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## What was the Origin of Number 153?

A short article suggesting the new interpretation of the meaning of number 153 in Jn 21 : 11<sup>1</sup> was published in “Ruch Biblijny and Liturgiczny.” Previous suggestions as to the origin of this number were not satisfactory.<sup>2</sup> An answer can easily be found when we notice a certain analogy between Jn 21 : 2 and Lk 1 : 43. In Luke the full title of Mary as the Mother of the Lord consists of five words. John enumerates five disciples by their first names. John talks about two disciples whose names he does not mention, in Luke the numerical value of the two key words of that title equals exactly 153, which is the same as the number of fish caught in Jn 21 : 11.

John’s pattern 5 + 2

Jn 21 : 2	Lk 1 : 43
Simon Peter; Thomas called Didymus; Nathanael from Cana in Galilee; Zebedee’s sons ( <b>five</b> disciples called by their names)	ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ κυρίου μου ( <b>five</b> words)
no names ( <b>two</b> other disciples)	μήτηρ κυρίου ( <b>two</b> words)
<b>153</b> fish	the numerical value of the two key words equals exactly <b>153*</b>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. P. M. Mucha, *Mother of the Lord and the 153 large fish in John 21:11*, “Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny” 62 (2009) no. 4, p. 297–301.

<sup>2</sup> C. Marucci, *Il significato del numero 153 in Gv 21, 11*, “Rivista Biblica” 52 (2004) no. 4, p. 403–440.

\* Calculated as simple gematria (linear calculation of the numerical values), i.e.  $\alpha=1$ ,  $\beta=2$ ,  $\gamma=3$ ,  $\delta=4$ ,  $\epsilon=5$ ,  $\zeta=6$ ,  $\eta=7$ ,  $\theta=8$ ,  $\iota=9$ ,  $\kappa=10$ ,  $\lambda=11$ ,  $\mu=12$ ,  $\nu=13$ ,  $\xi=14$ ,  $\omicron=15$ ,  $\pi=16$ ,  $\rho=17$ ,  $\sigma=18$ ,  $\tau=19$ ,  $\upsilon=20$ ,  $\phi=21$ ,  $\chi=22$ ,  $\psi=23$ ,  $\omega=24$ ; therefore: μήτηρ κυρίου =  $12+7+19+7+17+10+20+17+9+15+20=153$ .

M.-J. Lagrange confirms this way of interpreting the pattern. He claims that the original text mentioned only five disciples by their names, and the two whose names were not included were mentioned in a marginal gloss, which, with time, was incorporated into the proper text.<sup>3</sup> The mention of the two disciples with no names makes the appropriate interpretation of the name of Mary as the Mother of the Lord much easier from her five-word title. The lack of this piece of information could make understanding number 153 much more challenging, that is probably why the gloss was put in the text and later included in it.

The editor of the Gospel of John, mentioning the names of five disciples, at the same time suggested how to interpret number 153 properly based on Mary's title. He specifies the names of three disciples (Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee) and mentions the other two not specifying what their names are, but making their identification easy by putting additional information in the text (Zebedee's sons, so we can figure out that he has Jacob and John in mind). The afore-mentioned pattern (3 + 2) lets us read number 153 as the numerical value of a Greek expression meaning "the Mother of the Lord": three unimportant words from the title ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ κυρίου μου need to be ignored, and two need to be focused on.

### John's pattern 3 + 2

Jn 21 :2	Lk 1 :43
Simon Peter; Thomas called Didymus; Nathanael from Cana in Galilee ( <b>three</b> disciples whose names are mentioned)	ἡ ... τοῦ ... μου  ( <b>three</b> words)

<sup>3</sup> M.-J. Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Jean*, Paris 1948, p. 523.

Zebedee's sons ( <b>two</b> disciples whose names are not mentioned, but who can be identified as Jacob and John)	μήτηρ κυρίου ( <b>two</b> words)
<b>153</b> fish	the numerical value of these two words equals exactly <b>153</b>

John provides us with two keys emphasising the title of Mary as the Mother of the Lord: the primary pattern 3 + 2 (three disciples whose names are mentioned and two whose names are not mentioned, but who can still be identified) and the secondary pattern 5 + 2 (five disciples whose names are mentioned and two others, whose names are not mentioned and who cannot be identified, as a result of the incorporation of the marginal gloss into the proper text, the aim of which was probably to help interpret number 153 in the right way).

## 1. The use of John's patterns in the New Testament

Jn 21:11 is the only part of the New Testament where number 153 appears and the only part of the Bible where the numerical value of the two key words of the Greek expression "the Mother of the Lord" equals 153. However, it can be observed that in a few other fragments in the New Testament John's patterns emphasising the title of Mary as the Mother of the Lord were known and applied.

### 1.1. Feeding the multitude

Let us focus on the pericope of the First Feeding Miracle. Only Luke and John place one pericope of feeding the multitude (see Lk 9:12–17; Jn 6:1–15) in their gospels. Matthew and Mark mention two pericopes (see Mt 14:13–21; Mt 15:32–39; Mk 6:34–44;

Mk 8:1–9).<sup>4</sup> John reports that five barley loaves and two fish were used to feed a multitude (see Jn 6:9) and Luke repeats twice that it is in fact five barley loaves and two fish that were used (see Lk 9:13, 16). It is possible that these descriptions are the result of the application of the secondary pattern 5 + 2, which allows for the appropriate interpretation of number 153 as the numerical value of the two key words of the five-word title of Mary as the Mother of the Lord (ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ κυρίου μου), since feeding the multitude was not the Eucharist itself, but a type and promise of it,<sup>5</sup> and it is the Gospel of Luke that shows some connection between the Mother of Jesus and the Eucharist.<sup>6</sup> What is more, the author in Lk 9:16 reports five actions of Jesus (“taking [...], looking up to heaven, he said the blessing over them, broke them, and gave them”), four of which (“he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it”) were repeated in the description of the Last Supper (Lk 22:19).<sup>7</sup>

The secondary pattern 5 + 2 (five fish and two loaves), applied in the pericope of the First Feeding Miracle, might be a result of the author’s

