

**“BABEȘ-BOLYAI” UNIVERSITY CLUJ-NAPOCA
FACULTY OF ORTHODOX THEOLOGY
Doctoral School of Theology “Isidor Todoran”**

**HISTORICITY AND THEOLOGY IN THE EMMAUS
EPISODE
(Luke 24, 13-25)
- A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE MODERN
BIBLICAL RESEARCH -**

Scientific Coordinator:
Fr. Professor PhD Stelian TOFANĂ

PhD Candidate:
Daniela Dolha

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Key words

Emmaus, appearance, unbelief, recognition, the Stranger, “breaking of bread”, disappearance.

Synthesis of the main parts

In the modern exegesis it is considered that the dimension that characterises the appearance reported in Luke 24: 13-35 represents the “recognising experience” of the resurrection of Jesus on His way to Emmaus. The localisation of the first appearance of the resurrected Jesus at Emmaus, “threescore furlongs” from Jerusalem, reflects the primordial theological intention that guided Luke towards writing his text, which was an original creation. Sprinkled with sentences and idioms that stem right from the vetero-testamentary literatures – hence its extraordinary symbolism – the Emmaus text reflects an entire vetero-testamentary mentality that is easily recognised in connection with the prophetic text that served as a solid base for Luke’s history.

From a Lukanic perspective, the first beneficiaries of this experience – the first disciples to whom God’s salvation plan was revealed – are Cleopas and the anonymous disciple, two conceptual characters whose real identity is discovered simultaneously with the recognition of Jesus resurrected in “The Stranger” who extended his hand to them during “the breaking of bread”. The interpretation of the “Stranger’s” gesture is difficult not because of the issue concerning “the breaking of bread” as a symbol of the Eucharistia, even though it does not include “the wine” as a liturgical element (cf. Luke 22: 18) – which is the main cause of dispute between exegetes regarding the Eucharist at Emmaus – but because it is closely linked to the “Stranger” who sits at table above the salt. In other words, the theological intention of the Lukanic author, who belongs to the third Pauline generation, is questioned when it comes to identifying Jesus resurrected at Emmaus with the “Stranger”, therefore with a conceptual character who does not represent the identity of the people of Israel (cf. Ezekiel 44: 9) and was appealed against in the traditional Judaic space in the time of Jesus. With the geographical schema Jerusalem – Emmaus – “threescore furlongs” away from Jerusalem, Luke reveals with a highly authentic and complex precision not only the Judaic exegetical methods, but especially his own theological thinking.

The present thesis is structured in five parts that are preceded by an introduction and finalised with a series of conclusions.

The introduction will consist of a short reference related to appearances in order to clarify straight from the beginning and from a modern biblical investigation perspective some potential confusions, especially those related to the wrong interpretation of the appearances in the order in which they were included in the gospels or their interpretation as historical events, in the technical sense that this term has today; the main goal of recording the appearances or the exegetes’ explanation regarding the discrepancies between the evangelists, but also the theological reasons that characterise the

appearances. Additionally, the objectives of the thesis will be presented in this part, as well as the applied methodology, the current status of the investigation, the proposed research methods and the main sources that were consulted.

In the first part (chapter 2), the global vision of the Lukanic work will be exposed as to identify the primordial intention that guided Luke into documenting in writing the appearance of Jesus resurrect at Emmaus, a text that was an original creation. Two coinciding clues, that together with the Acts of the Apostles form the “Lukanic work”, represent the foundation of the entire Lukanic reflection. In other words, the Emmaus parable represents a compendium of the first book and a perspective of the second one, and this is why it is revealed only in the context of the entire Lukanic work. In this respect, two fundamental aspects that underline the real context of the Emmaus text will be considered: “The literary phenomenon of the Lukanic work” highlights the unity reflected by the two books, the Gospel’s narrative style and the historical – theological perspective of the Acts, which allows the Gospel to stand out from the autonomous narration model (Mark) while becoming complete with The Acts of the Apostles. These aspects will partially clarify the premises that identify Luke the evangelist as the author of the “Lukanic work”, the issue tackled next. This will be completed with the author’s identification as Paul’s disciple, given the two men’s familiar expressions, the scrupulous technique when it comes to exactly reproducing some sentences, the rich vocabulary, the stark and concise catechetical character, all of which combined reveal Luke the intellectual.

