

The Way to Emmaus (Lk 24, 13–32)¹

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1. Preface

According to G. Theißen – A. Merz, the appearances of the resurrected Jesus fall into two categories: a) those when his form is directly visible; his appearing is connected to his commanding his disciples to announce the Resurrection to the world together with his promising that he will be among them (**motif of authorization**: Mt 28, 16–20; Lk 24, 36–49; Jn 20, 19–23; 21, 15–22) and (b) those when Jesus appears in »another form« and then, through the interpretation of the Scriptures, a meal and his words, he reveals himself (**motif of recognition**: Lk 24, 13–32; Jn 20, 14–16; 21, 11–13).² In two instances falling under the first category the motif of doubt occurs along with that of the validation of Jesus' identity. Both cases deal with a meeting arranged by Jesus, who, after his Resurrection still bears the wounds of the Crucifixion and continues to be present in his church.

Both the narrative of the resurrected Jesus' appearance to two unknown disciples, Cleopas and another anonymous man being on the way to Emmaus (an account only found in Luke), and his appearance to Mary Magdalene as a gardener, belong to the second category.

The Emmaus narrative has the following components:

1. The Encounter (13–16)
2. The Dialogue (17–27)
3. The Dinner (28–32)
4. The »resurrection« of the disciples and the proclamation of the Resurrection (33–35)

According to H. Wansbrough³, the pattern of the story, which is parallel to Acts 8, 26–40, follows a chiasmus:

- a. Journey from Jerusalem (13)
 - b. Unenlightened conversation (14)
 - c. Jesus comes up (15–16)
 - d. Disciples declare their ignorance (17–24)
 - e. Jesus explains the good news (25–27)
 - d. Enlightenment in the breaking of bread (28–30)
 - c. Jesus departs (31)
 - b. Delight of disciples (32)
- a. Further spread of the good news (33–35)

¹ The text was translated from Greek by the postgraduate student Olympia Pavlopoulou. The English Bible texts are quoted from *English Standard Version 2001* in Bible-Works 2006, Version 7.

² G. Theißen–A. Merz, *Der Historische Jesus. Ein Lehrbuch*, Göttingen ³2001, S. 423.

³ H. Wansbrough, *Acts of the Apostles*, <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~sben0056/actoftheapostles.htm> (28.12.2006).

In this article I will try to stress the rich symbolism of this passage by placing particular emphasis on the role of the interpretation of the Scriptures in the opening of the people's spiritual eyes.

2. The first day of the week

Luke places this dramatic event in the centre of a triplet of Easter events, which took place on the first day of the week. As Cleopas emphasizes three days have already passed since the dramatic Passion events, while quietness – the rest of Saturday (23, 56) – has intervened. The first event with which the first day of the week begins, is the discovery of the empty tomb and the proclamation to three women, who are mentioned by their names (Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James,) and to other women, by two men who stood in shining garments (»ἐν ἐσθῇτι ἀστραπτύσει«). These good tidings are expressed in the phrase: »οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε, ἀλλὰ ἡγέρθη« (He is not here, but has risen). As with the Annunciation to the Mary in Jesus' Protohistory, so the presence and the tidings of the angel »on the first day of the week« first cause fear and then lead to faith.

The way in which fear is recorded in the case of these women, does not stem from the intention of reminding them of the prophecies of the O.T., but from the remembrance of Jesus' words in Galilee that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise (»τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Ἀνθρώπου ὅτι δεῖ παραδοθῆναι εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων ἁμαρτωλῶν καὶ σταυρωθῆναι καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἀναστῆναι«, Lk 24, 7). The use of the verb »μυμνήσκομαι« in the Scriptures does not only mean the remembrance of a word or an event in the past, but also the true worshipping experience of this event in the present with such a force that the present is transformed (see Lk 1, 54.72; 23, 42; Acts 10, 31; 11, 16)⁴.

It should be noted that the first time the prophecy of the Passion and the Resurrection was heard in Galilee, was after the miraculous feeding of 5.000 men with five loaves and two fishes in Bethsaida by Jesus (9, 10–17). However, hearers of this prophecy in 9, 22 were *only* his disciples, who after the experience of feeding the crowd, were questioned about the identity of Jesus. After Peter's answer that Jesus is »the Christ of God« (9, 20), Jesus prophesized the passion, his rejection by the official representatives of Israel and finally his crucifixion and resurrection. Eight days later the three disciples had the astounding eschatological experience of Jesus' Transfiguration on the mountain (»ὁ ἱματισμὸς αὐτοῦ λευκὸς ἕξαστράπτων«) and of the presence of God's Kingdom not in the distant future, but in the dramatically experienced present (9, 28–36). On this mountain, a glorified Jesus was seen surrounded by Moses and Elias, who (as only Luke notes) appeared in glory and spoke of his departure- exodus- which he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem (»ὁ φθίντες ἐν δόξῃ ἔλεγον τὴν ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ ἣν ἡμελλεν πληροῦν ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ«, 9, 31). According to Luke, the Law and the Prophets, represented and symbolized by the two Old Testament personalities who had the overwhelming experience of the theophany at Sinai, do not appear to focus their prophecy on the exodus of Israel from the »Egyptian« (Roman) slavery, but the exodus of Jesus from Jerusalem through *his* passion and resurrection. By rephrasing the *Shema* the interpretive voice of Yahweh (the Bat Qol) makes it in fact clear that even the two leading personalities of Judaism and the entire world are compelled to listen, not only to God's word, as it was written down in the

⁴ O. Michel, *Μυμνήσκομαι*, in: G. Kittel (Hg.), ThWNT IV, Stuttgart 1959, S. 678–687.

