settings: (1) life of Jesus (27–30/33 CE); (2) life of the church (33–70s CE); and (3) life of the Gospel writers (70–90s CE). A careful comparison of the Synoptic Gospels with each other reveals their editorial hands and enables us to discern motivations for redaction. The methodological importance of these theories for our discussion is that our investigation begins with Mark, assumes a period of formal development, identifies both structural shaping and narrative thematic connections, and identifies redactional elements that may have been stripped away.

Scholars have also devised various criteria of authenticity to discern historical Jesus material.³ Five criteria instrumental in this study are multiple attestation, embarrassment, coherence, contextual credibility, and traces of Aramaic. Many scholars agree that authentic material should be able to be translated back into Aramaic since this was Jesus's mother tongue.⁴

² The classic argument for Johannine independence is that John's Gospel is radically different from the Synoptic Gospels, and this difference is best accounted for by the hypothesis that John wrote independently of them. Overlaps and agreements between the Synoptics and John are best explained by the hypothesis that John is aware of pre-Markan and presynoptic sources. See Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 364–65. For an opposing view, see C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 141.

³ John P. Meier, *The Roots of the Problem and the Person*, vol. 1 of *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 167–95.

⁴ Gustaf Dalman, *The Words of Jesus Considered in the Light of Post-biblical Jewish Writings and the Aramaic Language*, trans. D. M. Kay (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1902), 71–72; Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology: The Proclamation*

THE HISTORICITY OF JESUS'S TEMPLE PROPHECY

Turning to Jesus's temple prophecy, Mark 14:53–65 presents a Jewish trial of Jesus during which a “false” accusation (v. 57) was raised against him. In contrast to other sayings of Jesus, this one is placed in the mouths of his accusers. Verse 58 reads: ἡμεῖς ἠκούσαμεν αὐτοῦ λέγοντος ὅτι ἐγὼ καταλύσω τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον τὸν χειροποίητον καὶ διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν ἄλλον ἀχειροποίητον οἰκοδομήσω.⁵

The charge is also repeated at the crucifixion in 15:29: Καὶ οἱ παραπορευόμενοι ἐβλασφήμουν αὐτὸν κινεῶντες τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν καὶ λέγοντες, οὐὰ ὁ καταλύων τὸν ναὸν καὶ οἰκοδομῶν ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις.⁶ The basic saying behind both texts is the same, and Mark has included it in greater detail in 14:58 and in truncated form in 15:29. As such, 14:58 is treated as the primary witness, whereas 15:29 is treated as a secondary doublet. A common saying behind each text is the simplest explanation of their similarities, but our assessment pragmatically focuses on 14:58 since it is the initial witness in the tradition. However, a more detailed explanation of the relationship between 14:58 and 15:29 follows our assessment.

Are there any reasons to think that 14:58 contains historical Jesus material? Indeed, there are strong reasons to think so, and higher-critical assessment of the tradition has reached something of an affirmative consensus regarding the question. This is more evident in publications devoted to the saying. First, the saying is attested in multiple sources: 14:58 (15:29) and John 2:19.⁷ It would be too coincidental for two or more people to independently invent the same material.⁸ Second, the saying is embarrassing because it

of Jesus, trans. John Bowden, New Testament Library (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1971), 3–8; and Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “Methodology in the Study of the Aramaic Substratum of Jesus' Sayings in the New Testament,” in *Jésus aux Origines de la Christologie*, ed. J. Dupont, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 40 (Gembloux: Leuven University Press, 1975), 73–102.

⁵ All Greek quotations are from Kurt Aland et al., eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012). “We heard him say that I will destroy the temple handmade and within three days another not handmade I will build” (Mark 14:58). All translations from Greek are the authors’.

⁶ “Those who passed by slandered him shaking their heads and saying, ‘Aha, you who would destroy the temple and build it in three days’” (Mark 15:29).

⁷ Meier, *Roots of the Problem*, 175. It is also found in Matthew 26:61 and Acts 6:14, but these passages are likely dependent on Mark.

⁸ *Pace* Mark Goodacre, “Criticizing the Criterion of Multiple Attestation: The Historical Jesus and the Question of Sources,” in *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, ed. Chris Keith and Anthony Le Donne (New York: T&T Clark, 2012), 152–69. His strategy is to collapse testimony in the synoptic tradition to one source and so undermine the criterion of multiple attestation. Hence, the criticism fails in

appears to be a false prediction.⁹ It is unlikely that Christians would have invented material that made their proselytizing more difficult. Third, the saying coheres with Jesus's temple action reported in Mark 11, the events of which historians accept as authentic because it would explain the crucifixion of Jesus.¹⁰ This supports historicity because consistent material is more likely to share the same source.¹¹ "It is perfectly reasonable," says Sanders, "to put together Jesus' action against the money-changers and his statement about the destruction of the temple."¹² Fourth, the saying is contextually credible since other individuals at the time also presaged the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.¹³ This provides a negative test for identifying anachronistic material. However, its positive use will not distinguish between material from Jesus or others of the same environment. Fifth, the saying trans-

cases where independent sources are known or more likely. For example, his claim of John's dependence on the Synoptics is less likely because of the greater number of differences between John and the Synoptics. See note 2 for discussion.

⁹ Pace Rafael Rodríguez, "The Embarrassing Truth about Jesus: The Criterion of Embarrassment and the Failure of Historical Authenticity," in *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, ed. Chris Keith and Anthony Le Donne (New York: T&T Clark, 2012), 132–51. He argues against the criterion by citing examples where redaction and theology may explain the embarrassment. This is certainly true, but history, redaction, and theology may overlap, as Mark's polyvalent description of Jesus's death demonstrates. Jerry Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel: Text and Subtext*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 72 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Rodríguez generalizes discussion to "possibilities" and ignores the relevance of embarrassment to probability judgments. Statistically, embarrassments are less likely to be created by redactors. Particularly, this skepticism ignores studies of prophetic disconfirmation and the ostensive tendency to remove the embarrassment in the saying's tradition history. Also, numerous criteria are typically applied.

¹⁰ E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 254–64.

¹¹ Following Meier's and Le Donne's recognition that this criterion helps support authenticity after foundational material has been identified. In this case, Jesus's eschatological expectation for the temple's destruction/replacement is supported both by multiple attestation and embarrassment. Coherence next reinforces the prophecy's authenticity because it is drawn in and explained by related material, e.g., Mark 11, the parables of growth, and Jesus's word over the supper cup in Mark 14:25. For a measured criticism of the criterion, see Anthony Le Donne, "The Criterion of Coherence: Its Development, Inevitability, and Historiographical Limitations," in *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, ed. Chris Keith and Anthony Le Donne (New York: T&T Clark, 2012), 95–114.

¹² Sanders, *Historical Figure of Jesus*, 258.