The projection of the end of times and of the manifestation in a far future, as to focus on continuing the history of the salvation, singles out Luke the theologian from the other evangelists’ vision; the same is done by calling the Holy Spirit solve his contemporaries’ preoccupation regarding the delayed manifestation. Defining the limits of the history of the salvation and configuring Jesus as “the centre of the time”, re – enacting the theological motif of the “road”, the precise geographical diagram, Galilee – Jerusalem, all of these represent theological elements that are also reflected in the theology of the Emmaus parable. The analysis of the general structure of the third gospel highlights Luke’s literary effort after joining together the results of the literary effort of the pre-Lukanic author and that of other gospels (Mark) until the current writing, driven by the responsibility of announcing the Gospel to his contemporaries, and also by facilitating the experience of meeting Jesus Christ. The analysis of the social – religious context in Luke’s writing – one marked by tensions, divisions and heretical delays – reveals the primordial intention that guided Luke the theologian towards writing his work, and implicitly the Emmaus parable.

The second part (chapter three) will tackle the “Emmaus” historicity, seeing as the textual critique has not managed to solve – until the present day – the so-called “Lukanic problem”, which means identifying Emmaus’ location. The theoretic approach regarding this issue has remained the same over the last fifty years, focusing on clarifying the “threescore furlongs” or “eightscore furlongs” distance between Jerusalem and Emmaus, based on the information provided by various manuscripts. From a textual critique perspective, Emmaus’ location remains an open issue. The experts also resorted to archaeology, trying to identify Emmaus’ location by archaeological excavations or by

interpreting various literary symbols. Taking into account that the hypothetical assessments deriving from these two methods do not clarify Emmaus' symbolism, most of the exegetes recommend using other methods to solve the "Lukanic problem".

As such, they tried identifying Emmaus starting from the etymology of the term Emmaus, which derives from the Hebrew חמט or חמת , *hammat*, meaning "fountain" of "hot fountain". The actual goal was to conceptualise the term "Emmaus" in the literary context of that age. In this respect, the term "fountain" was identified in the Epistle of Jacob, which was recently assessed by the modern exegesis as being one of the earliest writings in the New Testament (44-48 .H.). From a literary point of view, the expression was also identified in the "De ebrietate" treaty by Philo of Alexandria, the leading representative of Judaism in the diaspora during the 1st century. In both cases, the term "fountain" appears in correspondence with "mouth" and is an analogy to "tongue", therefore it is associated with the way of expression as an external manifestation of the reality of faith. The adjective "hot" is symbolically associated with "wine", which leads to "drunkenness" (delirium), therefore rebellion, loss of judgement, ignorance. In a vetero-testamentary context, it is indicative of Exodus 32: 18, namely of the people of Israel falling into idolatry, becoming slaves of sin or losing grace, an event that had dramatic and eschatological consequences for Israel. One last approach of the Lukanic Emmaus comes from the historic Emmaus perspective, in the context of the triumphant battle of Emmaus (168 B.C.), caused by the Maccabees' uprising against the foreign occupation, which took place during the first renovation wave, as a reaction against the Hellenistic culture impregnating into Judaism (2nd century B.C.). The historic perspective aims at identifying some possible connections between the Lukanic Emmaus and the historic Emmaus, based on unique linguistic correspondences in the New Testament to be found between 1Maccabees 4: 10-11 and Luke 24: 21, according to experts. The historic – theological context reveals the prophetic text that served as a base for Luke's text, an original creation.

The Emmaus text's approximation will be made in the third part of the present paper (chapter four), by using some interpretation methods that emerged in the 20th century and are still valid today. One of the methods used is the synchronic method, focused on the rhetorical power of the text; once applied, this method will highlight the connection between the text and its recipients. The next method is the diachronic analysis, focused on clarifying the textual history, on solving the incognita in the text. These two methods, synchrony and diachrony, which complete each other, are enhanced by the so called pragmatic reading of the text, the narrative analysis, which works under the influence of the synchronic method. This is focused on highlighting the narrative strategy that influences the reader and aims to underline the narrator's theology.