Torah (Dtn 6, 4), but also to Jesus' words and especially those regarding his Passion and his Resurrection..

The angels refer back to this word of the Lord when addressing the women bearing the spices. At the same time, the audience of Luke's gospel correlates the experience of the coming of God's Kingdom into History (the Transfiguration) that took place on the eighth day (9, 27) with the men's good tidings of Jesus' resurrection »on the first day of the week«. The fact that Luke loads the »first« day with the symbolism of the eighth is also proved by the motif of calmness, which precedes it (23, 56; 24, 21). In this three days' quiescence, the agony of the disciples grows, preceded according to Jewish belief the creation and will, in eschatological terms, signalling the transition from the old to the New Age (4 Esdr 7, 29)⁵. In the New Testament this transition to the new Aion takes place in history because of the passion and the resurrection of Jesus.

In Luke this one Easter day reaches its peak (24, 36–49) with the visible presence of Jesus »in the middle« of his disciples, the greeting Shalom (Peace), the confirmation through eating fish (and honey according to Majority Text) that the resurrected Jesus is not a spirit, and the ensuing Christocentric universal explanation of the Scriptures. In this way the feelings of fear and agitation first turned into »joy and wonder«, with a sense of underlying disbelief (verse 41), and in the end into »a great joy« (verse 50).

3. Place and People

It is a remarkable event that in Luke the resurrected Jesus does not first reveal himself to Peter (compare 1 Cor 15, 5), who rose and ran to the tomb (»ἀναστὰς ἔδραμε ἐπὶ τῷ μνημείῳ«) in order to verify the information of the spice-bearing women, but to two unknown disciples, who were on their way to a geographically unidentified town. The destination of the two disciples has not been adequately determined until today. **Emmaus** (< *chammath* = warm – curative spring)⁶, which according to the Gospel is 60 stadia⁷, i.e. 11,1 km (6,9 miles), away from *Jerusalem*, has been identified with the following places⁸:

1. Emmaus is a place known from the battles of the Maccabees (1 Macc 3, 40. 57; 4, 3). This town, that was later named *Nikopolis*, once fortified by Bacchides (1 Macc 9,50; *Josephus*, Ant 13.15), was set on fire in 4 B.C. and was later rebuilt (*Josephus*, Bell 3.3.5). It is also identified with the village *Amwas* on the road to Joppe. This site, where there was a city and not a town in the Hellenistic period, is about 40 km from Jerusalem, so the question is raised how the disciples covered a distance of more than 80 km from and to Jerusalem in only one day.
2. The Crusaders identified Emmaus with el-Quibeibeh, which is located northwest of Jerusalem and at exactly the same distance as that noted in the Gospel. In 1099 A.D. the Crusaders erected there a fortress and built a church). (However there is no evidence of a town called Emmaus situated in this particular area).
3. *Josephus* mentions a town called *Ammat* at a distance of 30 stadia (5 km) from Jerusalem (*Josephus*, Bell 7.6.6), where Vespasian settled 800 veterans. This site is now

⁵ S. Despotis, Η Επουράνιος Πατρεία στα κεφ. 4–5 της Αποκαλύψεως του Ιωάννη, Wiesbaden 2000, S. 144.

⁶ D: Ουλαμμαούς.

⁷ (Codex) a et al: 160 στάδια.

⁸ J. E. Strange, Emmaus, in: D. N. Freedman, The Anchor Bible Dictionary, vol. II, New York u.a. 1992, S. 497–498.

called Quloniyyeth and is located near Bet Mozah (Isa 18, 26). This is probably the most likely location.

The two disciples who walked to that town are also unknown to us. The name Cleopas is a short form of the name *Cleopatros* and has no connection to *Clopas* (Jn 19, 25; *Eusebius*, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.11). Regarding the other anonymous walker it is assumed that he was either Simon (not Peter but) the son of Clopas (*Origen*, *Contra Celsus* 2.62. 68; cod. S; 949), Nathaniel (cod. V; 9th century), the wife of Cleopas or Peter (something impossible as it is proven in 24, 34). The liturgical tradition of the Eastern Orthodox Church has adopted the view that it was **Luke**, even though the Evangelist himself in the preface of his gospel does not name himself among the eyewitnesses and servants of the Word (1, 1)⁹.