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. A. M. Farrer, *Loaves and Thousands*, “Journal of Theological Studies” 4 (1953), p. 1–14; H. Schürmann, *Die Gestalt der urchristlichen Eucharistiefeyer*, “Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift” 6 (1955), p. 107–131; G. Ziener, *Das Brotwunder im Markusevangelium*, “Biblische Zeitschrift” 4 (1960), 282–285; A. Shaw, *The Marcan Feeding Narratives*, “Church Quarterly Review” 162 (1961), p. 268–278; J. Knackstedt, *Die beiden Brotvermehrungen im Evangelium*, “New Testament Studies” 10 (1963–1964), p. 309–335; G. Friedrich, *Die beiden Erzählungen von der Speisung in Mark 6, 31–44; 8, 1–9*, “Theologische Zeitschrift” 20 (1964), p. 10–22; A. G. Hebert, *History in the Feeding of the Five Thousand*, “Studia Evangelica” 2 (1964), p. 65–72; A. Heising, *Die Botschaft der Brotvermehrung*, Stuttgart 1966; E. Lipiński, *La multiplication des pains*, “Revue Ecclesiastique de Liège” 5 (1967), p. 298–307.

<sup>5</sup> J. Klinkowski, *Cudowne rozmnożenie chleba zapowiedzią Eucharystii i wspólnoty Kościoła (J 6, 1–15)*, [in:] *Eucharystia życiem Kościoła i świata. Refleksja teologiczna w środowisku legnickim*, pod red. B. Drożdża, Legnica 2007, p. 11–25 (Biblioteka Diecezji Legnickiej, 25).

<sup>6</sup> G. Crocetti, *La Madre di Gesù e l’Eucaristia nella prospettiva lucana (Lc 1–2; At 1, 14; 2, 42–47)*, “Rivista Biblica” 48 (2000) no. 4, p. 401–434.

<sup>7</sup> S. Stasiak, *Symbolika chleba w Ewangelii według św. Łukasza*, [in:] *Eucharystia życiem Kościoła i świata. Refleksja teologiczna w środowisku legnickim*, op. cit., p. 29–35.

intentional composition and not any kind of coincidence. It seems to be Luke's conscious choice, especially that he used numbers "five" and "two," in this particular order, in a different place, when he was referring to selling five sparrows for two small coins (cf. Lk 12:6). From among numerous possibilities Luke chose to use a comparison based on numbers "five" and "two" in this order. This key (the secondary John's pattern  $5 + 2$ ), making the interpretation of the title of Mary the Mother of the Lord much easier, might have been the reason why the two disciples without names were added in Jn 21:2, as this kind of clue seems obvious to an attentive reader of the Gospel.

## 1.2. Five-time use of the phrase "the child and his mother"

It is worth mentioning that the second chapter of the Gospel of Matthew uses the phrase "the child and his mother" five times. According to some, this expression is a kind of formula that was used in Christological catechesis. Matthew presented it in his Infancy Narrative.<sup>8</sup>

However, if we take a closer look, we can notice incredible similarities to the full title of Mary as the Mother of the Lord (see Mt 2:11–15, 19–21):

v. 11: the child with Mary his mother

v. 13: the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother"

v. 14: the child and his mother

v. 20: the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother"

v. 21: the child and his mother

Matthew surprises us with such composition of chapter two. The phrase "the child and his mother" is used five times, which is the same number as the amount of words in the full title of Mary as the Mother of the Lord (ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ κυρίου μου). What is more, the second and the fourth time

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Ewangelia według św. Mateusza. Wstęp – przekład z oryginału – komentarz*, oprac. J. Homerski, Poznań 2004, p. 97.

he uses the expression “the child and his mother,” he informs us about the intervention of the angel of the Lord, who decides about the fate of the child and his mother. We can see a clear analogy to the Greek title of Mary as the Mother of the Lord – intervention of the angel Gabriel (Lk 1:26–38) and Mary’s consent to the virginal conception<sup>9</sup> results in her becoming the Mother of the Lord, and that is why the second and the fourth words in her full title ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ κυρίου μου become the two most important ones. As a result of angel Gabriel’s Annunciation, Mary became a true Mother of the Lord (Mother of God).<sup>10</sup> In the same way as angel Gabriel influences the life of Mary, which results in her becoming the Mother of the Lord, the angel of the Lord in the Gospel influences the lives of the child and his mother.

This is a result of conscious and intentional decisions concerning the composition of the Gospel of Matthew and it cannot be considered a coincidence. Matthew emphasises the work of the angel when he uses the phrase “the child and his mother” for the second and the fourth time, and it is the numerical value of the second and the fourth word in the full title of Mary as the Mother of the Lord (ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ κυρίου μου) that equals 153 and means “the **Mother** of the **Lord**.” The honour of Mary being the Mother of the Lord is the result of angel Gabriel’s Annunciation, and that is what Matthew emphasises in his Infancy Narrative.

### 1.3. Five woman in the genealogy of Jesus

In the Matthean genealogy of Jesus, which is significantly different from the one reported by Luke,<sup>11</sup> five women were listed (Tamar, Rahab,

<sup>9</sup> On the subject of the virginal conception cf. W. Chrostowski, *Dziewicze poczęcie Jezusa Chrystusa*, “W Drodze” 17 (1989) no. 5, p. 13–20; S. Hareźga, *Dziewictwo Maryi w Nowym Testamencie*, “Salvatoris Mater” 4 (2002) no. 1, p. 11–26.

<sup>10</sup> On the subject of Divine Motherhood of Mary cf. L. Balter, *Boże macierzyństwo Maryi*, “Communio” 20 (2000) no. 6, p. 39–81.

<sup>11</sup> A. Kowalczyk, *Genealogie Jezusa w Ewangeliach*, “Studia Gdańskie” 10 (1995), p. 113–121.