¹³ Craig A. Evans, "Predictions of the Destruction of the Herodian Temple in the Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Scrolls, and Related Texts," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 10 (1992): 89–147.

lates back into Aramaic smoothly and follows a specific rhythm common to laments. This supports historicity because Aramaic was the common language of Jesus's environment. This criterion also provides a negative test in that it identifies material from Jesus and the early Aramaic-speaking Christians in Jerusalem. Although, like the criterion of contextual credibility, its positive use cannot distinguish between Aramaic sayings of Jesus and those of his Aramaic-speaking followers.¹⁴

To summarize, a positive judgment in favor of historicity looks quite strong. Since Mark 14:58 meets the conditions of authenticity set forth by no less than five distinct criteria—multiple attestation, embarrassment, coherence, contextual credibility, and traces of Aramaic—it is highly probable that it preserves *ipsissima vox Jesu* (“Jesus’s very voice”).¹⁵

¹⁴ Following Meier, our application of this criterion acknowledges its limitations and secondary usage. For critical discussion, see Loren T. Stuckenbruck, “‘Semitic Influence on Greek’: An Authenticating Criterion in Jesus Research?” in *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, ed. Chris Keith and Anthony Le Donne (New York: T&T Clark, 2012), 73–94. Our application of the criterion sidesteps Stuckenbruck’s criticism because it is applied only after other criteria are used to identify authentic material. Even so, sociolinguistic analysis suggests that Jesus’s primary language was a dialect of Aramaic since it is the widest attested language of Galilee and larger urban areas of Judea at the time. M. O. Wise, “Languages of Palestine,” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 439, 442.

¹⁵ Contra Dieter Lührmann, “Markus 14.55–64: Christologie und Zerstörung des Tempels im Markusevangelium,” *New Testament Studies* 27.4 (1981): 457–74. Lührmann argues that Mark should “be responsible for the introduction of the Temple Word 14:57–9, which—as is often noted—represents a duplication of 14:56” (463), because the whole theme of “false accusation” is a creation based on “allusions to the Old Testament texts that characterize Jesus’s fate as the typical fate of the suffering righteous: False witnesses appear against him (see Pss. 27:12; 35:11; 109:2ff.)” (460, authors’ translation). Such wide-sweeping literary arguments are too strong, however, and demonstrate clear overreach by arguing, for example, that Mark created the whole legend of an interrogation altogether based on the Old Testament theme of “witnesses appearing against him,” that Jesus was not crucified in Jerusalem since his fate there plays a significant literary role throughout Mark’s Gospel (foreshadowed early in 1:9; 3:8, 22), or that Jesus could not have faced resistance from the religious authorities of Jerusalem since this opposition is also characteristic of Mark’s literary scheme (3:22; 7:1; 8:11; 11:1; 12:12–13; 14:43). These clear counterexamples show that redaction and literary craft do not preempt the use of historical detail. The Old Testament motif of “false witness” also does not explain the specific content of the accusation in the trial narrative because “false witness” is not synonymous with “false prophecy.” More balanced would be the false testimony that Jesus raised the dead, healed the sick, cast out demons, or made the lame walk, each of which occurs with more frequency. Why create a rumor of false prophecy that would only make proselytizing more difficult? More likely that tradition was too well known and could not be ignored. The Markan evangelist likely created a pericope of the trial combining historical and Old Testament elements.

SOURCE AND FORM OBSERVATIONS OF MARK 14:58 AND
ITS TRADITION HISTORY

Our positive historical judgment leaves open a more specific question. How much of the saying goes back to Jesus? The wording of the saying differs in each Gospel parallel, and this difference suggests that there is an older logion that has been edited in relevant ways by each of the evangelists.¹⁶ The original wording is likely the most troublesome, namely, *lexio difficilior potior*, because redaction is more likely to remove a problem than create one.

Matthew was dependent on Mark for his account of the trial scene. In response to the problem in his parallel at Matthew 26:61, he omitted the theme of false accusation, identified ναόν with God, and changed the charge by replacing Mark's definite future tense καταλύσω with a declaration of potential power—δύναμαι + the infinitive καταλῦσαι: οὗτος ἔφη, δύναμαι καταλῦσαι τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν οἰκοδομησαί (26:61).¹⁷ This eliminates the embarrassment because it conveys only a possibility focusing not on what Jesus "will" do but on what he "can" do.

Luke was likewise dependent on Mark for his trial scene. He effectively eliminated the difficulty by omitting the saying in his parallel account of the trial in Luke 22:66–71 and at the crucifixion in 23:34–35, but a version of the saying occurs later when Stephen is apprehended: ἀκηκόαμεν γὰρ αὐτοῦ λέγοντος ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος οὗτος καταλύσει τὸν τόπον τοῦτον (Acts 6:14).¹⁸ Here the time indicator "in three days" is missing and there is no mention of rebuilding. The result of this redaction is that Luke removed any time limit for the fulfillment of the prediction. Thus, Luke and his readers may have identified the fulfillment of this prediction with the destruction of the temple in 70 CE.

John presented an account early in the ministry of Jesus, combining the temple cleansing event with the temple saying in John 2:19, but in this version the saying is different: λύσατε τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερῶ αὐτόν.¹⁹ John's version does not

¹⁶ Marcel Simon, "Retour du Christ et Reconstruction du Temple dans la Pensée Chrétienne Primitive," in *Aux Sources De La Tradition Chrétienne: Mélanges Offerts à M. Maurice Goguel* (Paris: Delachaux & Niestle, 1950), 245–57.

¹⁷ "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and in three days build it'" (Matt 26:61).

¹⁸ "For we heard him say that Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place" (Acts 6:14).

¹⁹ "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it" (John 2:19).

speak of the destruction of the temple but of the destruction of the body of Jesus (v. 21). John also replaced “rebuild” (οικοδομήσω) with “raise” (ἐγερῶ) and applied the prediction to the resurrection of Jesus, solving any embarrassment about fulfillment. Thus, whereas in Mark the saying refers to the Jerusalem temple, at least in part, by the time John wrote his Gospel none of the saying refers to the physical sanctuary or temple. In this way John eliminated the problem because those who heard Jesus misunderstood him. John’s Gospel typically uses double meanings, which create confusion. Jesus spoke figuratively, but his listeners took him literally.

Apparently, each evangelist dealt with the perceived embarrassment uniquely and creatively.²⁰ On our working hypothesis, then, we can strip away identifiable redactional material in the earliest strata of Mark in order to reconstruct the original wording of the saying.

STRUCTURAL AND WORD-STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF MARK 14:58

It is widely recognized that the trial narrative in Mark 14:54–65 has been shaped by the evangelist in numerous ways. For example, it follows a clear chiasmic structure: a:b:c:d:e:f:e’:d’:c’:b’:a’. In a sen-

²⁰ This reconstruction draws support from social psychology because millenarian groups try to resolve dissonance over the threat of disconfirmation. The harder saying is more original with recalculated and symbolic interpretations following later. Leon Festinger, Henry W. Riecken, and Stanley Schachter, *When Prophecy Fails: A Social and Psychological Study of a Modern Group That Predicted the Destruction of the World* (Mansfield Center, CT: Martino, 2009); with revisions and application of cognitive dissonance theory in *How Prophecy Lives*, Diana G. Tumminia and William H. Swatos Jr., eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2011). For further case studies, see Jon R. Stone, ed., *Expecting Armageddon: Essential Readings in Failed Prophecy* (New York: Routledge, 2000). Cognitive dissonance theory and social psychology provide multidisciplinary support for our use of the criteria of authenticity, showing that they retain evidentiary value despite critical trends proposing their rejection. Our approach also questions the “social memory” approach to historical Jesus studies. In this approach, individual memory is lost in collective memory over time (after forty years or the first eyewitnesses die). However, as Dunn argued, conventional evidentiary tests suffice to recover more precise sayings of Jesus since the Christians likely began to record the material early, before the first eyewitnesses died, i.e., before the process of memory distortion blocks such retrieval. James D. G. Dunn, “Social Memory and the Oral Jesus Tradition,” in *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity*, ed. Loren T. Stuckenbruck, Stephen C. Barton, and Benjamin G. Wold, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 212 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 179–94. If the same standards of evidence do not justify judgments about accurate reporting during the life of eyewitnesses in the ancient world, then they do not justify such judgments about contemporaries. However, on the principle of “same evidence,” if they justify judgments about contemporaries, then they must also justify eyewitness reports from the ancient world because the types of evidence are the same. On this principle, see Richard Feldman, *Epistemology*, Foundations of Philosophy Series (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003), 28–30.