The disclosure of these walkers' names is surely not so important to the evangelist. More important is their path since they are both presented as walking away not only geographically but metaphorically as well, from Jerusalem, which is the kernel – the centre – of the »theological geography« of Luke's entire work and constitutes the link between the divine Promise and the historical Fulfilment. After the anticipation of three days and the escalation of anxiety it seems that the disappointment due to the tragic end of Jesus of Nazareth and their unfulfilled expectations led them to turn away from the entire plan of divine economy, in which the town of David was a point of reference.

At this moment of existential detachment from the Holy City, Jesus, drawing near, walks with them. Thus, even after his resurrection he seems to continue the peregrination he has already begun from Galilee to Jerusalem. If one wants to »narrate« in full the course of the divine economy in Luke's Gospel, one should first remark that through the Annunciation and Birth a mysterious descent of the God-Saviour takes place who is escorted by angels to earth where darkness thrives and the world is sleeping (Lk 2, 8). This descent is obvious only to some unknown and humble persons, the Virgin Mary and the shepherds. After that, the exodus (that is, *ascension*)¹⁰ of Jesus from Galilee to the Holy City through Samaria takes place, which ends with his publicly degrading crucifixion by the representatives of the Torah, the Temple and the Roman government. At the outset of that journey, as it has already been noted, there is the description of the ascension of Jesus to the mountain of glory and his Transfiguration, that the disciples (the future pillars of the Church; Gal 2, 9), can understand only if *they wake up*. Before the description of the ascension of Jesus to heaven at the right side of the Father (Lk 24, 50–53; Acts 1, 6–11; 7, 55–56), in the narration of the way to Emmaus there is a reference to his descent to the dark depths of doubt and disbelief of the two disciples, which leads to their ascension from the tomb of their hopes and expectations to the missionary field of the presence of the God's Kingdom. It is about ascension before the Ascension! In both cases only after an awakening procedure do the disciples realize that the Law and the Prophets speak of Jesus. In the transfiguration -Metamorphosis¹¹, the disciples are invited through the

⁹ Eothinon V, in: *Apostoliki Diakonia* (Hg.), Παρακλητική ήτοι Όκτώηχος ή Μεγάλη, Athens ²1984, S. 399.

¹⁰ Compare Lk 9, 51: »Εγένετο δὲ ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ἀναλήψεως αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς τὸ πρόσωπον ἐστήριξεν τοῦ πορεύεσθαι εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ« (= When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem).

¹¹ It is true that, in the case of the way to Emmaus, Jesus is not depicted as taking another form (see Mk 16, 12–13) as in the occasion of the Transfiguration. **The eyes of the disciples** were kept from recognizing him (Lk 24, 16. 32). In my opinion, this is due to the fact that Luke, having to deal with an early Gnosticism, does not wish to shed doubt on the fact that the resurrected Jesus not simply seemed to have but really had human flesh.

protological and eschatological glory of Jesus and the divine voice to understand and accept the Passion. In the second case, the disciples and the listeners are invited through the Passion to view the glory of the resurrected Messiah.

4. The Exodus of the disciples from Jerusalem

At the beginning of the narrative the two disciples appear to talk intensively¹² to each other about all these things that had happened (»πρὸς ἀλλήλους περὶ πάντων τῶν συμβεβηκότων τούτων«). It is characteristic that the phrase »πρὸς ἀλλήλους« has already been used in the Gospel to note the reactions of the shepherds (2, 15), the farmers (20, 14) and other witnesses (4, 36; 6, 11; 8, 25) to the strange person and actions of Jesus. The object of the conversation between the two disciples is not only the discovery of the empty tomb by the spice-bearing women and Peter, as the reader / listener first supposes, but as Cleopas explains in verses 19–20, all the events regarding Jesus of Nazareth, »a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him« (»ὅς ἐγένετο ἀνὴρ προφήτης δυνατὸς ἐν ἔργῳ καὶ λόγῳ ἐναντίον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ, ὅπως τε παρέδωκαν αὐτὸν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ ἄρχοντες ἡμῶν εἰς κρίμα θανάτου καὶ ἐσταύρωσαν αὐτόν«). The words of Cleopas, as is proved by their comparison with the words of Peter in Acts (2, 22–24; 10, 38), were part of the sermon and perhaps of the Credo (confession of faith) of the first church. However, »reciting the creed« does not lead to true faith, and has no existential impact if the spiritual eyes and the mind of men do not open¹³.

This is why at this exact moment of their common walk and discussion they are touched by the person, whose experience »torments« them. The revelation of the resurrected Jesus of Nazareth is presented through the method of the tragic irony. While the listeners know that the one approaching the two errant disciples is the omniscient Jesus, the disciples do not know that. Furthermore Jesus actually approaches the two disappointed disciples with a question, pretending to know nothing about the events in Jerusalem¹⁴. The two co-walkers express their surprise at this encounter with the question »Are you the only one who lives in Jerusalem and do not know what happened this day?« (»Σὺ μόνος παροικεῖς Ἱερουσαλὴμ καὶ οὐκ ἔγνως τὰ γενόμενα ἐν αὐτῇ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις;«) They are compelled (a) to stand sad¹⁵ and (b) to express the reason of their gloominess.