Ruth, Bathsheba, Mary).<sup>12</sup> Their appearance in this place and its significance is currently subject to analysis. These five women are perceived both as a group forming the genealogy of the Messiah, a part of which is Jesus himself with his virgin birth, and a justification of the opening of Israel to the Gentiles through placing (adding) these precedents from the history of Israel.<sup>13</sup>

Biblical authors rarely mention women in genealogy (the Bible mentions only one genealogy of a woman: Jdt 8 : 1–3). What is even more striking is the omission of Sarah and Anna, who were perceived as exemplary women in Israel, and inclusion of a prostitute from Jericho (Rahab: Josh 2 : 1–21) and David’s adulterous wife (Bathsheba: 2 Sam:11) in the genealogy.<sup>14</sup>

In the genealogy of Jesus five women are mentioned, which is the same as the number of words in the full title of Mary as the Mother of the Lord (ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ κυρίου μου). Three first women are listed in accordance with the following formula: ἐκ τῆς + mother’s name, and the other two, however, are presented differently: the fourth one is mentioned in a similar way to the first three, but instead of the name of her mother (Bathsheba) Uriah’s [ex-wife] is mentioned, and with the fifth one the name of Mary appeared, but the above-mentioned formula was not applied.

ἐκ τῆς Θαμάρ (Mt 1:3)

ἐκ τῆς Ῥαχάβ (Mt 1:5)

ἐκ τῆς Ῥούθ (Mt 1:5)

<sup>12</sup> Cf. H. Stegemann, “Die des Uria.” *Zur Bedeutung der Frauennamen in der Genealogie von Matthäus, 1, 1–17*, [in:] *Tradition und Glaube. Festgabe für K. G. Kuhn*, hrsg. von G. Jeremias, Göttingen 1972, p. 246–276; H. C. Waetjen, *The Genealogy as the Key to the Gospel According to Matthew*, “*Journal of Biblical Literature*” 95 (1976), p. 205–230.

<sup>13</sup> P.-B. Smit, *Something about Mary? Remarks about the Five Women in the Matthean Genealogy*, “*New Testament Studies*” 56 (2010), p. 191–207.

<sup>14</sup> M. Bednarz, *Znaczenie rodowodu Jezusa w Ewangelii Mateusza*, “*Tarnowskie Studia Teologiczne*” 6 (1977), p. 129–132.

ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Οὐρίου (Mt 1:6b)

τὸν Ἰωσήφ τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας, ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς (Mt 1:16)

Mentioning the first three women with the use of a particular formula (ἐκ τῆς + mother's name) and the other two in a way not following the accepted rule, preserves John's primary pattern (3 + 2) of interpreting number 153 as the numerical value of the Greek expression "the Mother of the Lord" (in the Gospel of John three disciples mentioned by their names, the names of two others not mentioned, but they can easily be identified). Matthean genealogy of Jesus shows familiarity with the title of Mary as the Mother of the Lord and its appropriate interpretation emphasising her dignity as the Mother of God. Matthean genealogy stresses humanity of Jesus (human provenance from Mary) and at the same time the dignity of Mary as the Mother of the Lord, which stems from the fact of becoming the Mother of Jesus (John's primary pattern 3 + 2 emphasises this truth).

#### 1.4. The composition of the Gospel according to Matthew

The Gospel according to Matthew is a narrative of deliberate composition and content. It can be easily noticed when we compare the structure of this work to parallel texts of other Synoptics, and when we notice references to the Old Testament characteristic in their form. The carefully created structure of this Gospel was of great interest to many, as it led to the conclusion that the structure itself presents the keynote of the Evangelist.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Ewangelia według św. Mateusza. Wstęp – przekład z oryginału – komentarz*, op. cit., p. 37.



Different interpretations were presented,<sup>16</sup> among which the one presented by B. W. Bacon<sup>17</sup> is the most often accepted and applied.<sup>18</sup> He was the first one to make a hypothesis that the Gospel according to Matthew consists of five main parts, since it was composed on the basis of the Pentateuch (the five books of Moses).<sup>19</sup> The basis of this claim is the formula, which appears five times in the narrative: *καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς* (Mt 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1 and 26:1) and the traditional, dated back to the second century, division of the Gospel of Matthew into five parts.

It is worth mentioning that if we take into consideration the Prologue of the Gospel (Mt 1–2) and its Epilogue (Mt 26–28), an analogy with John's pattern (5 + 2) can be observed: five main parts of the Gospel and two lateral ones (Prologue and Epilogue). With this interpretation, however, we might encounter some difficulties. The secondary pattern of John is a very late one, as it comes from the copyists, so it was not present in the original text of the Gospel according to John. The editor of the Gospel of Matthew would have to know about the gloss, previously incorporated into the main text, concerning the two disciples without names, which would mean very late dating of the Gospel of Matthew (the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century). However, this issue can easily be accounted for, as

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 38–43; A. Kowalczyk, *Wpływ typologii oraz tekstów Starego Testamentu na redakcję Ewangelii Mateusza*, Pelplin 2004, p. 179–195.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. B. W. Bacon, *Studies in Matthew*, New York 1930, p. 80–82.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. G. D. Kilpatrick, *The Origins of the Gospel According to St. Matthew*, Oxford 1950<sup>2</sup>, p. 107–108. 135–136; K. Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew and Its Use of the Old Testament*, Philadelphia 1968, p. 21–22. 24–27; L. Vaganay, *Le probleme synoptique*, Paris 1969, p. 57; D. J. Selby, *Introduction to the New Testament*, New York 1971, p. 110–113; *Ewangelia według św. Mateusza. Wstęp. Przekład z oryginału. Komentarz*, op. cit., p. 41; J. Kudasiewicz, *Ewangelie synoptyczne dzisiaj*, Warszawa 1986, p. 204–205. Supporters of this approach are also M.-J. Lagrange, P. Benoit, L. Randellini, L. Algisi, A. Wikenhauser, L. Deiss, J. L. McKenzie, H. C. Kee; P. Bonnard, P. Gächter.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. B. W. Bacon, *The "Five Books" of Matthew against the Jews*, "The Expositor" 8 (1919) 15, p. 56–66; B. W. Bacon, *Jesus and the Law*, "Journal of Biblical Literature" 47 (1928), p. 203–231.

John's secondary pattern (5 + 2) is used in the pericope about feeding the multitude, which is not only present in Luke (Lk 9:2–17) and John (Jn 6:1–15), but also in Mark (Mk 6:34–44) and even in Matthew (Mt 14:13–21). The problem is therefore solved, as he editor of the Gospel was, in fact, familiar with John's pattern mentioned above (5 + 2).