tence, bicolon, or larger unit, chiasmus presents an inverted sequence or crossover of parallel words or ideas. These structures organize material, emphasize various themes, and inform interpretation. The trial's chiasmic structure can be schematized in the following way:²¹

- a: The guards (ὕπηρετῶν) welcome Peter (v. 54)
 - b: The council seeks Jesus's death (θανατώσαι, v. 55)
 - c: Witnesses tell of "hearing" (ἠκούσαμεν) false testimony (vv. 56–59)
 - d: The high priest's question (ἀρχιερεὺς, λέγων): "Have you no answer?" (v. 60)
 - e: Jesus is silent (ἔσιώπα) about himself (v. 61a)
 - f: Ironic confession of the high priest: "Christ, Son of the Blessed" (v. 61b)
 - e': Jesus proclaims (εἶπεν) himself (v. 62)
 - d': The high priest's question (ἀρχιερεὺς, λέγει): "Why do we still need witnesses?" (v. 63)
 - c': The high priest tells of "hearing" (ἠκούσατε) blasphemy (v. 64a)
 - b': The council condemns Jesus to death (θανάτου, v. 64b)
 - a': The guards (ὕπηρέται) beat Jesus (v. 65)

Analysts also detect a variety of other Markan redactional and literary traits.²² Of particular relevance is the theme of "false" testimony brought against Jesus regarding his prophecy about the temple's destruction in 14:56–59 (the c block) because Jesus's temple prophecy is intercalated or sandwiched between charges of "false" and "conflicting" testimony in the trial narrative (a:b:a'):²³

²¹ John Breck, *The Shape of Biblical Language: Chiasmus in the Scriptures and Beyond*, 2nd ed. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2008), 161.

²² John R. Donahue, *Are You the Christ? The Trial Narrative in the Gospel of Mark*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 10 (Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1973); and Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*, 2 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1994).

²³ On Markan sandwiches/intercalations, see James R. Edwards, "Markan Sandwiches: The Significance of Interpolations in Markan Narratives," *Novum Testamentum* 31.3 (1989): 193–216.

a: false and conflicting testimony

ἔψευδομαρτύρουν . . . καὶ ἴσαι αἱ μαρτυρίαι οὐκ ἦσαν (vv. 56–57)
gave false testimony . . . and their testimony did not agree

b: prophecy

ἐγὼ καταλύσω τὸν ναὸν . . . οἰκοδομήσω (v. 58)
I will destroy the temple . . . I will build

a': conflicting testimony

καὶ οὐδὲ οὕτως ἴση ἦν ἡ μαρτυρία αὐτῶν (v. 59)
and their testimony did not agree

The material in block c is unevenly distributed (four verses) compared with the other blocks (no more than one verse each). The repetitive triplication²⁴ of conflicting “testimony” (μαρτυρία) in verses 55, 56, and 59 follows the Markan pattern of triplication elsewhere (three passion predictions, 8:31; 9:31; 10:32–34; three times the disciples fell asleep, 14:32–42; three times Peter denied Jesus, 14:66–72) and draws attention to itself to establish its importance.

The asymmetry between c:c' suggests that Mark has superimposed a pre-Markan form of Jesus's prophecy over the pre-Markan passion narrative material at c.²⁵ The evangelist cleverly reshaped the traditions since the triplication and balance of the units in the chiasm are each likely Markan. The inclusion of the prophecy is deemed important enough to disrupt the symmetry of the chiasm.

A plausible explanation of the Markan insertion is that the superimposition allowed Mark to relieve the dissonance of perceived embarrassment by aligning the falsity of the saying with the charge of “false witnesses” in accord with the Old Testament testimonia of Psalm 27:12: “Do not give me up to the will of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen against me, and they are breathing out violence” (NRSV). In this way, a typological connection between King David and Jesus as the Davidic Messiah is established, and the perceived threat of falsification becomes a feature of the accusation and not the actual prophecy.

²⁴ Frans Neirynck, *Duality in Mark: Contributions to the Study of the Markan Redaction*, *Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium* 31 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1972), 100, 110–12.

²⁵ Contrast Kurt Paesler's judgment that Mark 14:58 shows no traces of redaction apart from ἐγὼ, even though a pre-Markan redactor added it to the passion narrative. *Das Tempelwort Jesu: Die Traditionen von Tempelzerstörung und Tempelerneuerung im Neuen Testament*, *Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments* 184 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 29.

The temple charge itself (Mark 14:58) is likewise presented in a chiasmic structure, but two competing reconstructions have been presented by analysts. For example, Donahue (a:b:c:b':a'):²⁶

- a: ἐγὼ καταλύσω (I will destroy)
 b: τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον τὸν χειροποίητον (the temple handmade)
 c: καὶ διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν (and in three days)
 b': ἄλλον ἀχειροποίητον (another not handmade)
 a': οἰκοδομήσω (I will build)

This reconstruction recognizes the importance of placement since the time designation “within three days” is located directly in the center of the saying. Markan chiasms with central units are also the most prominent organizing literary structure for pericopes.²⁷

Despite its common usage as an organizing structure, chiasm is rarely used in verses and sayings. This is striking considering the parallel usage between the trial saying in 14:58 and the crucifixion narrative in 15:37–39:

- a: ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἀφείξ (Then Jesus gave)
 b: φωνὴν μεγάλην ἐξέπνευσεν (a loud cry and breathed his last;
 v. 37)
 c: Καὶ τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ ἐσχίσθη εἰς δύο ἀπ' ἄνωθεν ἕως
 κάτω (and the veil of the temple was torn in two from
 top to bottom; v. 38)
 b': Ἴδὼν δὲ ὁ κεντυρίων ὁ παρεστηκὸς ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ ὅτι οὕτως
 [κράζας] ἐξέπνευσεν (Having seen, the centurion who stood
 facing him, that in this way [having cried out] he breathed
 his last; v. 39a)
 a': εἶπεν, ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν (said, “Truly this man
 is God's son”; v. 39b)

To draw the chiasm into sharper focus, scribes added κράζας as an additional parallel to φωνὴν in some of the New Testament manuscript evidence.²⁸ The edit supports the literary identification of the chiasm itself in verses 37–39 since it looks like something of which scribes were aware. The word count imbalance between a:a' and

²⁶ Donahue, *Are You the Christ?*, 105–6.

²⁷ Breck lists forty-six. *Shape of Biblical Language*, 144–64.

²⁸ Aland et al., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 172n39. The earlier witnesses of \aleph and B lack κράζας.

b:b' is explicable as a result of the parallelism between units of the wider chiasmic structure for the crucifixion of Jesus in verses 21–39.²⁹ Hence, the chiasm of verses 37–39 looks well established.

The coincidence of the rarer chiasmic structure with a central c unit across both 14:58 and 15:37–39 is most likely intentional. Together, the two pinpoints read harmoniously: “within three days,” the veil of the holy of holies will be “torn in two, from top to bottom.” Therefore, the inclusion and placement of the temporal designation is likely Markan.

