The papyrus fragment 7Q5 has caused a polemic based on the fact that it has few recognisable letters, even fewer words, and a generally cloudy history. The polemic started when J. O'Callaghan identified 7Q5 as Mark 6:52-53 in 1972, and has remained tenacious in his proclamation of the certainty of his identification since he first published it. He and his follower C.P. Thiede often move the debate to journals and reviews where the severe and rigorous objections of serious scholars do not appear. Lately, on the Internet, I came across an interview with O'Callaghan by G. Mckenzie González, in which O'Callaghan's personable and open expressiveness certainly did not hide his authoritarian arguments. He explains the history of the identification of 7Q5 with Mark 6:52-53, stressing the honesty and papyrological rigor observed by him throughout the process, and showing more eagerness to succeed in his thesis than the scientific interest needed to gain a valid conclusion. The reader can perceive that O'Callaghan does not pay enough attention to the actual meaning of the opposing arguments. Although he says that he seriously considers

1 J. O'Callaghan, “¿Papiros neotestamentarios en la cueva 7 de Qumrán?” Bib 53 (1972) 91-100.
3 “They [the opponents] attacked me vehemently, but they were personal attacks with great international repercussions, rather than scientific arguments. I could see, with the arguments allowed by the science of papyrology, with which I am acquainted, that they did not touch the core of the question. Their attacks had little papyrological scientific content. Then I began answering them rigorously, paying attention to the arguments and not to the persons... I thought I was wasting my time and energies in a debate that, planned in such terms, was worthless... As a papyrologist I consider pathetic their proposed alternatives. It seems that they wish to lead astray or to talk, just for the sake of talking, rather than to enlighten... One can clearly see that in their
other reconstructions of the text, he accepts only one possibility for the eight letters of the fragment. All other possibilities are dismissed as impossibilities, because the identification of 7Q5 with Mark 6:52-53 is the truth, and the truth is real, objective and conclusive. In my opinion, this a priori argument begs the question at hand and minimizes many relevant contributions to an open scientific debate on this subject.

alternative proposals the most elementary scientific methodology has not been taken into account. And I stand by these words. (“Ellos me atacaban fuertemente, pero más que argumentos científicos de peso eran ataques personales de gran resonancia internacional. Yo veía, por los argumentos que me permitía la ciencia de la papirología, de la que conozco, que no tocaban el meollo de la cuestión. Eran ataques de poco contenido científico papiroológico. Entonces empecé a responder con rigurosidad atendiendo a los argumentos y no a las personas... Pensaba que perdía tiempo y energías en un debate que planteado en esos términos no valía la pena... Esas alternancias que proponen, como papiroólogo... ¡da pena verlas! Parece que aquí quieren más que iluminar desorientar y hablar por hablar... Se ve que es evidente que en las propuestas de sus alternancias no se ha tenido en cuenta lo más elemental de la metodología científica. Y esto lo digo de manera absoluta”). And again: “Those alternative positions are disgraceful according to science” (“Estas significaciones alternativas que han propuesto en verdad dan pena en el plano científico. [Etc., etc.]”) (Internet 3, 6).

4 “I analyse in depth all their papyrological statements” (“Todo lo que afirman al nivel papiroológico yo lo analizo en profundidad”...) (Internet 5).

5 “There (in his book Los primeros testimonios del Nuevo Testamento. Papirología neotestamentaria [Córdoba: Ediciones El Almendro, 1995]), I declare and prove scientifically from a papyrological point of view that 7Q5 is Mk 6:52-53 [emphasis mine]... This matter is definitively proved and definitely certain, this Professor Dou has also confirmed from the point of view of mathematical possibilities” (“Allí declaro y pruebo científicamente, desde un punto de vista papiroológico que el 7Q5 es Mc 6,52-53... El asunto está decididamente probado y es decididamente seguro, cosa que también me ha dicho, desde el punto de vista de las posibilidades matemáticas, el mismo profesor Dou”) (Internet 5).

6 “With the final results of my research, I am happy to have found this to be true... I am pleased to have proposed an identification that can be stated with certainty [emphasis mine].” (“Tras los resultados finales de la investigación estoy encantado de que esto haya sido verdad... estoy contento de que la identificación que propuse pueda afirmarse con certeza”) (Internet 14, 15).