The issue can also be explained within the structure of the Gospel of Matthew. A sentence which appears twice in the narrative attracts the readers' attention: ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς (Mt 4:17 and 16:21). For some, this particular sentence was a reason to divide the Gospel of Matthew into two main parts.<sup>20</sup> It needs to be noticed that this formula tears the previous division of the Gospel of Matthew (five parts) into two parts, which strikes with the precise analogy to the primary John's pattern (3 + 2):

ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς (Mt 4:17)  
καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς (Mt 7:28)  
καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς (Mt 11:1)  
καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς (Mt 13:53)  
ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς (Mt 16:21)  
καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς (Mt 19:1)  
καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς (Mt 26:1)

The 3 + 2 pattern can clearly be seen here,<sup>21</sup> and it is the same pattern which was used in the genealogy of Jesus (Mt 1:1–17). This pattern emphasises the dignity of Mary as the Mother of the Lord in the structure of the Gospel according to Matthew. It does not seem to be coincidental, as Matthew shows a predilection to particular numbers and ordering content according to specific numerical criteria, which is either an intentional procedure applied

<sup>20</sup> J. C. Hawkins was the first one to notice this formula – cf. J. C. Hawkins, *Horae synopticae. Contributions to the Study of the Synoptic Problem*, Oxford 1909<sup>2</sup>, p. 168. The theory of the literary structure based on this formula was created by: E. Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Matthäus*, Göttingen 1958<sup>2</sup>, p. 1. 64. 264; N. B. Stonehouse, *The Witness of Matthew and Mark to Christ*, London 1944, p. 129–151.

<sup>21</sup> We can also notice John's secondary pattern 5 + 2 here: καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς used five times and ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς twice.



on the primary John's pattern 3 + 2, stressing the dignity of Mary as the Mother of Lord. The Miracle Chapters (Mt 8:1–9:34) are through and through Mariological as well.

### 1.5. The composition of the Gospel according to John in the light of the description of the meal (Jn 21:9–13)

The literary composition of the Gospel according to John proves to be difficult to analyse.<sup>25</sup> The Gospel has two endings: Jn 20:30–31 and Jn 21:24–25. This fact indicates that the original version of the text finished with Jn 20:31. Chapter 21 was somehow added, not disturbing the structure of the narrative. Disregarding the complicated issue of who the author of this chapter and the whole Gospel was,<sup>26</sup> we need to acknowledge that it was added to the original version very early, as it was certified by all witnesses of the text.

The main structure of the Gospel of Matthew seems to have Mariological character (primary John's pattern 3 + 2 to emphasise the dignity of Mary as the Mother of the Lord). Since Matthew used this particular editorial idea, we cannot exclude that John, whom Jesus entrusted with taking care of His Mother, deliberately composed the Gospel giving it the Mariological character that it seems to have.

John emphasises the dignity of Mary as the Mother of the Lord twice, when the term "Woman" (γύναϊ) is used with reference to her (Jn 2:4 and 19:26).<sup>27</sup> Her special role in the plan of salvation is presented by

<sup>25</sup> Cf. S. Mędała, *Problem struktury literackiej czwartej Ewangelii*, "Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny" 46 (1993) no. 1, p. 11–17; K. Ziąja, *Problem struktury Ewangelii św. Jana we współczesnej egzegezie*, "Scriptura Sacra" 8–9 (2004–2005), p. 211–224.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. J. Bolewski, *Problem autorstwa czwartej Ewangelii*, "Collectanea Theologica" 48 (1978) 3, p. 79–86; J. Kügler, *Der Jünger, der Jesus liebte. Literarische, theologische und historische Untersuchungen zu einer Schlüsselgestalt johanneischer Theologie und Geschichte. Mit einem Exkurs über die Brotrede*, Stuttgart 1988; A. Paciorek, *Jeszcze o autorstwie IV Ewangelii*, "Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne" 47 (2000) z. 1, p. 129–152.

<sup>27</sup> More on the titles "Mother of Jesus" and "Woman" in the Gospel according to John cf. A. Nalewaj, "Matka Jezusa" i "Niewiasta" jako tytuły Maryji w czwartej Ewangelii, "Ruch

the inspired author even before the end of Messiah's work<sup>28</sup>: during the Wedding in Cana (Jn 2: 1–11)<sup>29</sup> and also in the pericope about the testament from the cross (Jn 19: 25–27).<sup>30</sup> In his editorial choice we can discern the analogy to the full title of Mary as the Mother of the Lord:

Jn 1: 1–1: 51: Introduction – ἡ

Jn 2: 1–11: Wedding in Cana [“Woman” (Jn 2: 4)] – μήτηρ

Jn 2: 12–19: 24: Jesus the true Son of God – τοῦ

Jn 19: 25–27: Testament from the cross [“Woman” (Jn 19: 26)] – κυρίου

Jn 19: 28–20: 31: Conclusion – μου

The division of the Gospel according to John into five parts may refer to the five words in the full title of Mary (ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ κυρίου μου). The Gospel of John, in its original version (finishing with Jn 20: 31), was composed along the lines of the full title of Mary as the Mother of the Lord. It is easier to understand the inclusion of two Mariological peri-

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Biblijny i Liturgiczny” 63 (2010) no. 1, p. 13–30.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. M. Czajkowski, *Maria u progu i kresu dzieła Mesjasza (J 2, 1–11 i 19, 25–27)*, [in:] *Egzegeza Ewangelii św. Jana*, pod red. F. Gryglewicza, Lublin 1976, p. 101–112.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. L. Stachowiak, *Maryja w Kanie Galilejskiej [J 2, 1–11]*, [in:] *U boku Syna. Studia z mariologii biblijnej. Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski. Księga pamiątkowa ku czci Kp. Prof. Dra Feliksa Gryglewicza z okazji 50-lecia jego kapłaństwa*, red. J. Szlaga, Lublin 1984, p. 85–94; F. Gryglewicz, *Pierwszy cud Jezusa (J 2, 1–11)*, “Częstochowskie Studia Teologiczne” 15–16 (1987–1988), p. 7–18; K. Meissner, *Miejsce Maryi w dziele odkupienia. Prorocka zawartość cudu w Kanie Galilejskiej (J 2, 1–11)*, “W drodze” 20 (1992) no. 5, p. 24–32.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. W. Smereka, *Ecce Mater Tua [J 19, 25–27]*, “Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny” 9 (1956) no. 4–6, p. 244–261; T. Langkammer, *Znaczenie mariologiczne tekstu ewangelii św. Jana 19, 25–27*, “Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne” 9 (1962) 3, p. 99–113; H. Langkammer, *Maryja pod krzyżem [J 19, 25–27]*, [in:] *U boku Syna. Studia z mariologii biblijnej. Księga Pamiątkowa ku czci Kp. Prof. Dra Feliksa Gryglewicza z okazji 50-lecia Jego kapłaństwa*, red. J. Szlaga, Lublin 1984, p. 109–114; F. Gryglewicz, *Testament Jezusa (J 19, 25–27)*, [in:] *Męka Jezusa Chrystusa*, red. F. Gryglewicz, Lublin 1986, p. 183–189; J. Kudasiewicz, *Testament Jezusa (J 19, 25–27). Nowe trendy interpretacyjne*, “Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne” 37 (1990) z. 1, p. 49–61.

