Tendencies in the synoptic resurrection tradition:
Rudolf Bultmann's legacy and an important Christian tradition

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ABSTRACT
Although many exegetes assume that the synoptic tradition was transmitted according to certain tendencies or laws of oral transmission, they do not spend much time verifying this assumption. This essay investigates the way in which tendencies are used by various scholars (Bultmann, Craig, Paulsen, and Crossan) to establish the oldest or most reliable witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is concluded that an analysis of the resurrection traditions in terms of tendencies does not yield much in the way of positive results.

1 INTRODUCTION
When Henning Paulsen recently (1980:138) introduced his essay on Mark 16:1-8 with the observation that Bultmann's fifty-year-old analysis of the story of the empty tomb seemed for a long time to have achieved the optimum of what can be done in historical interpretation, I once again came under the spell of the man's genius. But when Paulsen added the remark that new insights into the correlation between "historische, literarkritische und formgeschichtliche Argumente" as well as the debut of the "redaktionsgeschichtliche Analyse" (1980:138f) necessitated a new inquiry, I was puzzled at the easy way in which Bultmann was pushed aside and wondered what had happened to his form-critical approach.

Was it possible that the methodology applied in his The history of the synoptic tradition had been proven wrong? If so, by whom, and in what way? On the other hand, did his approach not perhaps lose impact as the storm of redaction criticism hit the world of New Testament scholarship? Or were many of Bultmann's methods (and assumptions) not perhaps continued under new names - without being properly understood or evaluated? In this paper I want to give attention to a few of these possibilities and demonstrate how Bultmann influenced modern interpretations of the reported resurrection of Jesus Christ.

2 BULTMANN'S FORM-CRITICAL METHODOLOGY
We commence with a description of his methodology and his analysis of the synoptic Easter tradition. Bultmann developed a method which was to take him behind the written Gospels to the pre-canonical formulation of the Jesus
tradition and the original events of Jesus' life. A central aim was to describe the characteristics of different classes of small textual units and investigate the way in which they were transmitted by the early Christians.

As a first step in the analysis he assumed that those texts which came closest to the ideal characteristics of a particular class of texts ("Gattung"), also called the original or pure form, were most likely to be the oldest stories or the most authentic sayings of Jesus. A description of pure forms could then be used to detect later additions and changes to original or authentic tradition by the early Christians. Removing the additions, however, does not necessarily mean that we have the oldest witness (or an account which is historically reliable), especially in the case of the narrative material. One must also consider the literary genre of the text (second step) (the "Gattung" of which the pure form is the most characteristic illustration), for example:

Ein Märchen (womit doch wohl eine literarische Gattung bezeichnet ist) erzählt keine Geschichte; ein Mythos und eine Legende ebensowenig. Die Trennung des Formgeschichtlers vom Historiker lässt sich also auch hier nicht vollziehen (Bultmann 1925:381).

In addition to a study of pure forms and literary genres Bultmann described a third route to reach behind the written Gospels, namely the study of tendencies in the development of tradition. This important aspect of the so-called form-critical approach has been widely neglected in theoretical discussions of the method, but nevertheless applied in many form- and redaction-critical studies of the Gospels.

Bultmann described the establishment of tendencies in the following way:

For the most part the history of the tradition is obscure, though there is one small part which we can observe in our sources, how Marcan material is treated as it is adapted by Matthew and Luke. If we take fully into account the connected question of an Ur-Markus, and the problems of textual criticism which do not always lead to firm judgments, we may still discern a certain regularity in the way Matthew and Luke use Mark. In the case of Q admittedly, we are dependent upon a reconstruction from Matthew and Luke to recognise what laws governed the development of material from Q to Matthew and Luke. If we are able to detect any such laws, we may assume that they were operative on the traditional material even before it was given its form in Mark and Q, and in this way we can infer back to an earlier stage of the tradition than appears in our sources (1968:6).

This is the first way in which one can come to a knowledge of the laws of early Christian transmission of tradition. The second and third methods are described as follows:
Such considerations are reinforced through the expansion of the material, in so far, that is to say, as the same observations can be made on the stories that are found outside the Synoptics, and particularly on the later gospels - though less in the case of John than in the apocryphal tradition - and then, quite fundamentally, on the history of the text (1968:6).

There is also a fourth way, which is dependent on another step of the form-critical method:

The aim of form criticism is to determine the original form of a piece of narrative, a dominical saying or a parable. In the process we learn to distinguish secondary additions and forms, and these in turn lead to important results for the history of the tradition (i.e. the tendencies) (1968:6).