What is worth noting and proves the literary flair of Luke is the fact that Cleopas with his answer summarizes the entire content of the Gospel in a unique way. Through the phrase »ὁ μέλλων λυτρωσθαι τὸν Ἰσραὴλ« (the one about to redeem Israel) the listener remembers the prophecies of the O.T. and those of the Protohistory of Jesus, which were announced by Gabriel, Mary, Zacharias and Simon regarding the person and the works of the newly born Jesus. For three days all these predictions have seemed to be an idle tale (λῆρος). His public actions, which are summarized in »ἐγένετο ἀνὴρ προφήτης δυνατὸς ἐν ἔργῳ καὶ λόγῳ ἐναντίον τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ« (24, 19: »a man who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word

¹² Ὅμιλεῖν is used in NT only by Luke.

¹³ See R. J. Karris, The Gospel according to Luke, (New Jerome Biblical Commentary), New Jersey 1992, S. 720.

¹⁴ John follows a similar technique especially in the narration of the dialogue between Jesus and the woman from Samaria (Jn 4).

¹⁵ Instead of »ἐστάθησαν σκυθρωποί« W, Θ, Ψ and the Majority Text insert »ἐστὲ σκυθρωποί;« in the question of Jesus.

before God and all the people»; see 4, 16–30; 13, 31–35) gave the impression to the crowd that he is the expected successor of Moses, the Prophet, who will indeed save the people from the tyranny of their oppressors (Romans).

Then there is the reference of Cleopas to the crucifixion, using the same phrases as the ones used by Jesus to prophesy the crucifixion. His answer culminates in the phrase: »ἡμεῖς δὲ ἠλπίζομεν ὅτι αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ μέλλων λυτροῦσθαι τὸν Ἰσραήλ· ἀλλὰ γε καὶ σὺν πᾶσιν τούτοις τρίτην ταύτην ἡμέραν ἄγει ἅφ' οὗ ταῦτα ἐγένετο« (»We hoped that it was Him, who would free Israel. However, despite all these, today is the third day, since all of these happened«). The phrase with the verb »hoped« in past tense and especially the »ἀλλὰ γε καὶ σὺν πᾶσιν τούτοις« (however, despite all these) expresses the feeling of despair at its peak after three days of futile waiting. The answer ends with a reference to the doubtful information given by the »fanciful« (according to the two disciples) women regarding the vision of angels, who say that he is »alive« (in present tense). This information is verified by »others« and by Peter, as mentioned in 24, 12 (see Jn 20, 2). The answer of Cleopas concludes with the question of the sceptic: »αὐτὸν δὲ οὐκ εἶδον« (but him they did not see).

5. The explanation of the Scriptures

The response of Jesus starts with the vocative address: ὦ ἀνόητοι καὶ βραδεῖς τῇ καρδίᾳ (O foolish ones, and slow of heart)! This is the characterization of those who had considered the gospel of the myrrh-bearing women as a *delusion* and had been astonished by the report of the empty tomb. These introductory words of Jesus, which correspond to the rhetorical question with which Kleopas started his answer, work at first sight embarrassing and then stimulating to the disciples »κατὰ βραχὺ πρὸς τὴν τῆς ἀναστάσεως πίστιν«¹⁶. After that Jesus, instead of repeating his own predictions regarding the Passion and his Resurrection, as occurred with the myrrh-bringing women, interprets – opens – ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ (on the way) the Scriptures, which speak of Himself.

As it is proved by the double repetition of the phrase »κατὰ τὰς Γραφὰς« (according to the Scriptures) in the confession of faith of the early church in 1 Cor 15, 3–5, the validation of Jesus' Passion and Resurrection by the Scriptures was a basic concern of the early church. After the Resurrection Jesus himself tries through his explanation of the Scriptures to prove to his companions that the passion and the resurrection of the Messiah were inherent in the divine δεῖ. The speeches of Acts demonstrate the way Jesus explained the Scriptures to his disciples. Jesus Christ himself started his public ministry at the synagogue of his hometown with the following programmatic act (4, 16–30): He read the important **messianic prophecy** Isa 61 and then declared: »Σήμερον πεπλήρωται ἡ Γραφή αὕτη ἐν τοῖς ὠσὶν ὑμῶν« (4, 21: Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing).

The explanation of the Scriptures by Jesus (as it is proved by the »burning« that is caused in the hearts of his co-walkers), does not simply intend to prove that the way to the glory for the Messiah goes through Passion. The Christological explanation of the Scriptures by Jesus Christ himself is a prophecy and a proclamation (see 1 Cor 12, 10. 30; 14, 5). As it is noted by P. Andriopoulos¹⁷, by analyzing the Greek term »Hermeneia« (explanation), used in verse 28, »the work of Hermes, the messenger of the will of God, was to explain, clarify and make

¹⁶ J.A. Cramer, Catenae Graecorum patrum in Novum Testamentum, vol. 2, Hildesheim 1967, S. 171.