copies (Wedding in Cana [J 2: 1–11] and the Testament from the cross [Jn 19: 25–27]), in which Mary, the “Woman” (γύναϊ), is mentioned. Both Mariological pericopes were put in the text in a way which allows us to assume they constitute part two and part four of the Gospel, indicating the importance of the second and the fourth word in the full title of Mary, emphasising her dignity as the Mother of the Lord.

This way of interpretation seems to be quite rational. Chapter 21, added to the Gospel according to John, contains a pericope about the appearance of the Resurrected Christ at the Sea of Tiberias (Jn 21: 1–14).<sup>31</sup> In this pericope we can distinguish the description of the meal (Jn 21: 9–13), which in a way is a variation on feeding the multitude (cf. Jn 6: 1–15).<sup>32</sup> Some pay special attention to the Eucharistic character of this meal, as it consists of bread and fish – similarly to Jn 6: 9. This combination of bread and fish may have a symbolic or sacramental meaning, which would confirm the Eucharistic character of the meal.<sup>33</sup>

In the pericope about feeding the multitude, Luke uses a Greek word ἰχθύς with reference to fish (Lk 9: 13. 16), John uses the word ἰχθύς in Jn 21: 11 in direct connection with number 153, whereas in the pericope about feeding the multitude uses the word ὀψάριον (Jn 6: 9).<sup>34</sup> The word ὀψάριον was also used in the description of the meal (Jn 21: 9–13), in which number 153 appears. Using the term ὀψάριον three times in the text and twice the term ἄρτος (bread) is consistent with the primary John’s pattern 3 + 2, which is the pattern originally used in Jn 21: 2 (before the

<sup>31</sup> Cf. S. Mędała, *Funkcja i treść opowiadania o trzecim objawieniu się Jezusa uczniom po zmartwychwstaniu (J 21, 1–14)*, [in:] *Duch i Oblubienica mówią: “Przyjdź.” Księga Pamiątkowa dla Ojca Profesora Augustyna Jankowskiego OSB w 85 rocznicę urodzin*, zebra. i oprac. W. Chrostowski, Warszawa 2001, p. 247–274; R. Wróbel, *Chrystofania nad Jeziorem Tyberiadzkim (J 21, 1–14). Problemy interpretacyjne i znaczenie*, “Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny” 3 (2007), p. 185–208.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. R. E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, New York 1970, vol. 2, p. 1083.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John. An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text. Second Edition*, Philadelphia 1978, p. 581–582.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. R. Popowski, *Wielki słownik grecko-polski Nowego Testamentu*, Warszawa 1994, p. 302.

marginal gloss about the two disciples without names was incorporated into the proper text<sup>35</sup>). The order of appearance of these two terms surprises:

Jn 21 : 9: “fish [...] and bread”

Jn 21 : 10: “fish” [plural]

Jn 21 : 13: “bread [...] and fish”

fish + **bread** + fish + **bread** + fish

ἡ **μήτηρ** τοῦ **κυρίου** μου

On the basis of the above – mentioned analogy we can notice that the words “the Mother of the Lord” (μήτηρ κυρίου) correspond with the word “bread,” which may suggest that John, in the same way as Luke, connected the Mother of the Lord with the Eucharist. The application of the 3 + 2 pattern emphasises this reference even more.<sup>36</sup> The use of the plural form of the word fish τῶν ὀψαρίων in the central place may suggest the previously mentioned division of the Gospel according to John.

Since John uses the patterns for the full title of Mary as the Mother of the Lord emphasising her Divine Motherhood, he might have divided

<sup>35</sup> Cf. M.-J. Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Jean*, op. cit., p. 523.

<sup>36</sup> A special way of using the terms ἰχθύς (fish caught), ὀψάριον (fish to be eaten) and ἄρτος (bread) can be noticed. In Jn 21 (being the chapter added to the original ending of the Gospel according to John) we can see a double 3 + 2 pattern: the word ἰχθύς used three times (Jn 21 : 6. 8. 11) and the word ἄρτος used twice (Jn 21 : 9. 13) as well as the word ὀψάριον used three times (Jn 21 : 9. 10. 13) and the word ἄρτος used twice (Jn 21 : 9. 13). The word ἰχθύς appears only in the parts of the Gospel mentioned before, there is no other fragment in which they are used. The word ὀψάριον, apart from the three fragments indicated above, appears twice more in the main structure of the Gospel of John (Jn 6 : 9. 11), which altogether amounts to five, giving an impression of the application of the 3 + 2 pattern. Therefore, it is not surprising, that the word ἰχθύς is used exactly five times in Matthew: Mt 7 : 10; 14 : 17. 19; 15 : 36; 17 : 27 – cf. W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden [ed.], *A Concordance to the Greek Testament According to the Texts of Westcott and Hort, Tischendorf and the English Revisers, Fourth Edition Revised by H. K. Moulton*, Edinburgh 1963 (reprinted 1970), pp. 504 and 744.

the whole narrative in accordance with this title. The use of plural τῶν ὀψαρίων in the central place seems to correspond with the central part (the third out of five) of the Gospel according to John (Jn 2 : 12–19 : 24), which contains a huge amount of material proving that Jesus is a Messiah, the true Son of God.<sup>37</sup> From this point of view the main division of the Gospel of John into five parts along the lines of the title of Mary as the Mother of the Lord seems justified. The Gospel according to John is Christological,<sup>38</sup> however, its main structure is Mariological. The editor of Chapter 21, containing the so-called description of the meal (Jn 21 : 9–13), is obviously familiar with the full title of Mary as the Mother of the Lord as well as with John's pattern 3 + 2 emphasising her dignity as the Mother of the Lord, and this is the pattern originally applied in Jn 21 : 2.