Firstly, there will be an analysis of chapter 24, made up of three matrix texts, in the sense that there is a structural (linguistic) matrix and a functional (communicative) one. They both contribute to the synoptic base of textual comparisons which bring about textual clarifications. In this context, the variety of exegetic proposals and arguments related to the division of chapter 24 will be highlighted, followed by a structural analysis of each of the three matrix texts (24: 1-12; 24, 13-35; 24, 36-49). Two analyses stand out: the outstanding structural analysis of Louis Dussaut, which allows for the identification

of numerous "concentric symmetries" in the Emmaus text, this concentric structure emphasising the entire chapter 24, and the analysis of Antoine Delzant, based on the semiotic method. The analysis of chapter 24 aims at interpreting the Emmaus text in its immediate context, following its interpretation in the global context of the Lukanic texts, presented in the second chapter. Furthermore, several issues will be considered: the origin of the history of Emmaus, of the previous tradition Luke had access to when writing the text, obvious in some phrases which do not belong to the author and in terms which do not reflect the Lukanic style; the structural similarity to other texts and, finally, the interpretation of old tradition through the theological perspective of his gospel. In addition, a reflection will be made on the origin of pre-Lukanic tradition, most likely a prior Hierosolymitani tradition, contemporary to Paul and known by Luke, which demonstrates the similarities between Luke 24: 34 and 1 Corinthians 15: 3. In the same context, an attempt will be made at identifying Cleopas and different options of identity attributed to the "anonymous" disciple will be presented.

The exegetic analysis of the text will be included in the fourth part of the paper (chapter five) and will apply to all verses individually. This exegetic analysis pinpoints to the central theological idea of "recognition" towards which the dialogue with the "Stranger" converges and which advances the idea of unbelief, namely the loss of faith, which determined the two disciples to leave Jerusalem; their messianic expectations regarding the Restoration of Israel, the lack of knowledge of the Scriptures as main cause of the spiritual blindness of the two disciples, expressed as disillusion and unbelief towards the paschal message. Moreover, emphasis will be placed on the fact that Jesus resurrected and under the identity of the "Stranger", resorts to the Scriptures, which is a Lukanic theological central idea focused on the fulfilment of prophecies; on the Christological dialogue underlining the messianic typology of Jesus, from a prophetic perspective: "a prophet mighty in deed and word" (v. 19). From this angle, the expectations placed in Jesus as a prophet, who was supposed to announce a better future for Israel and to make it come true (v. 21), will be considered in relation to the Maccabees' political expectations of a messianic prophet (1 Maccabees 4: 46) to free them from foreign ruling (1 Maccabees 4: 10-11). As one can observe, the context of Maccabean Emmaus allows Luke to illustrate the opposition between Jesus and the messianic, traditionalist and nationalist paradigms of the Maccabees, conjured up by the two disciples on their road to Emmaus. Luke supports the reasoning of Jesus based on the Scriptures, thus highlighting His identity and messianic mission (cf. Genesis 21: 28).

In the same chapter, a few critical – exegetic approaches will be presented, after which the recognition of God resurrected at the table will follow. The two verses, 30 and 35, which mention the "breaking of bread", are the climax of the recognition of Jesus resurrected, being in fact the central idea of the Eucharistical sacrament and of the paschal faith of the disciples (Luke 24: 36-49). At the same time, the Lukanic intention of establishing the bases of the relationship between Eucharist, Passion and Easter, expressed through the "breaking of bread", will be highlighted. There will also be an assertion of the idea that Jesus "breaking bread", present in the supper of the community, is Jesus crucified and resurrected. Observations will be made as well, repeating the theological idea of "eyes opened/knowing Him" in the Lukanic text (Luke 24: 13-49) The

chapter will end by evoking the relationship between recognition and metanoia (the inflection point) in the Lukanic outlook. The theological idea of "returning" to Jerusalem will be considered, both in the sense of a change of direction and in that of a change of destiny for the two disciples; especially due to their return to Jerusalem and participation with the "the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them" (Luke 24, 33) in the official appearance of Jesus resurrected (Luke 24: 36- 49), an event which shows how the community of the witnesses of Jesus resurrected was born in Jerusalem. This explains the geographical schematism Jerusalem – Emmaus – Jerusalem, whose role is to signal the Hierosolymitani community as the only community at the origin of the Christian movement. This represents the "mother" community for all the other Christian communities and the place where mission amongst strangers will start. This is how some exegetes explain the fact that all the appearances of Jesus resurrected are placed within the limits of Jerusalem and the convergent structure of the three appearances. Moreover, the idea that, from now on, the paschal message is based on the established body of witnesses (cf. Isaiah 43: 10-12) and not on an individual appearance (Luke 24: 13-35), of angels (Luke 24: 4), will be put forward. Before the peoples, the Apostles' community, as inheritor of Israel, holds the mission of witnessing the fact that God is the only Redeemer and that Jesus is Christ resurrected (Luke 24: 46).