¹⁷ P. Andriopoulos, Τὸ Πρόβλημα τοῦ Ἱστορικοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῇ Συγχρόνῳ Ἑρμηνευτικῇ τῆς Κ.Δ. ὑπὸ τὸ Φῶς τῆς Θεολογίας Κυρίλλου τοῦ Ἀλεξανδρέως, Athen 1975, S. 16.

clear the will of God to humans«. According to Philo, »a prophet is an interpreter, God from within prompting him what he ought to say« (Praem 1, 55).

In the Old Testament **the burning**, in the hearts of God's workmen (here caused by the Christological explanation of the Scriptures), is heavily connected with the declaration of the fiery prophetic speech, which in expressing the will of God, creates a crisis in the consciences of people (Jer 20, 9). In the Scriptures it is also connected with the all-powerful Love: *»for love is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the Lord. Many waters cannot quench love, nor will rivers overflow it«*, Song of Songs 8, 6 (and in LXX: »κραταιὰ ὡς θάνατος ἀγάπη, σκληρὸς ὡς ἄδης ζῆλος· περίπτερα αὐτῆς περίπτερα πυρός, φλόγες αὐτῆς· ὕδωρ πολὺ οὐ δυνήσεται σβέσαι τὴν ἀγάπην, καὶ ποταμοὶ οὐ συγκλήσουσιν.« Hence the interpretation of the Scriptures results into the purification of these disciples' hearts from all the conventional messianic understandings, which had existed before the advent of Jesus and lights up the flames of their first love – the zeal for His Face.

In the Gospel of Luke the burning is the first condition and the first consequence of understanding the Scriptures. Jesus' next step will be in the following scene, right after eating the fish, to open-up their minds to understand the Scriptures (*»τοῦ συνιέναι τὰς Γραφὰς«* verse 45). In this phase, the evangelist will add the understanding of the Gospel's universal message. This transformation of the disciples' senses, as it is proven by this vital passage, is necessary for the understanding of the Scriptures and is completed on the day of Pentecost with the coming of the Spirit in the form of cloven tongues as of fire. That day, Peter will fully acquire the ability to explain the Scriptures by himself. This sermon of Peter will also cause a burning, that is crisis of his listeners' conscience, repentance and zeal for Jesus, as it happens to the two disciples in the under examination passage of Luke 24 (see Acts 11, 5). Right after the afflation of the Holy Spirit in Acts Luke notes the result of the explanation of the Scriptures in the sermon: *»Ἀκούσαντες δὲ κατενύγησαν τὴν καρδίαν, εἶπόν τε πρὸς τὸν Πέτρον καὶ τοὺς λοιποὺς ἀποστόλους, «Τί ποιήσωμεν, ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί;» Πέτρος δὲ πρὸς αὐτοὺς, «Μετανοήσατε, καὶ βαπτισθῆτω ἕκαστος ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὑμῶν, καὶ λήμψεσθε τὴν δωρεάν τοῦ Ἁγίου πνεύματος· ὑμῖν γάρ ἐστιν ἡ ἐπαγγελία καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς εἰς μακρὰν ὅσους ἂν προσκαλέσῃται κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν». Ἐτέροις τε λόγοις πλείοσιν διεμαρτύρατο, καὶ παρεκάλει αὐτοὺς λέγων, «Σώθητε ἀπὸ τῆς γενεᾶς τῆς σκολιᾶς ταύτης». οἱ μὲν οὖν ἀποδεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθησαν, καὶ προστετέθησαν ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ψυχὰι ὡσεὶ τρισχίλιαι. ἦσαν δὲ προσκαρτεροῦντες τῇ διδαχῇ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ, τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς. Ἐγένετο δὲ πάσῃ ψυχῇ φόβος, πολλὰ τε τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα διὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐγένετο«* (2, 37–43)¹⁸.

Another element worth noting is that the explanation –proclamation takes place **on the way**. The entire work of Luke uses the symbol of **the way** emphatically in order to give every **Theophilus** (Friend of God), who is overwhelmed by mystery religions and philosophies,

¹⁸ Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, »Brothers, what shall we do?« And Peter said to them, »Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.« And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, »Save yourselves from this crooked generation.« So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

the answer to the question: »which is the way to truth and life?« In the works of Luke the same belief is identified as »*the way of the Lord*« (18, 25; 19, 9; see 1QS 9, 17 10, 20) and the Christians as (those) »*of the way*« (Acts 9, 2). In Acts the »*on the way*« explanation takes place in the case of the eunuch treasurer of the queen of Ethiopia who bears the title, *of Candace* (Acts 8, 28–35). This narration also occupies an important place in the work of Luke, since it is the first conversion of a Gentile (not an European but an African) to Christianity at a moment when he (just as the two disciples of the Lk 24 passage) is returning –descending– from Jerusalem obviously disappointed because he was prohibited from entering the Temple beyond the court of the Gentiles and from being fully accepted into the chosen people of Israel because he was a Eunuch.