The redactional nature of the chiasm in 14:58 is also supported by the statistical frequency for both antithetical (37) and synonymous (33) parallels in the Jesus sayings tradition because these figures contrast sharply with the frequency of smaller chiasms (around a dozen by estimation, including the crucifixion chiasm).³⁰

Additionally, there is further support from grammar for these statistical arguments from the usage of structures and patterns. Apart from the pronoun ἐγὼ, the phrase διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν is also the only grammatical unit without parallel in the entire structure. Whereas the pronoun is grammatically necessary “because it is the unchanged subject of both the negative part and the positive part, expressed the first time and implied the second,”³¹ the temporal designation διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν is “the time needed for the second work only, once the first is put into effect.”³² Hence, the time designation has a limited scope and is not required of grammar. This makes the absence of any semantic parallel problematic. While no central unit of the a:b:c:b':a' structure should have formal parallels, a comparison with other chiasms demonstrates that its content is typically foreshadowed by preceding units. Placement is typically contextualized so that semantic relevance ranges over the entire structure. In contrast, διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν has limited semantic scope applying only to the second clause.³³

²⁹ Breck, *Shape of Biblical Language*, 163.

³⁰ Neiryck, *Duality in Mark*, 133–34. For some smaller chiasms, see Mark 2:22, 25b–26; 3:34; 14:58; 15:37–39.

³¹ Giancarlo Biguzzi, “*To Distruggerò Questo Tempio*”: *Il Tempio e il Giudaismo nel Vangelo di Marco*, 2nd ed. (Vatican City: Urbaniana University Press, 2008), 157 (authors' translation).

³² Biguzzi, 157 (authors' translation).

³³ See further discussion of τρεῖς ἡμέραι in Christian tradition and Markan redaction in Peter Dschulnigg, *Sprache, Redaktion und Intention des Markus-Evangeliums: Eigentümlichkeiten der Sprache des Markus-Evangeliums und ihre Bedeutung für die Redaktionskritik*, Stuttgarter Biblische Beiträge 11 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1984), 212–13.

The “within three days” motif is also introduced by καί, a distinctively Markan trait. Out of 88 divisions for paragraphs and sections, Mark uses καί no less than 80 times. With much less frequency, Matthew uses it only 38 times of his 159 divisions and Luke uses it only 53 times of his 145 divisions.³⁴ For these reasons, the “three days” designation appears redactional. The theme is likely “an additional element which reaffirms the superiority of the new over the old *naos*.”³⁵

Alternatively, Biguzzi reconstructs an antitypical parallel using the simpler a:b:b':a' structure:³⁶

| | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| a: ἐγὼ καταλύσω | |
| b: τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον | τὸν χειροποίητον |
| b': καὶ . . . ἄλλον | ἄχειροποίητον |
| a': οικοδομήσω | |

In this reconstruction, the phrase διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν reflects an addition at the final stage of composition because it creates a clear imbalance between b:b'.

In summary, some disagreement exists about the precise placement of “within three days” in the formal structure of Mark 14:58. In Donahue’s reconstruction, a chiasmic c unit connects antithetical parallels. In Biguzzi’s reconstruction, it has been added to one of the antithetical parallel units, b'. Neither Donahue nor Biguzzi accepts the traditional nature of the temporal designation, but granting the judgment of inauthenticity, the question of formal structure remains.

Donahue hypothesized that the Markan evangelist introduced the motif in order to seam together two independent sayings (the pre-Markan parallel between καταλύω and οικοδομέω). On one hand, Mark had a saying about the temple’s destruction. On the other hand, Mark had a saying about the temple’s replacement. Mark 14:58 represents Mark’s creative way of connecting these traditions

³⁴ John C. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae: Contributions to the Study of the Synoptic Problem*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1909), 151. Lloyd Gaston also identifies καί as common to Markan vocabulary. It occurs 1,073 times out of 2,839 in Gaston’s sources: Mark, Q, Q Mt, Q Lk, M, L, Matt add, Lk add. Of Mark’s editorial sections, it occurs 210 times out of 1,073 occurrences. *Horae Synopticae Electronicae: Word Statistics of the Synoptic Gospels*, Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study 3 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1973), 19, 58, 75.

³⁵ Biguzzi, *Io Distruggerò Questo Tempio*, 157 (authors’ translation).

³⁶ Biguzzi, 156.

by way of the central *c* unit, “within three days,” in order to create an antithetical parallel. Pace Donahue’s learned judgment, however, *καταλύσω* used of the temple in early sources is always accompanied by some variation or cognate of *οικοδομήσω*. For example, Paul used the following three parallels:

- *κατέλυσα-οικοδομῶ* (Gal 2:18), describing the spiritual change of Christians
- *ἐποικοδομεῖ-κατακαήσεται* (1 Cor 3:12, 15) and *οικεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν-φθερεῖ* (vv. 16–17), describing actions and changes in the Christian community
- *καταλυθῆ-οικοδομηγῶν* (2 Cor 5:1), contrasting terrestrial with celestial bodies

Each parallel expresses the common antithetical parallelism of eschatological reversal through traditional apocalyptic and spiritual symbolism.

In Donahue’s reconstruction, it is merely coincidental that both Paul and Mark combined the same word pairs with links in similar ways.³⁷ More likely, the saying circulated as a unit or whole before Mark worked it into the trial context, because any similar pronouncement on the eschatological temple would de facto include a replacement of the earthly temple. Flusser similarly takes any discussion of “replacement” to suggest destruction when handling 4Q174 of the Dead Sea Scrolls: “The old house has to be done away with somehow, if a new one is to be erected in its place.”³⁸ It is simpler, then, to treat that saying behind the tradition rather than a combination of two smaller sayings. Therefore, minus the adjectival parallel, it is plausible that Biguzzi’s antithetical parallel reconstruction is pre-Markan and has been shaped and redacted into the narrative following Donahue’s formulation.

The inauthentic numerical motif was likely conjoined with a traditional antithetical parallel at a pre-Markan stage under the influence of “on the third day” in 1 Corinthians 15:4. This number probably circulated in the early Christian communities down to Mark’s time, but its precise placement, form, and use at Mark 14:58 are the result of Markan redaction.

³⁷ Donahue, *Are You the Christ?*, 105–8; and Lloyd Gaston, *No Stone on Another: Studies in the Significance of the Fall of Jerusalem in the Synoptic Gospels*, Supplements to *Novum Testamentum* 23 (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 102–243.

³⁸ D. Flusser, “Two Notes on the Midrash on 2 Sam. vii,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 9.2 (1959): 103.

Structurally, the χειροποίητος-ἀχειροποίητος coupling also stands out in uncommon double antithetical parallelism. It appears to have been added to the simpler antithetical καταλύσω-οικοδομήσω verbal parallel. The complexity of the neat double parallel, each face of which is marked by clear intentional precision, suggests a balanced redaction:

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| a: ἐγὼ καταλύσω | |
| b: τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον | |
| | [χειροποίητον] |
| | [ἀχειροποίητον] |
| b': καὶ ἄλλον | |
| a': οικοδομήσω | |

Structural simplicity favors the antithetical verbal parallel minus the adjectives.

Removing διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν and ἀχειροποίητον produces a simpler antitypical parallel and translates smoothly back into Aramaic. These details raise additional questions: If the temple prophecy is secondary to the trial narrative, then how does it relate to the charge of “false witness”? Also, in light of clear structural shaping, what is the original or more traditional wording of the saying (or what is redactional)?