In the context of the sixth chapter (fifth part), some possibilities of investigation will be put forwards, starting with the analysis of the "threescore furlongs" distance from the perspective of the theological idea of "the rest of Israel", a concept with veterotestamentary implications (cf. Ezekiel 4: 1-3, the term Yahad: "only us"; "we are a distinct group"); a specific Paulinic theological idea (Romans 11: 1-10), having remarkable significance in the Emmaus text (v. 13). An incursion will be made in the sectarian phenomenon, one of the most representative social and religious phenomena of ancient Judaism. The contextualisation of this phenomenon will bring about the discussion about the pre – sectarian phenomenon mentioned in Deuteronomy 6: 1-6, when the concept of religious ethnocentrism was crystallised (5th century B.C.), followed by the actual stage of sectarian phenomenon, taking shape during the Maccabees (2nd century B.C.), symbolised by the victorious battle of Emmaus (168 B.C) and ending with the presentation of the great theological currents of the first Christian churches, which remained illustrated in the writings of the New Testament. The impact of the sectarian phenomenon on the Christian movement will be analysed, bearing in mind the fact that the controversy which has torn apart Judaism ever since the Persian epoch transferred to Christianity (cf. Genesis 6: 1-6). This controversy aims at the relationship of the Israeli people with strangers, meaning with those who do not define the identity of the people of Israel (Ezekiel 44: 9). On a different vein, the controversy gives birth to the following question: faced with a global world, which attitude should Judaism assume in order to preserve its identity: to protect itself from the surrounding world or to open towards it? Luke presents the Christian option in Luke 24: 13-35, text based on 1 Maccabees 7: 13-18. By resorting to the prophetic text, Luke reflects upon the relation between Judaism and strangers before and after the coming of Jesus. Given that the subject of this chapter is spread across approximately five centuries of universal and Israeli history, it was

considered appropriate to present some chronological tables to complete the historical data provided in the analysis.

The paper will end with chapter seven, which is a reflective reading of chapter 24, where Luke helps identify divine pedagogy. By analysing this road, this pedagogy, the fundamental elements of the road which directs the contemporary human being towards Jesus Christ, the Saviour, are highlighted. By the same token, the role of Revelation will be pinpointed in the pedagogy God used with the believer, in order to make him step from darkness into the light, from slavery into freedom, from Egypt to Canaan, from Emmaus to Jerusalem. Later on, the role of the Holy Scripture will be taken into consideration as the source of truth which must determine the contents of faith. At the same time, the role of the Scripture as a pedagogical guide in the process of faith will be signalled. The urgency of preferential evangelisation of those who are away or estranged will be suggested. We ask ourselves how we should evangelise so as to offer the good news to the strangers with whom we interact now more than ever.

Concluding remarks:

The present thesis explained, during the analysis of the Emmaus gospel, that this appearance was included in Luke 24 as a keystone due to the special interests of the Lukanic author to solve (preparing beforehand the mission of Hellenist Christianity amongst strangers, started by Stephan, straight after the Descent of the Holy Spirit) the theological issue between Jews and strangers, by cutting off the "cultic" distinction between Jews and strangers, so that they can all be part of the "mother" Church of Jerusalem, presented by Jesus during His official appearance (24: 36-43), right after the Emmaus appearance. In this sense, the Emmaus appearance has the role of a transition channel towards something essential for Luke, namely the official appearance of Jesus resurrected (Luke 24: 36-49).

The purpose of this official appearance of Jesus resurrected is to recreate God's project which did not come true in the Old Testament, that is the creation of a people of God, of a Church where there are no poor, marginalised people (strangers) because they share everything, they live in unity. This objective is highlighted through geographical schematism (Jerusalem – Emmaus – Jerusalem – "threescore furlongs"), whose intention is to assert the unity of the Christian movement by denying any Christian group found at the edge of the lineal, fix and uniform mission started by Jesus in Jerusalem and later continued by the original Christian movement. This initial epoch of the Christian movement, marked by compact unity, without breaches, based on the teaching of the Apostles, linked to the community of Jerusalem, a key centre of Christian unity, representing the beginning of the mission among strangers (pagans), opposes the (advanced) epoch corresponding to the time when the Lukanic author actually lived and which was confronted with divisions and heretical deferrals on the part of priests and supervisors of the Church, called "ravenous wolves" because of their behaviour (Genesis 20: 29). Thus, Luke supports the Orthodox Church of his time in the public debate against heretical groups, placing them outside the old unitary tradition that put the basis of the Christian movement. In conclusion, Luke makes an ecclesiastical apology.