Although Bultmann occasionally mentioned the possibility that research into the transmission of "folk-tales, anecdotes, and folk-songs" (1926:245; see also 1962:30) can shed some light on these laws, he however never made use of such comparative studies (see also Sanders 1969:17ff). At this stage it should also be mentioned that Bultmann considered it important that the laws for each "Gattung" should be established independently. This means that when one studies the Easter narratives, the laws governing their transmission should be deduced from a study of the narratives themselves.

3 BULTMANN'S ANALYSIS OF THE RESURRECTION TRADITION

Let us now turn to Bultmann's analysis of the synoptic resurrection tradition. "Easter stories ... fall into two groups - stories of the empty tomb and stories of the appearance of the risen Lord, though there are stories that combine them both (Mt 28:1-8, 9f; Jn 20:1, 11-18)" (1968:287). Matthew and Luke (and John) were dependent on Mark in their versions of the stories of the empty tomb (Mk 16:1-8; Mt 28:1-10, 11-15; Lk 24:1-24 and Jn 20:1; 11-18) (1968:287), but they "developed" (1968:286) Mark's narrative. "In particular Luke has to alter the angel's saying, because he does not give any account of an appearance of the risen Lord in Galilee. In 28:2-4 Matthew gives a still reserved description of the miraculous occurrence (which is later greatly expanded in the Gospel of Peter), and adds to it in verses 9-10 an appearance of Jesus to the woman" (1968:286). Although Bultmann does not explicitly name the tendencies that he observed, we can distinguish three (assuming — in terms of his methodological points of departure — that he had them in mind): (i) Sayings were changed to fit the new context in a Gospel (Luke), (ii) miraculous occurrences were expanded (Matthew and the Gospel according to Peter), and (iii) new scenes were added (Matthew).

Does a knowledge of these tendencies help us to reach back behind the Gospel into the phase of pre-canonical oral tradition, that is, the origin of the
story of the empty tomb? Surprisingly, this does not seem to be the case because, to substantiate his statement that Mark 16:1-8 is based on a pre-Marcan tradition, Bultmann does not use any of the tools described at the beginning of his analysis, but simply finds enough proof in the fact that the women named in 15:40 and 47 differ from those in 16:1, and the observation that 15:46 assumes that the burial was complete (1968:285).

Did Mark change or edit tradition? Yes. He added 16:7 and 16:8b. Can this be substantiated in terms of an analysis of historical tendencies? No, not by such an analysis, but by various other means: (i) One should assume that the Gospel did not end in 16:8, but that Mark came to an end with the appearance of Jesus in Galilee. "So verse 7 is just as much as 14:28 a footnote put by Mark into the passage from the tradition, to prepare the way for a Galilean appearance of Jesus" (1968:285). (ii) The "purpose" or meaning of the story is "without doubt to prove the reality of the resurrection of Jesus by the empty tomb" (1968:287), which is to be seen in the message of the angel. "But in Mark what the angel says has a second point ... this second point is secondary ... it conflicts with the dominant motif of the passage." (iii) The silence of the women in 16:8b was most probably added "to give an answer to the question why the women's story of the empty tomb remained unknown for so long" (1968:285).

None of the tendencies established by an analysis of the way in which Mark 16:1-8 was transmitted by Matthew, Luke and the Gospel of Peter were used by Bultmann to understand Mark's redaction. It is interesting to note that in contrast with the tendency to expand miraculous occurrences (Matthew's reception of Mark), Mark transmitted tradition in an "extremely reserved" manner (1968:286). Bultmann does not use the tendencies to evaluate the origin or historical reliability of the story. This task is completed in another way — one to which we will give attention below.

The appearance stories (Mt 28:9f, 16-20; Lk 24:13-35, 36-49 (-53); Jn 20:14-18, 19-23, 24-29, 21:1-14, 15-17) cannot be approached in exactly the same way because we are not dealing with the transmission of similar traditions. Bultmann however does find a way out: He distinguishes between two types of stories which came into being through the presence of (or were "fashioned" by) two different "motifs" (1968:288): first, the motif of proving the resurrection by the appearance of the risen Lord (Lk 24:13-35; Jn 20:1, 11-18, 20:24-29, 21:1-14; Mt 28:9f) and, second, that of the missionary charge (Mt 28:16-20; Jn 20:19-23). The two motifs were, however, sometimes combined (Lk 24:36-49; Ac 1:3-8).

When one asks about the way in which these motifs influenced tradition, it is discovered that they actually created tradition: The "fashioning of the second motif ... is a quite late achievement of Hellenistic Christianity (if not also in part of Hellenistic Jewish-Christianity). For these stories presuppose the universal mission, as something authorised by a command of the risen Lord." (1968:289) The stories fashioned by the first motif are far removed
from the original "Easter happenings", namely the "certainty that Jesus has risen from the dead and that as the risen Lord he was the coming Messiah" (1968:289), but they are late apologetic formulations, especially Luke 24:36-43 and John 20:24-29. A third motif is also mentioned in connection with the appearance stories, particularly the Emmaus story, namely a "novelistic" motif (without any further clarification, Bultmann 1968:290).