LITERARY AND REDACTIONAL ANALYSIS OF MARK 14:58

An extensive study of Markan intercalations reveals their distinctive use of dramatized irony.³⁹ These studies are of particular importance for the temple threat in the trial narrative because the exegete must explain in what sense the testimony is “false.” How did Mark want the reader to understand the accusation? The key to Mark’s interpretation is found in his choice of words and grammatical links placed throughout the temple controversy and passion narratives.

³⁹ Tom Shepherd, “The Narrative Function of Markan Intercalation,” *New Testament Studies* 41.4 (1995): 522–40; and Tom Shepherd, “The Irony of Power in the Trial of Jesus and the Denial by Peter: Mark 14:53–72,” in *The Trial and Death of Jesus: Essays on the Passion Narrative in Mark*, ed. Geert Van Oyen and Tom Shepherd, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 45 (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 229–45.

A working definition of irony involves three characteristics:

1. Two layers
 - a. Lower level—situation viewed by the subject of irony
 - b. Upper level—situation viewed by the observer or ironist
2. Opposition between two levels—each is contrasted
3. Subject does not see the irony—the *ἀλαζών*⁴⁰

The “most important application” of this double level of meaning is found in Mark’s use of irony in the passion narrative.⁴¹ “The trial provides the basis for Jesus’ rejection,” explains Juel, “and also, for the reader who is able to understand the story at a deeper level, the basis for his vindication at the resurrection.”⁴² In this scheme, the belief that Jesus would be the agent of the temple’s destruction and restoration is false on the lower level, and even though Jesus was rejected and condemned for “blasphemy” (βλασφημίας, 14:64), the *dramatis personae* unwittingly make Jesus’s prophecy ironically true on the upper level.

In exactly what way is 14:58 false on the lower level? In 13:1, Jesus’s disciples marveled at the temple (ιερού). In response in verse 2, Jesus predicted the temple’s complete destruction. Mark 13:2 and 14:58 are linked grammatically by their use of the verb καταλύω. However, the verbs in 13:2 are conjugated in the passive voice: “none shall be left” (οὐ μὴ ἀφεθῆ) and “shall not be thrown down” (οὐ μὴ καταλυθῆ).⁴³ “The divine passive employed in the text,” explains Pikaza, “indicates that God is the one who performs the judgment, destroying the sterile building of his temple and thus culminating a path of ancient prophecy (cf. Mic 3:11–12; Jer 6:26; Isa 29:1–2, etc.).”⁴⁴ The first half of the testimony is false, then, because it reports that Jesus said he would be the agent of destruc-

⁴⁰ D. C. Muecke, *The Compass of Irony* (London: Methuen, 1969), 19–20. Cited in Shepherd, “The Irony of Power,” 237–38.

⁴¹ Donald Juel, *Messiah and Temple: The Trial of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 31 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977), 55.

⁴² Juel, 56.

⁴³ On the *passivum divinum* in the Jesus traditions, see Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, 9–14. On historical developments of the usage, see Marius Reiser, *Jesus and Judgment: The Eschatological Proclamation in Its Jewish Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 266–70; and Beniamin Pascut, “The So-Called *Passivum Divinum* in Mark’s Gospel,” *Novum Testamentum* 54.4 (2012): 313–33.

⁴⁴ Xabier Pikaza, *Comentario al Evangelio de Marcos* (Barcelona: Editorial Clie, 2013), 593 (authors’ translation).

tion, ἐγὼ καταλύσω, even though his use of the passive voice in Mark 13:2 suggests that God will be the agent of destruction. At this point, the phrase διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν is inserted into the middle of the saying instead of the μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας of the passion predictions in 8:31; 9:31; and 10:34. The time designation is therefore falsely attributed to Jesus's prediction of the temple's destruction when it is actually about his resurrection. The second half of the testimony is shown to be false since Jesus never predicted the temple's restoration by God in 13:2. Indeed, the phrase "not one stone upon another" (οὐ μὴ ἀφεθῆ ὧδε λίθος ἐπὶ λίθον) reverses God's command to rebuild the temple in Haggai 2:15, "stone was placed upon stone" (λίθον ἐπὶ λίθον, Septuagint).⁴⁵ Hence Mark 13:2 implies a command not to rebuild the temple. With this background detail in the narrative, the reader can see that 14:58 is an inaccurate conflation of words from the prophecy of 13:2 and the passion predictions.

In what way is Jesus's prophecy true on the upper level, the level of the reader? Since the saying presents a conflation of other sayings falsely delimiting the *terminus ante quem* for the literal destruction of the temple "within three days," Mark must present the "true" interpretation symbolically because the temple was not literally destroyed by the end of the Markan narrative. In this fashion the charge of "false witness" heightens the use of irony. Also, given the early Christian application of temple terminology to both the resurrection (Rom 9:33) and community (1 Cor 3:16–17; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16), it is unlikely that Mark would have felt the need to choose between them.⁴⁶ The prophecy therefore was likely polyvalent, permitting two symbolic and ironically true interpretations. Our explanation of these two interpretations resumes with our discussion of χειροποίητος-ἄχειροποίητος.

A literary analysis identifies the following traits as secondary elements of the temple prophecy: (1) the first person singular pronoun ἐγὼ; (2) the first person singular conjugation of the verbal parallel καταλύσω-οικοδομήσω; (3) the time designation διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν; and (4) the χειροποίητον-ἄχειροποίητον adjectival parallel.

⁴⁵ Rudolf Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium, Bnd 2: Kommentar zu Kap. 8,27–16,20*, 4th ed., Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Freiburg: Herder, 1991), 271; Robert H. Stein, *Jesus, the Temple and the Coming Son of Man: A Commentary on Mark 13* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 58–59; and Grant Macaskill, "Apocalypse and the Gospel of Mark," in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Tradition and the Shaping of New Testament Thought*, ed. Benjamin E. Reynolds and Loren T. Stuckenbruck (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 72.

⁴⁶ Timothy J. Gedder, *Watchwords: Mark 13 in Markan Eschatology* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 132.

Redactional arguments also confirm the secondary nature of χειροποίητον-ἀχειροποίητον. These words do not appear in Mark's parallel (15:29) or the other Gospel authors' versions of the saying. Based on the comparison between texts and the conspicuous absence of the coupling in Matthew's version, Bultmann reasons in favor of a redactional origin: "As to the relationship of Mk. 14 and Matt. 26, Mark is secondary in respect of the adjectives χειροποίητος and ἀχειροποίητος which he adds to ναός, in contrast to Matthew."⁴⁷ Linguistic considerations also facilitate the redactional judgment.

Semantically, the coupling does not exist in the Aramaic or Hebrew languages.⁴⁸ However, the word χειροποίητος occurs twelve times in the Septuagint (third to first centuries BCE) where it is used mostly for pagan idols. It is used to translate לְיָלֵד for "idol" in six occurrences (Lev 26:1; Isa 2:18; 10:11; 19:1; 31:7 [2x]) and for incense altars (Lev 26:30), sanctuary (Isa 16:12), and images (Isa 21:9) in three other instances. Similar wording with the same connotation occurs three times in Daniel (5:5, 23–24). Last of all, the word occurs in three apocryphal sources of the Septuagint (Wisdom of Solomon 14:8; Bel and the Dragon 5; Judith 8:18) and six times in the Sibylline Oracles (3:606, 618, 722; 4:28a; F 3:29; 14:62). In combination, there are around twenty-one instances where the wording denotes a religious icon, structure, or idol opposed to God. The survey shows that χειροποίητος is used with a negative connotation to describe "idols" and "gods" of cultic worship in religious Jewish sources. For this reason, as Biguzzi points out, "the first adjective, *cheiropoiētos*, cannot have the meaning it has in extra-biblical Greek, where it designates what is artificial and not produced by nature."⁴⁹ It is always used of artificial constructions without negative religious connotation in each of its approximately forty-five extrabiblical occurrences in other ancient sources before the first century CE.⁵⁰

Mark did not deny that the Jerusalem temple is a natural or man-made construct, so χειροποίητος is not used in its extrabiblical sense. Since Mark has already presented a clear contrast between Jesus and the old temple in chapters 11–13, Geddert explains that the "handmade" phrase "probably suggests something more than

⁴⁷ Rudolf Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. John Marsh, rev. ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 120.