In both cases the revelation contributes to the proclamation, which as a consequence causes the inner shock to its recipients. The difference between the two passages lies in the fact that whereas in the Acts 8 passage the explanation refers to Isa 53, 7–8 (according to the translation of LXX), in Lk 24 in all three times when Jesus refers to the explanation of the Scriptures, he uses »*πάς*«. The intention of this multiple repetition of »*πάς*« is to emphasize: (a) the fact that during the activity of Jesus in the world all prophecies have been fulfilled and not just those regarding the restoration of the nation of Israel and the coming of the glorious Messiah that the rabbis studied and explained selectively and (b) that the Scripture is a whole entity because its reference point is Jesus-Logos¹⁹ himself.

6. The appearance of the resurrected Jesus

The full revelation of the Word does not take place through the explanation of the Scriptures but through the breaking of the bread, as it is emphasized in verse 31²⁰. At that moment »*διηνοιχθησαν οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπέγνωσαν αὐτὸν*« (»And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him«). Jesus does not reveal himself in a powerful way as it happened in Sinai, but simply through the breaking of the bread and the meal afterwards. He is revealed through a daily act, which presupposes community, forgiveness, sharing, fullness, and joy. The breaking of the bread declares the liturgical gathering, which was the characteristic feature of Christianity (Acts 2, 46). The specific meal, which in a strange way is hosted by Jesus and not by those who forced him to stay with them and to eat because »*the day has passed*«, does not appear to be Eucharistic or messianic, but recalls both. The listener is reminded of the several dinners Jesus participated in, either as a guest or as a host during his public ministry. It especially refers to the meal Jesus as a »*good shepherd*« offered to the 5.000 in Bethsaida also in the evening (9, 10 – 17; Ps 22 [23], 1), when he thanked God and gave them the bread. Only in Luke is this particular dinner related to the revelation of Jesus as the suffering and resurrected Messiah first made by Peter and then by the Father-God. During the dinner at Emmaus the two disciples also open their eyes and realize the identity of their companion, who however immediately *disappears from them*. The Church Fathers explain this act of Jesus as follows: »*ὅτε λοιπὸν ἐπίστευσαν τοῖς λόγοις αὐτοῦ, τότε καὶ τὴν ὄψιν ἐμφανῆ καθίστησιν αὐτοῖς· οὐ μὴν συμπαράμειναι· αὐτὸς γὰρ φησιν, ἄφαντος ἐγένετο ἀπ’ αὐτῶν· οὐκέτι γὰρ μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν*

¹⁹ Compare Lk 1, 2: »*καθὼς παρέδωσαν ἡμῖν οἱ ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρέται γενόμενοι τοῦ Λόγου*« (just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word have delivered them to us).

²⁰ R. J. Karris, *The Gospel according to Luke*, (New Jerome Biblical Commentary), New Jersey 1992, S. 721.

τὰ τοῦ Κυρίου πρὸς τοὺς μαθητὰς τοιαῦτα οἷα τὰ πρότερον, ὅπως ἐκ τούτου πλειόνως τὸν πόθον ἐπαυξήσωσιν.²¹

The way to disappointment in faith and the missionary suffering is completed with the *resurrection* of the disciples at the same time, their return to the place of Crucifixion and Resurrection and especially the gathering place of all the disciples, Jerusalem, and the conveyance of the joyful message to the rest of the disciples. This return-repentance can be stopped neither by fatigue nor hunger nor by the darkness that has already been spread. Each man tastes the joy of the sight of the resurrected Jesus and feels the need to convey this message to his brothers and to the world (see Lk 1, 26–42).

The entire ingenious passage about the way to Emmaus is surrounded by sayings regarding the disciples' capability of spiritual vision. When Jesus approaches Cleopas and the other disciple, the evangelist notes »οἱ δὲ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτῶν ἐκρατοῦντο τοῦ μὴ ἐπιγινῶναι αὐτὸν« without declaring the cause of the spiritual blindness of the disciples (verse 16), who claim **that the witnesses saw his empty tomb »but him« (the resurrected Lord himself) »they saw not«** (v. 24). After the »caustic« Christocentric explanation of the Scriptures and during the breaking of the bread, the eyes of the disciples, who until then could not conceive of a Messiah crucified out of an ineffable love to man and resurrected from his grave, are opened (Lk 18, 38). Then the disciples recognize Jesus. The verb »ἐπιγινώσκω« originally used when referring to God does not only mean to recognize but to believe with respect and awe as well (Hos 5, 4; Zeph 12, 27; Job 34, 27; Lk 1, 4). Clearly, after having treaded the existential path of descent to despair the disciples are led to belief in Jesus through the explanation of the Scriptures and the dinner given by Him, who condescended to approach them and walk with them the same way.