We said that Bultmann distinguished two groups of Easter stories, those of the empty tomb and those of the appearance of the risen Lord. Is there any relationship between the two, and if so, can it throw some light on the development of the transmission? Bultmann is convinced that the stories of the empty tomb only came into being at a late stage. Proof for this statement cannot be taken from analysing the relative ages of the different texts by means of the tendencies in tradition, but from the facts that Paul knew nothing of the empty tomb and it was not part of the oldest and "official Kerygma" (i.e. 1 Cor 15:2-7; 1968:290) of the early church.

Through form-critical analysis, one can therefore reconstruct the origin and development of pre-synoptic tradition in the following way: The oldest traditions are those that show a similarity with the "basic appearance" of the risen Lord to Peter, reported in the "official Kerygma", namely elements of the transfiguration, the dominical saying in Luke 22:32 and the special mention of Peter in Mark 16:7 (1968:290). The appearance stories are legends created by the church for proving the resurrection and sanctioning the heathen mission. The story of the empty tomb came into being at a later stage as an apologetic legend to prove the physical resurrection of Jesus.

It is not difficult to see that Bultmann does not really make much use of tendencies to identify changes introduced to tradition in its pre-canonical form or to establish its origin. It is also very important to note that - by indicating that the story of the empty tomb was a creation of the early Christians to prove the (physical) resurrection - he hints that his "tradition-critical" analysis leads one to infer that Jesus' physical body was not resurrected. The oldest report, or origin of the story, is that of Peter's faith in the resurrection. All the other appearances of the risen Lord are (unhistorical) legends.

It has often been said that Bultmann's lack of trust in the historical reliability of the Gospels is derived from his view of history and not from his historical analysis of the texts (e.g. Harvey 1966:14; Hanson 1969:300f). I am convinced that this is so in the case of the synoptic resurrection tradition. Bultmann does not believe in supernatural intervention in the course of history (Bultmann 1960b:291f). God does not form a link from one event to the other (as part of the "causal nexus"), but is present within those events (Bultmann 1958:60ff; 1972). Jesus therefore did not physically rise from the dead but — in terms of a hermeneutic of demythologisation (Bultmann 1941; 1950) — he rose from the dead in the Kerygma (Bultmann 1960a:27).
In conclusion one can therefore say that Bultmann was unable to understand or evaluate pre-canonical resurrection tradition in terms of a logical methodology. As we have seen, he did not even apply the "tools" (1968:6) that he professed could take him way into the oral stage of transmission, in any case not in his analysis of the stories of the empty tomb. Here the relative ages of the different texts were not discussed, but it was just accepted that Mark 16:1-8 presented the oldest written witness. The age of Mark in relation to the appearance stories in Matthew, Luke and John was also not determined in terms of historical tendencies, but by Paul's failure to mention his knowledge of the empty tomb. The possibility of different stages in the development of the Marcan empty tomb story were not investigated; the story was summarily classified as a historically unreliable, apologetic legend (1968:287).

But did Bultmann not perhaps use a tendency analysis in his description of the appearance stories? Maybe he established the two "motifs" by investigating the way in which the early Christian community developed the so-called pure form of the appearance narrative, the resurrection faith of Peter, into a missionary charge and proof of the resurrection (see above, the fourth way of establishing tendencies). One does not know, because he does not explicitly say so. But if he did, it would mean that he built one hypothesis (tendencies in tradition) on top of another (reconstructed pure forms), resulting in a totally circular argument: the history of the appearance stories are explained in terms of the history of the appearance stories.

Sanders's conclusion (1969:24ff) that the form critics (Dibelius and Bultmann) did not in fact establish any real tendencies, nor apply them systematically to the Gospels, is thus also valid for Bultmann's analysis of the resurrection tradition. Does this now mean that tendency analysis (which forms the heart of any investigation into the history of pre-canonical tradition) should be discarded as a method which is sound in principle but cannot be applied in practice? Sanders believes that the idea is sound and that it can be practiced. To avoid the problem of a priori judgments and circular argumentation, he tried to establish the assumed tendencies of the early Christian transmission of tradition outside the Apocryphal Gospels as well as inside the Synoptic Gospels (Sanders 1969:25). But in this extremely thorough investigation he came to the following conclusion:

