THE STORM ON THE LAKE

_Mk iv 35-41 and Mt viii 18-27 in the light of Form Criticism, “Redaktionsgeschichte” and Structural Analysis_

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1. _Introduction_

The about-face which has been carried out in linguistics, from an almost exclusively historical to an almost totally synchronistic and structuralist study of language, has not only occurred in the study of the single grammatical sentence but equally so in the study of texts which consist of more than one grammatical sentence. Above all a number of French structuralists and German text linguists (“Generative Poetik”) have occupied themselves with the Bible because on one hand the various texts which the Bible contains can make a contribution, too, to a universally valid text grammar, and on the other hand because through this method new light can be thrown upon the text concerned and hereby the interpretation of the text can be made more fertile.

Although it is not abnormal that such reversals contain an antithetical element which often leads to polemics, it can be stated that not the French structuralists, true, but the German text scholars who apply the structural method to the New Testament, and E. GÜTTGEMANNS above all, indeed assume a very polemic stance toward the historical study of the New Testament as that appears in the form-critical and “redaktionsgeschichtliche” method. For them the form-critical and “redaktionsgeschichtliche” method is not only finished, but is also in principle irreconcilable with the structural starting points, which they consider to be the only correct ones.

Therefore it seemed to the two authors of this contribution of no little importance to study a section of a text with a parallel according to the two methods and thence to draw provisional conclusions regarding the reconcilability of the two methods.¹ To this end the story of the storm on the lake in the versions of Mk and Mt was chosen.

2. Form-criticism and "Redaktionsgeschichte" of Mk iv 35-41

2.1. Tradition and redaction in Mk iv 35-41

In the event that Mark used a tradition in his version of the story of the storm on the lake, it is clear that it at least showed structural similarities with the so-called miracle stories. It is also clear that at least one element is highly salient, namely the statement of Jesus in vs. 40. Likewise this is the only miracle story in which Jesus' disciples are saved from distress, a fact which has as yet gone unnoticed as far as we know.2

Although almost all authors are of the opinion that the beginning of the story contains editorial elements, the efforts to trace down the editorial elements have not been very successful. Something similar also holds true for vs. 40. Nevertheless it is not difficult to indicate, with the required degree of probability, a number of editorial elements.

The opinion of K. Kertelge that vss. 35-36 are editorial only to a very slight degree3 is difficult to sustain. The opening words καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς are characteristic for Mark. The same holds true presumably for διέλθωμεν and for the combination of both.4 Furthermore a certain

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2 Mt xvi 24-27 and Lc ν 1-11 are, structurally considered, certainly not miracle stories.
4 The combination of words καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς with Jesus as its subject occurs all together in the frequency 5/22/0. Calculated according to the total number of words in the narrative text (5868/5909/7647) the expected frequency would be 8.2/8.2/10.16 and the deviation from this in Mt is -3.2 (39%), in Mk +13.8 (168%), in Lc -10.6 (100%). If one takes only the cases in which the three immediately succeed each other (and thus function somewhat as a set formula), then the frequency is 5/16/0. The expected frequency is then 6.3/6.4/8.3 and the deviation in Mt is -1.3 (20%), in Mk +9.6 (150%), in Lc -8.3 (100%). (Worthy of notice is the fact that the combination occurs only once in two parallel sections of texts, namely Mt xxii 20 par. Mk xii 16).

The cohortative occurs in the following cases:

- Mt xxi 38; xxi 38; xxvi 46; xxvii 49.
- Mk i 38; iv 35; ix 5; xii 7; xiv 42; xv 36.
- Lc ii 15; ii 15; viii 22; ix 33; xv 23; xx 14.

The frequency is 4/6/6. Calculated at the total extent of the direct discourse, which contains 12472/5353/11800 words (the cohortative does not occur outside of this), the expected frequency is 6.7/2.9/6.4 and the deviation from that in Mt is -2.7 (40%), in Mk +3.1 (106%), in Lc -0.4 (6%). Calculated at the total number of verbs in the direct discourse (2582/1174/2615) the deviation is almost identical. The expected frequency is then 6.5/2.9/6.6 and the deviation in Mt is -2.5 (38%), in Mk +3.1 (106%), in Lc -0.6 (9%). The low numbers make it impossible, however, to express more than a conjecture here.

The combination of the introductory formula with the cohortative occurs exclusively in Mk i 38; iv 35 (diff. Lc viii 22); xiv 41-42 par.; Mt xxvi 45-46. The cohortative in these four cases is of a verb which expresses movement.