⁴⁸ Giancarlo Biguzzi, "Mc. 14,58: Un Tempio ἀχειροποίητος," *Revista Bíblica* 26.3 (1978): 225–40.

⁴⁹ Biguzzi, *Io Distruggerò Questo Tempio*, 150 (authors' translation).

⁵⁰ Biguzzi, 150–51.

simply the fact that the old temple was made with human hands.”⁵¹ Taken in conjunction with the temple cleansing in chapter 11, it looks like the Markan usage picks up the Septuagint connotation of “handmade” for “idols” but turns it against the Jerusalem temple. The saying’s close association with the temple cleansing pericope is astutely recognized by Lohmeyer; the word confirms “what the purpose of the temple cleaning was.”⁵² In this reading, the temple is both a “den of robbers” (v. 17) and an “idol.”⁵³ With this negative connotation, χειροποίητος is used with reference to the holy of holies and relates to the ironic fulfillment of the temple’s destruction in the first half of the temple prophecy.

Returning to our discussion of the role of irony, how is the destruction in the first half of the prophecy made ironically true? It is noteworthy that at the trial scene, instead of Mark using the commoner word for temple, ἱερόν (11:11, 15, 16, 27; 12:35; 13:1, 3; 14:49),⁵⁴ he intentionally used the word ναός. This word has a range of meanings, and the variance is not lost on Mark.⁵⁵ Given that Mark used ἱερόν for the temple and its buildings in the temple controversy segments throughout chapters 11–13, a better translation of ναόν here is “sanctuary” because the word is clearly used for the holy of holies in 15:38.⁵⁶ Mark 14:58 and 15:38 are linked grammatically by ναός, and this coordinates the symbolic fulfillment of the prediction of destruction with the rent veil by identifying χειροποίητος with the holy of holies. “What is most easily recognizable is the fulfillment of 14,58a,” explains Biguzzi, “since the moment the *naos* artifact that Jesus destroys is the *naos* whose veil at Jesus’s death is torn apart.”⁵⁷ The threat to “destroy the sanctuary” is rendered true when the “curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom” (15:38). The removal of the veil signifies the departure of God’s spirit, because “the sacrifice of the wicked is

⁵¹ Geddert, *Watchwords*, 132.

⁵² Ernst Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1951), 327 (authors’ translation).

⁵³ Biguzzi, “Mc. 14:58,” 225–40.

⁵⁴ Gottlob Schrenk, “τὸ ἱερόν,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 3:230–47.

⁵⁵ O. Michel, “ναός,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 4:880–90.

⁵⁶ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 1:439.

⁵⁷ Biguzzi, *Io Distruggerò Questo Tempio*, 192 (authors’ translation).

an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight” (Prov 15:8, NRSV). With the spirit’s departure, the promise that the temple would become “a house of prayer for all people” (Isa 56:7, NRSV) is fulfilled.

A survey of ἀχειροποίητος shows that Paul first introduced it into his handling of the καταλύω-οικοδομεῶ parallel in 2 Corinthians 5:1. Paul wrote around 57 CE from Macedonia,⁵⁸ and he used these terms to contrast terrestrial and celestial natures; the mortal body from which the immortal resurrection body will be transformed. If Paul had known of the χειροποίητος-ἀχειροποίητος parallel, he most likely would have used it earlier in his use of temple language in Galatians 2:18 (κατέλυσσα-οικοδομῶ, 50s CE) and 1 Corinthians 3:12, 15–17 (ἐποικοδομεῖ-κατακαήσεται and οἰκεῖ εν ὑμῖν-φθερεῖ, 56/57 CE). With the exception of Mark 14:58, ἀχειροποίητος does not again occur until Colossians 2:11 (80s CE) and is replaced by the οὐχ/οὐκ/οὐ (negative particle) + χειροποίητος construction in Hebrews 9:11, 24 (80–90s CE); Acts 7:48; and 17:24 (80s CE). For this reason, the adjectival parallel with the neat negative prefix α is an innovation of Greek-speaking Christianity.

Returning again to our discussion of irony, how is the replacement of the second half of the prophecy made ironically true? The preposition διὰ should be translated as “within” or “by,” referring to the time between the temple’s destruction and replacement. Hence, the whole designation διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν should read “within three days.” The preposition permits fulfillment at some point “within” the “three day” period or on “the third day.” Cleverly, Mark showed how the second half of the prophecy is made true on both calculations: (1) by the beginning of the Christian community through the centurion’s confession, “Truly, this man was the Son of God” (15:39), and the observations of the women (vv. 40–41); and (2) by the resurrection of Jesus (16:6; see the “cornerstone” of 12:10).⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 541–43.

⁵⁹ Max Botner suggests an alternative interpretation in “A Sanctuary in the Heavens and the Ascension of the Son of Man: Reassessing the Logic of Jesus’ Trial in Mark 14:53–65,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 41.3 (2019): 310–34. In Botner’s view, Mark 14:58’s “another [sanctuary] not handmade I will build” (ἄλλον [ναὸν] ἀχειροποίητον οικοδομήσω) refers to Jesus’s ascension to God’s eschatological sanctuary in heaven: “The Gospel of Mark invites its readers to perceive the exalted Christ as a priest of the heavenly sanctuary” (313). More precisely, he identifies ἄλλον [ναὸν] ἀχειροποίητον with God’s heavenly sanctuary and οικοδομήσω with Jesus’s journey to session at God’s right hand. This interpretation misidentifies the role of irony, the “three day” calculation, and the ναός grammatical connection. The communal and resurrection interpretations present themselves as the closest contextual fulfillments of the prophecy based on the grammatical coincidence and precise numerical calculation. A heavenly eschatological temple is nowhere mentioned in the

These connections are subtle, so Mark included the χειροποίητος-ἀχειροποίητος parallel to provide interpretive clues for the reader.⁶⁰

Assessing the critical data, Schlosser concludes succinctly that the life setting for the χειροποίητος-ἀχειροποίητος coupling must be found in “the Judeo-Hellenistic milieu.”⁶¹ They are, for Vögtle, “typical Hellenistic distinguishing qualifications.”⁶² Citing the aforementioned type of linguistic considerations, Brown supports the redactional judgment because the paired positive and negative adjectives are “a good Greek construction but are difficult to translate back into Hebrew or Aramaic.”⁶³ Vielhauer astutely discerns another problem: “The adjectives χειροποίητος and ἀχειροποίητος are incomprehensible in the indictment, which they neutralize.”⁶⁴ The problem here is that the parallel neutralizes the accusation and so makes little sense in the narrative. For these reasons, Gaston’s summary of critical consensus is apropos: “These words are, of course, familiar terms from the early Christian catechesis on the theme ‘temple’ (cf. Acts 7:48; 17:24; Hebrews 9:11, 24) and are widely recognized to be additions of the evangelist here.”⁶⁵ This raises the question of the historicity of the verbal parallel itself.