There are no hard and fast laws of the development of the Synoptic tradition. On all counts the tradition developed in opposite directions. It became both longer and shorter, both more or less detailed, and both more and less Semitic. Even the tendency to use direct discourse for indirect, which was uniform in the post-canonical material which we studied, was not uniform in the Synoptics themselves. For this reason, dogmatic statements that a certain characteristic proves a certain passage to be earlier than another are never justified (1969:272).
Sanders's condemnation of a form-critical analysis of the Synoptic Gospels in terms of the tendencies in the history of tradition was apparently not understood by the scholarly world as a rejection of the method, but as if Sanders refined the method to improve the "tool". In the light of criticism of the method by Schmithals, Feneberg and Berger (on other issues — e.g. the disputed existence of oral tradition and the supposed relationship between the formal structure of synoptic texts and the different needs of early Christian communities), it is unintelligible how Hahn could recently still insist that form criticism should be regarded as an indispensable part of the New Testament scholar's methodology:


4 WHAT HAPPENS AFTER BULTMANN?
Where do we go from here? Is there perhaps a refined (form-critical or redaction-critical) method that can take us back to pre-canonical resurrection tradition? Or how does one evaluate the historical reliability of the Easter traditions? It is clear that one cannot accept the texts at face value because they differ too much. There must have been some history, some development, of tradition. There is also not much sense in speaking about Jesus' resurrection without considering the Gospel reports. One has to evaluate them in some way or other.

The remaining part of the paper will be limited to current interpretations of the stories of the empty tomb. The reason for choosing this tradition lies in the fact that we have, in addition to the four Gospel reports, a fifth early Christian witness in the Gospel of Peter which means that one could possibly establish some kind of relationship between these texts in terms of the age and development of the tradition. One might even be able to learn something about its pre-canonical history.

Research into the stories of the empty tomb has been haunted by Bultmann's interpretation. Everybody has wanted to improve on it or to rectify Bultmann's wrong judgments. One could speak of three different directions in which research has been carried out: (i) People have wanted to prove the existence of the empty tomb without direct reference to — or an analysis of — the Gospel narratives. (ii) There have been different attempts to establish
a pre-Marcan empty tomb tradition. (iii) Mark was viewed as the creator of the tradition which was subsequently used by all the other Canonical and Apocryphal Gospel writers. The three different directions did not come about in the above chronological order and they were sometimes combined with one another.

We are at this stage mainly interested in the second line of investigation, to see if scholars have been able to improve on Bultmann's methodology in reaching behind the Gospels into the pre-canonical oral tradition. Attention will however also be paid to the other two directions in so far as they might shed light on the history of the development of the tradition.

5 CRAIG'S APPROACH

Paul's citation of an apparently old formula in 1 Corinthians 15:3b-5, particularly verses 3b and 4a ("that Christ died..., that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day"), led to speculation about Paul and the disciples' knowledge of an empty tomb. Craig's essay represents the views of many of the above-mentioned scholars: He believes that "too many New Testament scholars have fallen prey to Bultmann's fallacy: "Legenden sind die Geschichten vom leeren Grab, von dem Paulus noch nicht weiss" (1985:40). The fact that Paul does not mention the empty tomb does not imply that he does not accept the idea. "For in the saying that Jesus died - was buried - was raised - appeared, one automatically implies that the empty grave has been left behind" (1985:40). "A second possible reference to the empty tomb is the phrase 'on the third day'" (1985:42). "This means that the phrase 'on the third day' in the formula of 1 Corinthians 15 is a time indicator for the events of Easter, including the empty tomb ..." (1985:49). Paul did not only accept the idea of the empty tomb, he also most probably knew the story. From his own testimony (Gl 2:1, 11; Rm 15:25; 1 Cor 16:3 and 2 Cor 8-9) we know that Paul visited Jerusalem on more than one occasion after his conversion. The disciples to whom he spoke in Jerusalem, must have known the story. "For not only would the disciples not believe in a resurrection if the corpse were still in the grave, but they could never have proclaimed the resurrection either under such circumstances. But if the tomb was empty, then it is unthinkable that Paul, being in the city for two weeks six years later and after that often in
contact with the Christian community there, should never hear a thing about the empty tomb" (1985:50).

Having established Paul's acceptance of the idea and knowledge of the story of the empty tomb, scholars who follow this line of investigation usually also attempt to indicate that the Gospel reports (or at least Mk 16:1-8) do not represent a late stage of development of the synoptic tradition. This means that an analysis in terms of tendencies has become totally irrelevant. Craig names a few of the arguments (1985:50ff): We have two independent traditions, namely John and the Synoptic Gospels. The empty tomb story is old because it belonged to (or rather concluded) the pre-Marcan passion narrative. The account in Mark is remarkably restrained, that is, "not kerygmatistically coloured" (1985:51). There are logical and acceptable explanations for such problems as the women wanting to anoint the decaying corpse, the different names of the woman mentioned, the rolling away of the stone, the supposed interpolation in Mark 16:7 and the odd ending of Mark 16:8.