## 2. The origin of John's patterns

In several parts of the New Testament both John and Matthew prove familiarity with the full title of Mary as the Mother of the Lord (ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ κυρίου μου) presented by Luke (Lk 1 : 43) and its appropriate interpretation (with the use of John's patterns), emphasising dignity of Mary as the Mother of God. Especially Matthew, in some pericopes, mainly the ones connected with Mary and presenting her relation with Jesus (the genealogy of Jesus, the Infancy Narrative), with no hesitation applies the primary John's pattern (3 + 2), with the use of which he emphasises the Divine Motherhood of Mary.

It needs to be mentioned that in most places Mary is simply referred to as "mother of Jesus" or "His mother."<sup>39</sup> Many of them are parts of

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. the so-called first ending of the Gospel according to John (cf. Jn 20 : 31: "But these are written that you may (come to) believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name").

<sup>38</sup> On the subject of the Christology in the Gospel according to John cf. S. Mędała, *Chrystologia Ewangelii św. Jana*, Kraków 1993.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. J. Kozyra, *Matka Boża w pierwotnej tradycji apostołskiej Nowego Testamentu*, [in:] *Matka Boża w ludzie Bożym*, red. J. Górecki, Katowice 2005, p. 47–63; J. Kudasiewicz,



pericopes, which might have been written at the pre-canonical stage as independent texts (cf. Mk 6: 1–6 par.; Mk 3: 31–35 par.).<sup>40</sup> In the earlier layers of the Gospel Mary is indeed referred to as “mother of Jesus” or “His mother.” It was at the later stage (of the editing of the Gospel) that familiarity with Luke’s title of Mary as the Mother of the Lord was revealed and her dignity as the Mother of God emphasised. This process started taking place in the times of the apostles and concerned the editors of the Gospel according to John and the Gospel according to Matthew, although we can assume that it was Luke who initiated it (the use of the secondary John’s pattern 5 + 2 in Lk 9: 13. 16 and Lk 12: 6).

A similar process can be noticed with reference to Jesus, especially his resurrection. We can distinguish two stages of the perception of the resurrection of Jesus. In the earliest texts the resurrection of Jesus was perceived as a sole act of God the Father.<sup>41</sup> Regardless of the terms used to refer to the resurrection,<sup>42</sup> it was described in the passive voice of the verb as “Jesus was resurrected by God” and in active voice as “God resurrected Jesus.” These two ways express an old, common way of presenting the truth of resurrection with the use of stereotypical expressions and statements of faith. From the grammatical point of view the passive voice of the verb “was resurrected” can bear the meaning of “raised from the dead” and in this sense appears a few times in the New Testament (e.g. Mk 4: 27; 6: 14. 16; 12: 25–26; Lk 7: 14). It was not until much later

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*Matka Jezusa według Ewangelii Marka, [in:] Deus meus et omnia. Księga Pamiątkowa ku czci o. prof. Hugolina Langkammera OFM w 50. rocznicę święceń kapłańskich, red. M. S. Wróbel, Lublin 2005, p. 207–217; M. Rosik, Postać Matki Jezusa w Ewangelii Mateusza, “Salvatoris Mater” 10 (2008) no. 4, p. 42–60.*

<sup>40</sup> Cf. J. Majewski, *Mariologia Ewangelii Marka w świetle współczesnej biblistyki [Mk 3, 20–35], Salvatoris Mater” 1 (1999) no. 2, p. 235–267.*

<sup>41</sup> J. Kremer, *Das älteste Zeugnis von der Auferstehung Christi. Eine bibeltheologische Studie zur Aussage und Bedeutung von 1 Kor 15, 1–11*, Stuttgart 1966, p. 39–53.

<sup>42</sup> More about the terms referring to resurrection and their interpretation cf. J. Łach, *Problem interpretacji pojęć określających zmartwychwstanie*, “Communio” 26 (1985) no. 2, p. 43–50.

that raising from the dead, which was originally seen as the act of God, was perceived as resurrection, the act of Christ himself.<sup>43</sup>

Regardless of the voice of the verb used (passive or active), Jesus' raising from the dead was perceived in the light of the Old Testament. It stressed the "active" role of God the Father and the "passive" role of Jesus as the obedient Son waiting for his Father to intervene (cf. Acts 2:25–28; Ps 16 [15]:8–11). With time Resurrection of Jesus was seen as an autonomous act, executed with his own power. In the earliest layers of the New Testament this incredible act, which gave hope for the resurrection of the dead, was presented in an undoubtedly different way from later accounts of this event.

We can assume that both processes of the theological perception of Jesus and His Mother took place parallelly, as there is no evidence against this way of interpretation. However, a question of what the source of this phenomenon was arises. How is it possible that in the times of the Apostles Mary was referred to as the Mother of the Lord (the Mother of God)? What happened that Mary was no longer perceived as "mother of Jesus" or "his mother" and became "the Mother of the Lord" (Mother of God)?<sup>44</sup> How is it possible that the first Christians called Mary "the Mother of the Lord" (Mother of God),<sup>45</sup> not only with the approval of the Apostles (there is no mention of them forbidding to use this title with reference to Mary), but, as it seems, following the example of the Apostle, who seems to have initiated it (the Gospel of Luke written according to St. Paul's indications, the Gospel of John [or his protege's], the Gospel of Matthew). And how was it possible for them to view the Resurrection of Jesus as the act of his own doing, which should have been interpreted in agreement with the common formulas of the Old Testament?