The criterion of multiple attestation supports the verbal paral-

fulfillment texts. A similar problem arises for Adela Yarbro Collins’s position that Mark expected an eschatological temple to materialize on earth at some undesignated time in the future. *Mark: A Commentary*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2007), 701–3.

⁶⁰ Pace Paesler, *Das Tempelwort Jesu*, 219. Paesler follows Wenschkewitz and argues that ἀχειροποίητος interprets only what is already present and does not soften any embarrassment. Hans Wenschkewitz, *Die Spiritualisierung der Kultusbe-griffe. Tempel, Priester und Opfer im Neuen Testament* (Leipzig: Pfeiffer, 1932). Paesler erroneously assumes that the heightening of the charge of idolatry against the temple is inconsistent with the softening of an embarrassment, whereas the two are logically consistent. Mark softens the embarrassment by providing details justifying Christianity and guiding the interpretation of Jesus’s prophecy through resurrection and community.

⁶¹ Jacques Schlosser, “La Parole de Jésus sur la Fin du Temple,” *New Testament Studies* 36.3 (1990): 409 (authors’ translation).

⁶² Anton Vögtle, “Das markinische Verständnis der Tempelworte,” in *Die Mitte des Neuen Testaments: Einheit und Vielfalt neutestamentlicher Theologie: Festschrift für Eduard Schweizer zum siebzigsten Geburtstag*, ed. Ulrich Luz and Hans Weder (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 368–69 (authors’ translation).

⁶³ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 2:439.

⁶⁴ Philipp Vielhauer, *Oikodome: Aufsätze zum Neuen Testament*, ed. Günter Klein, Theologische Bücherei 65 (Munich: Kaiser, 1979), 2:60 (authors’ translation).

⁶⁵ Gaston, *No Stone on Another*, 69. For a more detailed discussion of the “hand-made-not handmade” parallel, see Elton L. Hollon, “Mark 14:58 and the ‘Hand-made-Not Handmade’ Parallel,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 180:719 (forthcoming).

lel's authenticity because some variation of the verb λύω is multiply attested by both Mark (καταλύσω, 14:58) and John (λύσατε, 2:19) and features in five of its six parallels (Acts 6:14 being the only exception).⁶⁶ The authenticity of verbal οικοδομεῶ is supported by the use of the cognate noun οἰκία ("house") throughout the Jesus traditions. It is used for the kingdom of God and Jesus's followers in pericopes like the Jesus and Beelzebub controversy in Mark 3:22–30 and Q 11:14–23 and the build your house on the rock teaching in Q 6:46–49. The verbal antithetic parallel is likewise supported by the criterion of embarrassment since it describes the destruction and replacement of the Jerusalem temple decades before 70 CE. Once more, reinterpretation likely serves to remove perceived difficulty rather than create it. Its authenticity also explains why Paul connected the parallel with his use of temple language in three different writings (Gal 2:18; 1 Cor 3:12, 15–17; 2 Cor 5:1). Consequently, it is more than likely a part of the historical Jesus's temple prophecy. Only after a perceived embarrassment did the church begin reinterpreting the wording in light of the resurrection.⁶⁷

The use of ναός over ἱερόν is likely traditional because Mark prefers ἱερόν in the Jerusalem controversy complex. Mark probably draws from this tradition for the word choice of 14:58; 15:29, 38. In any case, some word is used to refer to the temple. The choice of

⁶⁶ Dschulnigg lists John 2:19 as a "possible" variation, but he does not adequately assess the likelihood of traditional λύω based on multiple attestation and assigns it to Markan redaction. *Sprache, Redaktion und Intention*, 164. However, the common root is unlikely a coincidence.

⁶⁷ This construction of the tradition history explains why Mark 13:2 eliminated the embarrassment by replacing the second half of 14:58 with a synonymous expression of destruction. The same judgment is found in early Gerd Theissen: "Thus, for historical-critical exegesis . . . it is Mk 14:58 that is more likely to be the authentic version of Jesus' saying, while Mk 13:2 represents its adaptation to the events that have unfolded in the meantime." *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992), 194. "This temple prophecy [13:2], presupposes the destruction of the temple, because it has been adapted to correspond to events that have already happened. . . . The temple has been destroyed and there was no prospect of its being rebuilt; consequently Mark omits the positive half of the temple prophecy [of 14:58] in 13:2." Theissen, 259. This argument also explains why Neiryneck's traces of duality do not inauthenticize the tradition. Of his encyclopedic listing on Markan duality, 14:58 occurs in five listings: (1) double statement: negative and positive (οὐκ . . . ἀλλά and allied constructions); (2) repetition of motif (ἐψευστομαρτύρουν-μαρτυρία/ι between vv. 56 and 57–59); (3) direct discourse preceded by a qualifying verb (but this targets other words); (4) antithetic parallelism; and (5) doublet (15:29). *Duality in Mark*, 94, 100, 124, 134, 136. Each of these centers around parallelism, but this is too general a criterion of inauthenticity since parallelism is both a common mnemonic device and a technique of many genres. Why could Jesus not have spoken of the temple's destruction with an eye to eschatological reversal?

ἄλλος may reflect Markan vocabulary,⁶⁸ but this does not clearly argue against its inclusion because the temple noun is redundant in the second half of the saying: “God will destroy the temple and another temple will build.” As a matter of economy, ἄλλος alone in the second half of the saying is simpler and makes better sense. Last of all, the first person singular pronoun ἐγὼ and first person singular conjugation for the καταλύσω-οικοδομήσω parallel look redactional, since they serve the theme of “false testimony” and misrepresent what Jesus says in 13:2. They also mirror the redactional “I am” of 14:62 by juxtaposition.⁶⁹ It is more likely that Jesus used a common word for God with a corresponding conjugation for the verbal parallel in the future tense or some variation.

We are now in a better position to explain the relationship between Mark 14:58 and 15:29. The ἐγὼ and ὁ likely reflect a Christological heightening. More naturally, God was expected to replace the temple with the eschatological one. The conjugation of “destroy” is indeterminate. The first-person orientation is unlikely, but both the future and present tense conjugations (καταλύσω or καταλύων) are plausible. The present participle active in 15:29 coheres with the similar present indicative active in Luke 23:31 and enjoys support from the criterion of embarrassment. The redactional nature of ἀχειροποίητον in Mark 14:58 is suggested by its absence at 15:29. The question about the placement of “three days” is raised by its different location and wording in each verse. Analysis suggests its redactional placement and form in 14:58 and its placement in 15:29. The absence of a second noun (ναός) or adjective (ἄλλος) in the second half of 15:29 is grammatically awkward, and the omission emphasizes the misunderstanding that Jesus would destroy and rebuild a literal temple. Thus, the saying likely included a parallel lexical unit like the adjective. The replacement of the temple would also be in the future, so the conjugation of “rebuild” is likely in the future rather than the present tense. Since it is stripped of antithetical redaction, it looks like 15:29 is closer to

⁶⁸ Gaston, *Horae Synopticae Electronicae*, 18, 68; and Neiryck, *Duality in Mark*, 94. On Gaston's tally, the word occurs twenty-two times in Mark out of forty-five total times in Mark, Q (2), Matthean additions to Q (2), M (10), L (1), and Matthean (6) and Lukan (2) additions to M and L. It is not on the Markan editorial list, however. It also only occurs in three out of Neiryck's eighty-nine listings (e.g., 12:29–32; 14:58) for οὐκ . . . ἀλλά and allied constructions in Mark, which does not provide strong support for its identification as Markan redaction. There is no reason to think that Jesus did not use the word “another.”