Could we say that Craig's interpretation (1985) is more convincing than Bultmann's? I do not think so. From our lack of knowledge about Paul's view of the empty tomb Bultmann argues that Paul did not believe in Jesus' physical resurrection and Craig argues that he did. Both hypotheses fall into the class of an argumentum e silentio. Bultmann believes that the story of the empty tomb is told to prove the physical resurrection of Jesus — an idea that he does not accept — and therefore sets out to prove that the early Christian community created the legend by pointing to the possible historical inconsistencies and legendary character of the narrative. Craig also believes that the story of the empty tomb is told to prove the bodily resurrection — an idea that he accepts — and therefore argues against any possible historical inconsistencies and legendary features. It seems to me that we lack the evidence to prove either of the two correct and that Bultmann and Craig's views on the historicity of the stories of the empty tomb are determined not by historical investigation, but by dogmatic beliefs.

6 PAULSEN'S APPROACH
The second group of interpreters of the story of the empty tomb tries to continue Bultmann's search for the origin of the story — by analysing the text itself — in the oral stage of transmission. Paulsen (1980) is a representative of this group and, as we have seen, wants to improve on Bultmann's mistakes and goes into discussion with well-known linguists, as well as text, literary, form and redaction critics who have worked on Mark 16:1-8 (Aland, Bartsch, Bode, J Bowman, Broer, Dhanis, Dormeyer, Elliot, Evans, Farmer, Fuller, Goguel, Grass, Güttgemanns, Ittel, W L Knox, Léon-Dufour, Linneman, Pesh, Schenke, Schmithals, Stegemann, Taylor, Trompf, Van Cangh, Von Campenhausen and Wilckens). His criticism of Bultmann (see above) is followed by an analysis in which text, literary, form and redaction-critical analyses are kept separate. At this stage we are interested in those which can
take us back into the pre-canonical tradition, namely literary and form criticism.

Paulsen wants to improve “klassische Literarkritik” by not only taking the internal integrity or unity of Mark 16:1-8 into account in distinguishing between redaction and tradition, but by also using redaction criticism to investigate the way in which these verses form the ending of the Gospel (Paulsen 1980:145ff). The internal unity of the text (in terms of classical literary criticism) is for example not upset by verse 7, but a redaction-critical approach, which draws a parallel with Mark 14:28, to which this verse refers, leads to the conclusion that it is a redactional addition. The exact argument runs as follows: Mark 14:28 is a secondary interpolation of the redactor because: (i) it disturbs the "Stichwortanschluss" between 14:27 and 29 (σκακάλωσθήσεσθε and σκακώσασθήσουται); (ii) it is a pre-Marcan logion or a Marcan composition (reason: it is possible to view the verse this way) and (iii) it fits into "die (sic) theologische und kompositionelle Absicht des Markus".

After Mark 14:28 is established as a secondary interpolation by the redactor, one is automatically lead to conclude that Mark 16:7, which refers to 14:28, is also an interpolation by Mark. This observation is supported by the fact that Mark’s story of the empty tomb makes sense without verse 7.

Having also established Mark 16:7 as a secondary interpolation by the redactor, one is in turn directed to the further possibility that verse 8b, which stands in compositional relation to 16:7, is an addition by Mark. A pure literary-critical argument does not compel us to remove 8b as redaction, because it could still make sense within the pericope when verse 7 is viewed as secondary. The "Hypothese einer redaktionelle Hinzufügung von V 8b" is however a "bessere Argument" (Paulsen 1980:153).

Paulsen rejects attempts by scholars to prove redactional activity in Mark 16:1f, 3f or the pericope as a whole on pure (classical) literary-critical and "textimmanenten Gründe" as "methodisch problematic" and redaction-critically "unsicher" and "unwahrscheinlich" (1980:153f). This latter type of analysis is "deutlich von anderen Faktoren bestimmt". Unfortunately he does not name these other factors. As for himself, Paulsen does not show any awareness that his analysis might also be prejudiced (by his own reconstruction of Mark’s theology) (1980:165ff).

In order to apply a form-critical analysis to Mark 16:1-6, 8a, these verses – in agreement with the principles of form criticism – have to be viewed as an "ursprünglich isoliert umlaufende kleine Einheit" (1980:156). Paulsen admits that although there is a good argument for describing these verses as part of a pre-Marcan passion narrative, he prefers to perceive them as an isolated unit on the grounds that Mark 16:1 is a new beginning ("Neuaneinsatz").