In order to understand the significance of the motif of the opening of spiritual eyes in the Gospel of Luke, one should take into consideration that the entire two-volume work of Luke starts and ends with passages regarding the spiritual vision of Jesus as God or the opposite. In the Protohistory the shepherds in the night enjoy seeing the glory of the Lord (2, 8–10) and old Simeon praises the Lord (2, 32) because through the Holy Spirit he acquires the ability to see him and »go« in peace. The infant – Jesus – is »a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel« (Lk 2, 25–32). At the beginning of his mission in Nazareth Jesus promises to fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah (61, 1) and »to recover the sight to the blind« (Lk 4, 17–30; see 7, 21; 18, 35). The eyes of his co-patriots, however, even though they turn on him with wonder, are spiritually blind. When he declared his identity as Messiah »they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff« (Lk 4, 29: »ἤγαγον αὐτὸν ἕως ὀφρύος τοῦ ὄρους ἐφ' οὗ ἡ πόλις ᾠκοδόμητο αὐτῶν ὥστε κατακρημνίσαι αὐτόν«). At the outset of the journey to Ascension after the return of the 70 disciples, Jesus thanks the Father for the revelation he performed to the »infants« and then regards the »infants« as happy by saying this: »Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it« (10:23–4: »Μακάριοι οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ οἱ βλέποντες ἃ βλέπετε. Λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι πολλοὶ προφῆται καὶ βασιλεῖς ἠθέλησαν ἰδεῖν ἃ ὑμεῖς βλέπετε καὶ οὐκ εἶδαν, καὶ ἀκοῦσαι ἃ ἀκούετε καὶ οὐκ ἤκουσαν«). The entire work of Luke ends with the disclosure that, despite Paul's proving to the Jewish people in the centre of the

²¹ J.A. Cramer, *Catenae Graecorum Patrum in Novum Testamentum*, vol. 2, Hildesheim 1967, S. 172. See *Theophylaktos*, *Enarratio in evangelium Lucae* cap. 34: PG 123, 1119 AB.

Imperium Romanum – Rome– that the Scriptures speak of Christ, they remain blind to this liberating event (Acts 28, 23–28).

In the Emmaus passage, the phrase »διανοίχθησαν οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπέγνωσαν αὐτὸν« recalls events in Genesis 3. Devil tempts Eve with the following words: »ἤδει γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς ὅτι ἐν ἧ ἡμέρᾳ φάγητε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, **διανοίχθησονται ὑμῶν οἱ ὀφθαλμοί**, καὶ ἔσεσθε ὡς θεοὶ γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρὸν [...] καὶ εἶδεν ἡ γυνὴ ὅτι καλὸν τὸ ξύλον εἰς βρώσιν καὶ ὅτι **ἀρεστὸν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἰδεῖν καὶ ὡραῖόν ἐστιν τοῦ κατανοῆσαι**, καὶ λαβοῦσα τοῦ καρποῦ αὐτοῦ ἔφαγεν· καὶ ἔδωκεν καὶ τῷ ἀνδρὶ αὐτῆς μετ' αὐτῆς, καὶ ἔφαγον. Καὶ διανοίχθησαν οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ τῶν δύο, καὶ ἔγνωσαν ὅτι γυμνοὶ ἦσαν, καὶ ἔρραψαν φύλλα συκῆς καὶ ἐποίησαν ἑαυτοῖς περιζώματα. Καὶ ἤκουσαν τὴν φωνὴν Κυρίου τοῦ Θεοῦ περιπατοῦντος ἐν τῷ Παραδείσῳ **τὸ δειλινόν**, καὶ ἐκρύβησαν ὃ τε Ἀδὰμ καὶ ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ προσώπου Κυρίου τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ ξύλου τοῦ παραδείσου. Καὶ ἐκάλεσεν Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς τὸν Ἀδὰμ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ « Ἀδὰμ, ποῦ εἶ; » καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ « Τὴν φωνὴν σου ἤκουσα περιπατοῦντος ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ καὶ ἐφοβήθην, ὅτι γυμνός εἰμι, καὶ ἐκρύβην » « (3, 5–9)²². In the garden of Eden because of eating the forbidden fruit the eyes of the man open, first to see that the tree was good for food, that it was a delight to the eyes and that it was to be desired to make one wise (»ὅτι καλὸν τὸ ξύλον εἰς βρώσιν καὶ ὅτι ἀρεστὸν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἰδεῖν καὶ ὡραῖόν ἐστιν τοῦ κατανοῆσαι«) and then to realize the existential nakedness and the perishing that results when man makes himself a god. In Luke the breaking and the eating of the bread in the evening leads once again to a recognition of and faith in the Creator, whom Adam tried to avoid in the afternoon. In the narration of the Protohistory there is the dominant question »Adam where are you?« (»Ἀδὰμ, ποῦ εἶ;«) while in Luke's narration the question that hangs in the air is where the new Adam is. In the first narrative of Genesis 3, life is succeeded by death. In the second, death is crashed and life is triumphant.