⁶⁹ For discussion of the redactional nature of “I am” in 14:62, see James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, Christianity in the Making 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 651–52.

the original utterance. Mark likely expanded on the saying in 14:58 to provide clues explaining how the saying could be false yet ironically true simultaneously. A literary-redactional analysis leads to a similar construction as the structural-word analysis:

- a: Θεός καταλύσει/καταλύων (God will destroy)
 b: τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον (the temple)
 b': καὶ ἄλλον (and another)
 a': οικοδομήσει (will build)

This reconstruction likewise presents no difficulty for translation back into Aramaic. This means that the proposed reconstruction is likewise confirmed by the criterion of traces of Aramaic.

The historical Jesus anticipated the destruction of the temple by God and its replacement by the eschatological temple. The expectation for a heavenly or eschatological temple is well attested: Ezekiel 40–44; Trito-Isaiah 60; 1 Enoch 90:28–29; 11Q19 29:6–10; Jubilees 1:17, 27, 29; 4Q174 1:1–13; 4 Ezra 10:54.⁷⁰ The commonality of the expectation supports the general inference that Mark 14:58 originally refers to the eschatological temple of apocalyptic hope. This expectation is also logically consistent with the communal interpretation of the temple, as demonstrated by the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran (1QS 8:5–9; 9:6).⁷¹ The Qumranites described their community as a temple but also anticipated the future eschatological temple as well.

We propose that this is the best analogy with which to understand Jesus's use of temple language vis-à-vis the aforementioned attested usage of οἰκία throughout authentic Jesus traditions.⁷² Apparently, Jesus did use the temple language of his followers. However, in our handling of Mark 14:58 the expectation is clearly future oriented and so not a present communal reality.

⁷⁰ Flusser, "Two Notes on the Midrash," 99–109; and Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Dream of a New Jerusalem at Qumran," in *The Scrolls and Christian Origins*, vol. 3 of *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Second Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), 231–54.

⁷¹ C. F. D. Moule, "Sanctuary and Sacrifice in the Church of the New Testament," *Journal of Theological Studies* 1.1 (1950): 29–41.

⁷² For a similar suggestion, see Cecilia Wassen, "The Use of the Dead Sea Scrolls for Interpreting Jesus's Action in the Temple," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 23.3 (2016): 280–303.

ARAMAIC RECONSTRUCTION OF MARK 14:58

Dalman (followed by Jeremias) offers a four-four beat Aramaic reconstruction of the temple prophecy, but his reconstruction retains the first person singular pronoun and time designation:⁷³

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| I am destroying this temple | אנה סתר היכלא הדין |
| And in three days I will build another | ובתלתא יומין נבנא חורנא |

Our analysis strongly suggests that these features are not authentic to the original saying. Instead, based on our findings, we propose a reconstruction replacing the pronoun with the most common Aramaic word for God, conjugating the verbs as Peal imperfect in the third person to express future expectation in the most general of terms and omitting the time designation.

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| God will destroy this temple | אלה יסתר היכל דנה |
| And will rebuild another | ויבן אחרן |

What emerges is a different beat, a four-two beat pattern.

Perhaps not coincidentally, Jeremias identifies the four-two beat pattern as a *kīnā metre* (poetic meter) “deriving from the lament for the dead.”⁷⁴ It is a variation of the traditional three-two beat rhythm from lamentations in which the lead singer vocalizes a three-beat cry while the other lamenters respond with a shorter two-beat echo. It expresses strong inner emotion: “warnings, threats, admonitions and summons as well as beatitudes and messages of salvation.”⁷⁵

Confirmation for our reconstruction is found in the lament attributed to Jesus for the temple’s fate in Luke 23:31: “If in the green tree these things they do, in the dry what may take place?”

| | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| Protasis: | εἰ ἐν τῷ ὑγρῷ ξύλῳ ταῦτα ποιοῦσιν |
| | אן בקיסא רטיבא עבדין היך |
| Apodosis: | ἐν τῷ ξηρῷ τί γένηται |
| | ביבישא מה נהוי |

⁷³ Gustaf Dalman, *Orte und Wege Jesu*, 3rd ed. (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1924), 324. Cited in Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, 22. Special thanks to John J. Collins and Eric Reymond for assistance with the Aramaic.

⁷⁴ Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, 25–27.

⁷⁵ Jeremias, 26–27.

Jeremias calls this “a real *kīnā*” of Jesus, and Bovon concludes that it is “possible that the historical Jesus used it before or during his passion.”⁷⁶ At most, Neyrey is willing to declare it a “popular” saying of the time in the pre-Lukan tradition.⁷⁷ Each classifies it as a formal prophetic judgment, and it follows the same poetic meter identified in Mark 14:58. This provides multiple independent attestations of the structure and Aramaic rhythm for our proposal.

Of further interest is the conjugation of the verbs in Luke 23:31 because the verb in the protasis is in the present indicative whereas the verb of the apodosis is in the future passive. The best interpretation of which we are aware identifies Jesus’s opponents as the subject of the protasis and God as the subject of the apodosis. Brown explains, “If they (the Jewish leaders and people) treat me like this in a favorable time (when they are not forced by the Romans), how much the worse will they be treated in an unfavorable time (when the Romans suppress them)?”⁷⁸ The word contrast refers to two different periods.

The corroborating parallel for our reconstruction between Mark 14:58 and Luke 23:31 suggests that the verb in the first conjunct of Mark 14:58 could be an active participle after all. This conjugation coheres better with the present participle active καταλύων of Mark 15:29 and any perceived embarrassment with imminence:

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| God is destroying this temple | אלה סתר היכל דנה |
| and will rebuild another | ויבן אחרן |

It is also dramatic, however, and the present tense orientation of the protasis may simply be a redactional heightening in order to contextualize Luke 23:31 against those “presently” persecuting Jesus in the narrative. The same may be true of Mark 15:29 as well. Hence, it does not clearly inform our analysis of verb conjugation for “destroy” in 14:58. The current data undermines a firm judgment. A passive reconstruction of the *kīnā* is also conceivable, as in the apodosis of Luke 23:31. However, our reconstruction includes

⁷⁶ Jeremias, 26; and François Bovon, *Luke 3: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 19:28–24:53*, ed. Helmut Koester, trans. James Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 305.

⁷⁷ Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Passion according to Luke: A Redaction Study of Luke’s Soteriology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007), 114. For additional discussion, see Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 2:925–27.

⁷⁸ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 2:927.

the subject based on a general inference from more common linguistic convention. Hence, our proposal for the Aramaic reconstruction of Jesus's temple prophecy reads:

אלה [י/סתר] היכל דנה
ויבן אחרן

CONCLUSION

Current research methods in biblical studies support historical judgments about the authentic sayings of Jesus. These are probative in nature, based on the application of techniques in source, form, redaction, literary, and structural criticisms, as well as the criteria of authenticity in historical Jesus studies. Our investigation into the temple prophecy of Mark 14:58 identifies a four-two beat pattern in Aramaic. This pattern is common to lamentations and is probably the most apropos formulation for any prediction about the destruction of the temple. Independent corroboration for our proposal is found in the prophecy of Luke 23:31 because it follows the same poetic meter. Jesus lamented the temple's destruction with tears and wailing.