The form of the text corresponds with that of a legend. This statement is however difficult to verify because Paulson does not mention what he considers the typical characteristics of a legend. The origin or Sitz im Leben of
the tradition is to be seen "in der urchristlichen Verkündigung und ihrem Versuch, die Auferstehungstradition den Gemeinden bewusst zu machen" (1980:160). This statement is substantiated by "Traditionsgeschichte" that takes "über die Form hinaus auch inhaltliche Kriterien" (1980:158) into consideration. Between the lines one understands Paulsen's use of "Traditionsgeschichte" as the development of an original tradition into the text Mark found in his source. Paulsen accomplishes this feat by pointing out that the argumentative and compositional centre of the pericope is clearly ("eindeutig") formed by "he has risen" (ἡγερθήν) in verse 6. The other elements of the story, the empty tomb and the fear of the women is added as a theological (i.e legendary) interpretation in the sense that it objectifies the resurrection tradition in narrative style (1980:158ff). Paulsen does not hesitate to say that his analysis proves ("bestätigt") Bultmann's "grundlegende These ... dass die formgeschichtliche Keimzelle in der urchristlichen Verkündigung und deren Tradition zu sehen ist" (1980:160).

Paulsen continues to discuss the intermediary stage between the creation of the legend in the community, its being preached, and its appearance in Mark's Gospel as well as the meaning of the passage within the context of Mark's theology (1980:162ff). Although these analyses might throw more light on the way in which Bultmann's description of the history (or tendencies) of the tradition was continued and refined, we will leave it at that for lack of available space, and return to an evaluation of Paulsen's application of literary and form-critical methods.

The distinction between tradition and redaction in Mark 16:1-8 (and 14:28) is based mainly on Paulsen's view of Mark's theology. "Classical literary criticism" plays only a supporting role. Bultmann's tendencies in the tradition, which is supposed to be of assistance in getting behind Mark and Q (see above) does not play a role any more. While the possibility of developing criteria outside the text to be analysed existed in principle in Bultmann's method, Paulsen's approach or way of argumentation has become completely circular.

Paulsen's reconstruction of the resurrection tradition during the history of the oral tradition (or of the origin of Mark 16:1-6, 8a) is nothing more than a wild guess. He builds his interpretation upon the assumption that the Jesus tradition was radically changed in the oral tradition, but he — like all the other form critics — has no evidence to prove the existence of such a tradition (see Teeple 1970; Schmithals 1980:171-176; 1985:93-126). Furthermore, he might be correct that ἡγερθήν forms the centre of the pericope, but that does not at all imply that it is also the "Keimzelle der Einheit" which was interpreted theologically by the other "legendary objectifying" (Paulsen 1980:160) elements of the story. The opposite interpretation seems to me to be just as valid: I would like to follow the flow of the story, namely that the discovery of the empty tomb was interpreted by its implication — the angel's ("legendary") report that Jesus had risen from the dead. In any case, Paulsen
cannot supply us with any criterion by which we can falsify or verify his hypothesis. I would therefore like to call this interpretation— notwithstanding all the footnotes—not anything more than a wild guess.

7 CROSSAN'S APPROACH

The third group of interpreters of the empty tomb narratives are those who regard Mark as the creator of the tradition. I shall give attention only to the view of Crossan, not because he can be regarded as representative of such a group of interpreters, but because he takes part in the debate on the development of the synoptic tradition.

Crossan (1976) begins his analysis with the question of what can be known of the empty tomb outside Mark 16:1-8. He rejects the attempts of people such as Craig who wish to change "presumptions" into "traditions" (Crossan 1976:135). He is also convinced that Paulsen's type of analysis is too ambiguous to lead us to any knowledge of a pre-Markan empty tomb tradition. For instance, when one looks for consensus between the analyses of Schenke, Goguel, Grundmann, Gutzenger and Hirsch, only Mark 16:2 and 8a remain as pre-Markan tradition (1976:136). What then is Crossan's solution to our problem?

According to Crossan, John 19:31 tells us that Jesus' body was removed from the cross by the Roman soldiers. This report is "closer to what actually happened on Easter morning than any presupposed burial of Jesus by his friends and disciples" (1976:137). The Gospel burial tradition shows signs of "apologetic change" (1976:137) and is therefore not reliable. Mark's reference to the resurrection on Sunday was probably derived from 1 Corinthians 15:4, a tradition that "was not intended as chronology but as prophetic and/or eschatological symbolism" (1976:137). Luke 24:22-24 is not an independent witness, but Lucan redaction. The last statement is supported by four observations:

First, the narrative moves easily from 24:21a into 24:25. Second, the women of 24:1-11 and Peter in 24:12 reappear in 24:22-23 and 24:24 respectively. Third, four redactional phrases from 24:1, 3, 5, 7 reappear in 24:21b-23 (early, find the body, living, third day). Fourth, "a vision of angels" in 24:23 uses a word for vision found only in Lk 1:22, Acts 26:19, and 2 Cor 12:1 (Crossan 1976:138).