Another similar reversal of the existing situation, a miraculous transition from spiritual blindness and gloom into light, is found in Acts in a narration of the path from disbelief to belief. It is the way of Saul from Jerusalem to Damascus, which is described three times in the Acts (9, 1–19; 22, 6–11; 26, 12–18; see 1 Cor 9, 1–15, 8; 2 Cor 4, 6; Gal 1, 12. 15–16). In both cases the opening of the eyes is combined with a journey which has Jerusalem as a starting point. In both cases the protagonists have been informed of Jesus entering God's glory by witnesses (the myrrh-bringing women and Stephen) and have listened to a similar explanation of the Scriptures. In Acts, Saul is introduced immediately after the long oration of Stephen, where, through an extensive reference to the Scriptures, the entire divine economy is summarized. Between the suffering of Stephen and the Journey of Saul from Jerusalem to Damascus, we have the interpretation of Isa 52–53 to »the man of Ethiopia«. In this way the Christological explanation of the Scriptures becomes the bridge leading from the mist of ignorance to the light of knowledge. In both cases, Jesus at first remains consciously unrecognized by the protagonists, while his presence provokes a »burning.« In both passages,

²² »For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.« So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, »Where are you?«

three days of waiting in the »dark« intervene. The opening of the eyes is related to the »resurrection« of the protagonists and to the further declaration of the resurrection of the Lord.

7. Conclusions

From the above study one can conclude that walking a distance of 60 stadia from Jerusalem to Emmaus, a town unknown to a writer, who evidently, as it has been shown, has his work based on the metaphor of the way and the endless missionary journey to the end of the earth (Acts 1, 8; see Is 49, 6), and signals the gradual revelation of the glory of the crucified Jesus of Nazareth to everyone who is sceptical towards the resurrection and at the same time coincides with the gradual exit of the disciples from the darkness of ignorance and despair to the light of knowledge and faith that the »Lord has indeed been resurrected.« It is exemplary of the way the resurrected Jesus Christ reaches the sceptic even in Hades of disbelief and despair. It is the way that can lead the doubter to accept the fact of the Resurrection and at the same time to his personal resurrection. The claim that the »Lord has indeed been resurrected« comes through the Christocentric explanation of the Scriptures (which provokes *burning*) and finally the communal breaking of the bread.

With the passage about the way to Emmaus, the second narrative about the resurrection in the Gospel of Luke, the Greek evangelist and doctor who seeks to record the way in which Jesus, even after being resurrected, tries to approach a world that is in despair, giving to it, even after Jesus' earthly end, the opportunity to experience and live the assurance of his bodily resurrection from »δεσμώτη δυσπότημου θεοῦ [...] διὰ τὴν λίαν φιλότητα βροτῶν« (Aeschylus, Prom. 119 – 123). It should be noted that in the Hellenistic world, to whose inhabitants the two-volume work of Luke is addressed, death had been »indeed the greatest mystery.« The following abbreviation was often to be found on tombstones:

N(on) f(ui), f(ui), n(on) s(um), n(on) c(uro)
I was not, (and then) I did exist, now I don't exist,
I care not

This problem of despair before fate was addressed by the mysteries of Eleusis and Orpheus, which with their mythical and repeated character did not offer a substantial *salvation* from the pain of death. They underestimated and demonized history and the flesh; that way they deepened the tragic feeling of imprisonment in an inhospitable world. The figures of Dionysus, Hercules, Asclepius and the Dioscuri, who were rumoured to have defeated Hades and left his world by following the natural circle of decay and renewal, were seen to be mythical figures and consequently they could not abolish the fear of death. That is why the motto that ruled was indeed the one quoted by Paul at 1 Cor 15, 32: »*Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die*« (»φάγωμεν, πίνωμεν, αὔριο γὰρ ἀποθνήσκομεν«).

With the course it takes from the darkness of despair to the light of resurrection and the simultaneous opening of the spiritual eyes, Luke's passage about Emmaus could be considered as corresponding to the great Platonic exit to beauty and light for those bound to live in the dark depth of a cave, forever seeing only the shadows (the fictitious reality) of things (Res Publ. VII, 512a–512b; 539d–541b). Luke's path to the light does not happen through the complacent individual theory of Ideas nor through humanitarian education, but it takes place through the co-walk, the co-way and especially through the Christ-centred explanation of the Scriptures and the breaking of bread. The two elements were the constituent elements of worship for the first Christians. The divine Liturgy on *the first day of the week*, which in

Luke is surrounded by the symbolism of the eighth day (eternity), is for him the only way to the light of knowledge and hope. The sight of this resurrection light in the »evening« of this world, presupposes the opening of spiritual eyes, which after the effort of Adam and Eve to make themselves gods, they have stopped considering »ἐπιστημονικῶς.« Perhaps the motif of blindness and light created in the minds of some hearers, associations with the tragedy of Oedipus. In this ancient drama the revelation of the pure truth blinds, while in the Gospel the same event leads the two disciples to light and hope. It is certain that the hearers of the Gospel, after listening to this passage and experiencing the explanation of the Scriptures and the breaking of the bread, discovered the way to approach with Jesus the world-»οικουμένη« that is in despair, in order to spread the light of resurrection.