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<sup>43</sup> J. Kremer, *Das älteste Zeugnis von der Auferstehung Christi...*, op. cit., p. 42–43.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. W. Misztal, *Wiara w pośrednictwo Maryi oraz Jej kult a duchowość pierwszych chrześcijan*, "Salvatoris Mater" 4 (2002) no. 3, p. 232–251.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. W. M. Stabryła, "Matka Pana" (Łk 1, 43) w świetle krytyki historyczno-literackiej. Czy św. Łukasz wyznaje Boże macierzyństwo Maryi?, "Salvatoris Mater" 10 (2008) no. 4, p. 23–41.

Some claim that the Apostles, influenced by the tragic and traumatising experience of Jesus' passion, grew to attribute divinity to him,<sup>46</sup> the further consequence of which, following the example of the Greek and Roman religion, was attributing divinity to his mother, Mary.<sup>47</sup> It is a serious but an unsubstantiated allegation.<sup>48</sup> As from the very beginning Christians were extremely reasonable and down to earth, and since the descent of the Holy Spirit they were under his special care and felt his assistance on everyday basis (cf. Acts 10:1–11:18; 16:6–10; Jn 14:26; Acts 18:9–10; 22:14; 22:17–21; 23:11). It seems ridiculous to claim that the Apostles made such an enormous mistake or that they were misled to this extent and began to proclaim the Gospel embellishing it on purpose.

In their times an event important to Christians must have taken place and must have forced them to revise the theological thought. And such kind of event did take place in the times of the Apostles. It was obviously the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, which was dogmatically defined by Pope Pius XII in 1950. The Apostolic Constitution "Munificentissimus Deus" teaches that having completed the course of her earthly life, Mary was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory. This historical fact was expressed in the contemporary theological language.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Cf. K. Adam, *Das Problem der Entmythologisierung und die Auferstehung des Christus*, "Theologische Quartalschrift" 132 (1952), p. 385–410; R. Bultmann, *Neues Testament und Mythologie*, [in:] *Kerygma und Mythos I*, Hamburg-Bergstedt 1960<sup>4</sup>, p. 15–48; H. W. Bartsch, *Das Auferstehungszeugnis, sein historisches und theologisches Problem*, Hamburg-Bergstedt 1965; W. Marxsen, *Die Auferstehung Jesu als historisches und als theologisches Problem*, Gütersloh 1965<sup>2</sup>; L. W. Hurtado, *How on Earth did Jesus become a God? Historical questions about earliest devotion to Jesus*, Grand Rapids-Edinburgh 2005; L. W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ. Devotion to Jesus in earliest Christianity*, Grand Rapids 2003.

<sup>47</sup> The cult of Mary is rooted in the Holy Scripture – cf. Z. Janiec, *Kult Maryi w Piśmie Świętym, Mszy Świętej i Liturgii Godzin*, "Anamnesis" 9 (2003) no. 1, p. 88–94.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. J. Guillet, *Jezus w wierze pierwszych uczniów*, tłum. M. Krzeptowska, Kraków 2000; T. Jelonek, *Od Jezusa z Nazaretu do Chrystusa z Chalcedonu*, [in:] *Inkulturacja Biblii*, pod red. T. Jelonek, Kraków 2007, p. 27–66.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. N. G. Ramirez, *Chwalebne Wniebowzięcie Maryi*, tłum. L. Balter, "Communio" 20 (2000) no. 6, p. 109–125.

The dogma only mentions the bodily taking up of the Virgin Mary into heaven, it does not determine when it happened. Therefore, there is no definitive conclusion as to whether the assumption took place at the end of her earthly life or after her physical death. Many theologians, on the basis of convincing arguments, tend to believe that the assumption took place after Mary's death.<sup>50</sup> These arguments seem reasonable: Mary faithfully followed her Son in everything, so experiencing death was no exception.<sup>51</sup> It was after her death that Mary's body and soul were assumed. It is not of crucial importance where the Assumption took place, although Jerusalem seems to be a more probable place than Ephesus.<sup>52</sup>

The right perception of this most important event in the times of the Apostles lets us fully understand its consequences for the theology of the time. After her death Mary was probably buried in accordance with the custom of those days,<sup>53</sup> however, her body, instead of decomposing, disappeared and her grave was left empty, just like in the case of Jesus. For the Apostles and their disciples this event must have come as a surprise. The body of Mary, just like the body of Christ, after being put in the grave

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<sup>50</sup> Cf. W. M. Stabryła, "Assumpta est Maria in caelum." *Wniebowzięcie w śmierci?*, "Salvatoris Mater" 8 (2006) no. 1–2, p. 81–101.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. S. Włodarczyk, *Zwiastowanie – Kalwaria szczególnym doświadczeniem wiary Maryi*, "Częstochowskie Studia Teologiczne" 17–18 (1989–1990), p. 43–47; S. De Fiores, *Droga Maryi od służby Panu do korony chwały*, "Salvatoris Mater" 6 (2004) no. 3, p. 44–60.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. F. Gryglewicz, *Jerozolimskie tradycje Wniebowzięcia Najświętszej Maryi Panny*, "Homo Dei" 20 (1951), p. 40–45; P. Stach, *Miejsce Zaśnięcia Najświętszej Maryi Panny*, "Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny" 4 (1951) no. 1–2, p. 59–82; S. Włodarczyk, *Tradycja jerozolimskie grobu Najświętszej Maryi Panny w świetle tekstów Pisma św. i Tradycji*, "Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny" 33 (1980) no. 6, p. 331–337; A. Strus, *Legenda, tradycja i historia o zaśnięciu i wniebowzięciu NMP*, "Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny" 37 (1984) no. 2, p. 127–139; E. Jastrzębowska, *Kult maryjny w Efezie*, "Meander" 50 (1995) no. 9–10, p. 469–481.

<sup>53</sup> More on the subject of burial traditions of that time cf. J. Chmiel, *Pogrzeb Jezusa w świetle zwyczajów żydowskich*, "Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny" 37 (1984) no. 2, p. 119–127; H. Muszyński, S. Mędała, *Archeologia Palestyny w zarysie*, Pelplin 1984; I. Wilson, *Całun Turyński*, Kraków 1985; J. Kucharski, *Spocząć ze swymi przodkami*, Lublin 1998; B. R. McCane, *Roll Back the Stone. Death and Burial in the World of Jesus*, Harrisburg-London-New York 2003.

simply “evaporated.” From the perspective of the witnesses contemporary with these two events, the two were basically the same as far as their form was concerned: two identical resurrections of the bodies put in their graves.