All the other stories of the empty tomb therefore are dependent on Mark. There is even a tendency to be observed in this history of the tradition:

The argument is that WT (woman tradition) originated in Mk and went thence into all the other Gospels. These both adapted WT in their own versions and also added either GT (guard tradition) in Mt, AT (apostle tradition) in Lk and Jn, or JT (Jesus tradition) in Mt and Jn. One discerns
in all this a steady desire to replace the Woman of Mk with Apostles, and the Messenger of Mk with Jesus himself (Crossan 1976:138).

An analysis of Mark 16:1-8 in terms of content and form demonstrates the thesis that Mark created this text. The analysis of content results in the view that Mark 16:1-8 is in accord with the aims of the Gospel as a whole, namely as a polemic against "miracles and apparitions rather than in suffering and service", against the lack of interest in the Gentile mission and against the "appeal to the authority of ... the twelve, the inner three, and Peter in particular" (Crossan 1976:146). In short:

My thesis is that it was precisely to avoid and to oppose any such apparition to Peter or the Apostles that he created most deliberately a totally new tradition... (1976:146).

An analysis of Mark 16:1-8 in terms of form can be summarised in the following way:

First, the historical sequence and development of the appearances tradition was from credal statement (as in 1 Cor 15:5-7) to credal story as stages in the articulation of Easter faith. Second, one example of such credal stories is the walking on the waters in Mk 6:45-51. This is especially important because we are certain that Mk knew at least this one no matter what he knew about any other such stories. Third, the form of Mk 16:1-8 is derived directly and deliberately from that of 6:45-51 (Crossan 1976:150).

In later years Crossan refined his view of Mark 16:1-8 as a creation of Mark. In a study of the Apocryphal Gospels (Thomas, Egerton Papyrus 2, Secret Mark and Peter, 1985; see also 1987) he proposed inter alia that Mark used the Gospel of Peter (and Secret Mark) as the source for sections of his passion narrative and that the Gospel of Peter was afterwards edited with traditions taken from Mark. Crossan reconstructs the transmission of this tradition in the following way:

There are four major stages in this transmission.
(a) In the original Passion-Resurrection Source (used by the Gospel of Peter) there were only guards at the tomb ... The guards were restored to his Marcan source by Matt 27:62-66; 28:4, 11-15. (b) Mark has nothing about any guards but creates instead the empty tomb rendition of 16:1-8 ... the "youth in the tomb" of Mark 16:1-8 was derived by him from the "youth in the tomb" of the Secret Gospel of Mark in MSLC 2r:3, 4, 6. This means that both GP 2 (Gospel of Peter 6:23f): Joseph and Burial and GP
5 (Gospel of Peter 12:50-13:57): Woman and Youth are Marcan creations and were thence derived by Peter (1985:162).

The origin of the empty tomb tradition therefore lies in what Crossan calls "intertextuality": One text "creates" another. For example, the "Burial tradition in the Passion-Resurrection Source" stems from Deut 21:22-23" (Crossan 1985:164) and the tomb tradition was "derived from Josh 10:18, 26-27, which was an obvious step once Deut 21:22-23 drew attention to Joshua 10:27" (1985:164). "Just as intertextuality created the narrative details of the Passion story, so also did it create those of the Burial and the Tomb traditions" (1985:164).

At first sight the methodology of Crossan might seem to differ from that of Bultmann since it does not correspond with the assumption of an oral stage in the transmission. They do, however, agree with one another that the authors of the canonical Gospels freely created stories and that there is a certain pattern (or tendency) to be discerned in the history of this development. "Intertextuality" as the creative force behind this development is also just a new name for Bultmann's idea that narrative material (miracles and legends) in the Gospels came into being within the context of other (parallel) texts (e.g. Bultmann 1968:221ff) and this narrative material is influenced in the "formulation here and there, especially in the Emmaus story" by "nihilistic motifs" (Crossan 1985:290) or tendencies.

