CHAPTER 5

Syntax and Representation of Matt 28:1–20

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 State of Preservation
The third analytical sample comes from the final leaf of the codex, pages 91–92, containing 28:1–20. With a little less than three quarters of the text extant, Schenke reconstructs a total of about 450 letters for both pages. I have provided my own transcription, which largely reflects Schenke's transcription, except that mine reflects greater uncertainty, with parts of six verses left unreconstructed. Differences are noted.

5.1.2 Mae² as a Witness to “Canonical” Matthew
My analysis of the four Coptic versions for 28:1–20 concludes that the syntax of mae² and of the other Coptic versions have about the same degree of homogeneity and heterogeneity as the texts analysed in chapters three and four. Mae²'s relative homogeneity with the other Coptic versions, and the relative heterogeneity of the others to one another, makes Schenke's theory of an alternative Vorlage difficult to sustain: mae² is too much alike the other versions for it to be a non-canonical Matthew, and the others are too different from one another for them to be canonical Matthew if mae² is not. Some examples are instructive.

Mae²'s syntactical homogeneity is especially seen in v. 2 where 16 of mae²'s 19 words are also found in at least two, and often all three, of the other versions. Two of the three remaining words are found in one other version, and only one word is unique.

On the other hand, the syntactical heterogeneity of the Coptic versions is especially seen in v. 14 where sa⁹ has five unique elements, mae² and boA have three each, and mae¹ has one. Similarly, in v. 10, sa⁹ has nine unique elements, mae² has three, and mae¹ and boA have two each.

Again, I found Schenke's retroversion of 28:1–20 to be consistently slavish, unnuanced, and little more than a formal re-translation of mae² into Greek.

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1 The most serious problem with Schenke's reconstruction is that his left margin of the recto is variable, sometimes extremely so. A well defined left margin for the upper half of the recto can be achieved if space for a single letter is assumed where the page has broken off.
Examples from nearly every verse could be cited, but two may suffice. In v. 2, with the exception of 032, the Greek manuscript tradition has the participle καταβάς, for which all four Coptic versions have the perfect verb ϧⲁⲥⲓ̈ (or its dialectal equivalent). Schenke formally retroverts ϧⲁⲥⲓ̈ as κατέβη, implying that the four Coptic versions support 032’s singular reading. Similarly, in v. 14 where the unanimous Greek tradition has the passive voice, the unanimous Coptic tradition has the active, with Schenke retroverting mae² as an active, with no regard to well-known Coptic convention.

As in the previous chapters, whenever a verse has any of the frequently recurring syntactical elements listed in 1.5, I indicate such by writing “Cf. 1.5” at the pertinent section heading. Again, comments such as “The verse has no syntactical differences from NA²⁷” or “There are two syntactical differences” are not to be taken absolutely, but as being duly qualified by the data in 1.5.

5.2 Verse by Verse Analysis

Matt 28:1

Mae² [γεν τ]ογύη δὲ μπαλμαθαον γι οψα[π τ γεν] [π]νευμ ἡπούλιν ετι

NA²⁷ Ὀψὲ ὑδὲ σαββάτων, τῇ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ εἰς μίαν σαββάτων, ἦλθεν Ἄμαρίαν ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ καὶ ἡ ἄλλη Ἄμαρία θεωρῆσαι τὸν τάφον.

28:1.a Translational Analysis. Mae² deviates significantly from NA²⁷’s syntax and vocabulary, more so than many other passages, lacking representation of Greek elements, and including elements not found in NA²⁷. These differences probably arose from the translator’s attempt to clarify his Vorlage. Despite these incongruities, mae² conveys the meaning of NA²⁷.

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2 Schenke reconstructed this as [γεν] [τ]αλαμαθαον. However, space considerations dictate that the τ of ταλαμαθαον be placed at the end of the previous line.