I would not like to reject Crossan's hypothesis about the origin of Mark 16:1-8 on the ground that it rests on too many sub-hypotheses and methodological assumptions. I personally believe that no historiography can proceed along any path other than the (re)construction of a hypothesis. But I also believe that a hypothesis must be susceptible to testing. McCullagh (1984) made a valuable contribution in this regard by distinguishing between the explanatory scope and power of a historical account or hypothesis. It might have a wide scope in taking most of the relevant material into consideration, but that does not necessarily imply that it also has the power to replace other hypotheses. Crossan's interpretation of Mark 16:1-8 takes a lot of material into account, but I do not see it eliminating other interpretations. When Crossan rejects Craig's type of solution with the judgment that he turns "presumptions" into "traditions", he pretends to provide us with solid proof in terms of real traditions which can be analysed. But when he turns necessity into a virtue by arguing that because we do not have access to any pre-Marcan traditions we have to accept Mark as the author of Mark 16:1-8, his type of argument is no different from that of Craig. It becomes even worse in his second attempt when he postulates "intertextuality" as the true "creator" of the story of the empty tomb: there was no empty tomb (and resurrection), but because Mark needed a tradition to refute the claims of the Jerusalem disciples who claimed to have seen the risen Lord, he built Secret Mark's hint at "the youth in the tomb" into a tradition.
Crossan also rejects (Bultmann's and) Paulsen's type of interpretation because no consensus exists as to the format of the reconstructed pre-Marcan empty tomb tradition. I however doubt if Crossan will bring about a consensus with his analysis. In fact, I wonder if he will find any eminent New Testament scholar endorsing his findings. Brown (in his presidential address at the SNTS meeting of 1986) believes that Crossan's methodology is way off-track from the relative consensus achieved among historical critics (not that I agree with this consensus – see below).

**8 IS BULTMANN SURPASSED BY MODERN FORM-CRITICAL STUDIES?**

In this paper I have wanted to investigate the way in which the resurrection tradition is analysed in terms of tendencies in the presupposed oral stage of its transmission. In the world of New Testament scholarship it is widely accepted that the synoptic tradition existed (or quite some time (anything between thirty and fifty years) only in the oral tradition of the early Christian community. It is also accepted that these communities were creative to a degree which varies between radical (e.g. Paulsen) to conservative (e.g. Craig). But where do these ideas come from?

The early form critics assumed that the tradition developed according to laws that can easily be established. They also believed that once these laws were known, they would explain the inconsistencies in the Gospels and help us to identify the creations and changes of the Christian community. This insight into the tradition would then eventually lead us to the original action and the authentic words of Jesus of Nazareth.

I believe that these general assumptions today still exist as part of the so-called general consensus achieved by the international world of New Testament scholarship (see the reference to Brown above) despite the fact that they have been seriously questioned and in many aspects refuted (cf the work of Sanders, Hanson, Berger, Feneberg and Schmithals, referred to above). It seems to me that people very easily use these basic assumptions (note: not observations) as if in some way or other they have been proved correct.

We have noted how Bultmann pretends to use tendencies in his analysis of the resurrection tradition. Paulsen unknowingly realised that Bultmann did not use a tendency analysis to get behind Mark, but fell back on literary-critical arguments, including those which later became known as redaction criticism. When Paulsen in turn analysed the pre-Marcan oral tradition he turned his assumptions into observations (results): the pericope developed (was changed, was created) from an early statement of faith into an objectified legend. All this happened in early Christian preaching. No tendency analysis was applied, but one is reminded of Bultmann's conviction that tendencies can be established by investigating the way in which pure forms were changed in the course of oral transmission.
We have already noticed Crossan’s use of the assumptions of form and redaction criticism. He discerns some kind of development in the (written) transmission of the resurrection tradition, namely "the steady desire to replace the Woman of Mk with the Apostles, and the Messenger of Mk with Jesus himself". His concept of intertextuality is also used in the same way as Bultmann uses novelistic tendencies in the creation and colouring of details in the miracle stories.

Hanson (1969:301) has aptly described Bultmann’s approach, which I believe has developed into a whole school of thought (cf. the essay of Hahn 1985) as "speculations by means of which he exploits these alleged discrepancies [in the synoptic tradition which] are sometimes much more elaborate than the most farfetched explanations of the harmonisers" (such as Craig). At the end of the day his historical interpretation of the resurrection story is only a result of his rationalistic assumptions (see also Hanson 1969:300f).

This does not mean that I doubt that the synoptic resurrection tradition underwent some kind of development or that Craig comes close to the real truth. Craig is unable to say what happened on Easter morning at the tomb of Jesus. If he wants to reconstruct the events, he has to reject much of the conflicting evidence — and that means that his interpretation is just another competing hypothesis.

9 CONCLUSION
All four interpretations of the resurrection tradition discussed above build their overall conclusion or hypothesis on many smaller conclusions or sub-hypotheses. In some unspoken way, it is accepted by everybody that the weight of many indecisive arguments can swing the scale in favour of one’s overall interpretation. This is however a fallacy. Many ambiguous arguments taken together do not make one overall conclusive argument.

I believe that the methodological way out of the large amount of contradictory hypotheses about the resurrection is only to be found in an honest declaration of one’s own presuppositions and in making an effort to incorporate in one’s argument the strongest points of rival interpretations. This means that assumptions that cannot be given credibility, such as the existence of tendencies in the synoptic tradition, should be abandoned. This also means that those who cannot in principle accept the resuscitation of Jesus’ corpse should not lead the world to believe that they arrived at this conclusion through a historical study of tendencies in the synoptic resurrection tradition.

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