This event provoked a change in the theological perception of Mary and her Son, and, most importantly, of resurrection itself. Christians from those times, despite the lack of terminology and theological notions, without any doubts were able to see the difference between Mary, “just” human, and her Son, who not only is a true human incarnate from the Virgin Mary, but also true God from true God. With this crucial difference of natures, both the body of Christ and the body of Mary were resurrected in an identical way.

There is a slight differentiation of the theological perception of the two resurrections. Until then the resurrection of Jesus was seen as an act of God the Father, resurrecting his Son, obedient till the very end of His earthly life. The Assumption of Mary resulted in the change of understanding of these two facts: she was resurrected by God, He resurrected himself with his own power, as He is true God.

The same thing happened to the body of Mary and to the body of Christ, however, the two events were not the same due to the difference of natures of the two: Jesus resurrected His body with his own power and with his own power ascended into heaven; the body of Mary was resurrected by God and it was God who took her up to heaven with her body and soul (that is where the name Assumption comes from). It happened because of her special dignity: at the moment of Annunciation Mary became the Mother of the Lord (the Mother of God), which was crowned with her Assumption, which proved her full participation in the acts of her Son, including the adoration of her body.<sup>54</sup> Not only was she the Mother of the Messiah, but also the Mother of the Lord – including the resurrection of her body from the dead. Her body was granted the grace of adoration before parousia (the second coming of Christ), and indicated a tight connection between Mary and the Lord, who was her Son, which is why her dignity as the Mother of the Lord was recognised and emphasised.

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<sup>54</sup> Cf. S. Hareźga, *Podstawy wniebowzięcia Maryi w Nowym Testamencie*, “Salvatoris Mater” 2 (2000) no. 4, p. 22–40.

A question concerning the lack of any direct mention of the Assumption of Mary in the New Testament arises. It is obvious though that the Gospel was the story of Jesus Christ and His Salvific Grace.<sup>55</sup> Mary appears in the text only in the context of the life and works of Jesus.<sup>56</sup> It was Jesus who was the substance of the Gospel.<sup>57</sup> However, it seems that the lack of any account of this event was rooted even deeper. Jesus was the announced Messiah to deliver redemption from sin.<sup>58</sup> The whole of the Old Testament led to Jesus, His Passion, Death and Resurrection (cf. Acts 2:22–36; 3:12–26; 17:2–3; 18:28; 26:22–23; 28:23; Lk 24:25–27; Rom 10:4). Although he was the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies, he was also “a sign that will be contradicted” (cf. Lk 2:34). Since the resurrection of Jesus, supported by logical arguments in the light of the Old Testament, met with so much disbelief from the opponents (cf. Acts 19:8–9; 28:22), it was even more important to be careful talking about the resurrection of Mary, whose rising from the dead could not have been supported by the books of the Old Testament,<sup>59</sup> as there is no mention of the resurrection of the Mother of the Messiah in any fragment of the text.<sup>60</sup> That is why this

<sup>55</sup> Cf. M. Rosik, *Jezus i jego misja. W kręgu orędzia Ewangelii synoptycznych*, Kielce 2003.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. M. Oleś, *Milczenie Ewangelii o Matce Bożej*, “Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny” 15 (1962) no. 1, p. 44–49; Anton Adam, *Maryja w dziele Chrystusa*, “Salvatoris Mater” 3 (2001) no. 3, p. 149–152.

<sup>57</sup> The Ascension of Jesus and his exhortation to go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel in a way sums up his earthly works and opens up his activity through the Holy Spirit in the Church. The Assumption takes place long after the Great Commission of Christianity, which means it is not directly connected to the gospel of Jesus.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. A. S. Jasiński, *Maryja o oczekiwaniu mesjańskie w Starym Testamencie*, “Salvatoris Mater” 5 (2003) no. 4, p. 11–28.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. K. Markłowski, *Wniebowzięcie Najświętszej Marii Panny w świetle Pisma św.*, “Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny” 3 (1950) no. 1–2, p. 154–157; A. Tronina, *Assumpta. Typologia Arki Przymierza*, “Salvatoris Mater” 2 (2000) no. 4, p. 11–21.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. E. Haratym, *Najświętsza Maryja Panna w Starym Testamencie*, “Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny” 4 (1951), p. 13–42; J. Homerski, *Maryja Matka Chrystusa w świetle tekstów Starego Testamentu*, “Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne” 35 (1988) no. 1, p. 27–37; S. Strzelecki, *Teksty “maryjne” w księgach Starego Testamentu*, “Wiadomości Kościelne

great event was given account of indirectly. It was theologically compiled (emphasised) by the Apostles and their disciples (the Gospel according to Matthew, Luke and John) mostly for the believers, which was a way of avoiding confrontation with those unfamiliar with the Christian faith.<sup>61</sup>

The Assumption of Mary is a critical moment. It verifies the theological perception of Mary and her Son, and, most importantly, the perception of His resurrection. Until the Assumption of Mary, it was enough to see the resurrection of Jesus in the context of the Old Testament as a sole act of God the Father, who resurrects His Son. Mary was perceived as the Mother of Jesus, His Mother (Mother of the Messiah). The Assumption compelled a change in the perception of the resurrection of Jesus (there was a transition between “was resurrected” and “raised from the dead” [himself]) and Mary as a person. The resurrection of Mary was objectively presented as “she was resurrected,” which means she was assumed body [and soul] into heavenly glory. The adoration of her body through the Assumption became the basis and the beginning of emphasising her title of the Mother of the Lord – God bestowed grace on her body, the same grace held by the body of Christ, her Son, which is why she fully deserves to be given the title of “the Mother of the Lord” (which means “the Mother of the One who raised from the dead”).

The evidence of these two stages of the theological perception of Jesus and Mary, especially in the context of resurrection, is clearly visible in the New Testament. This specific duality of the account of the resurrection of Jesus and later emphasising the dignity of Mary as the Mother of the Lord resulted from the most important event in history after the resurrection of Christ – the Assumption of Mary. Luke’s title ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ κυρίου μου became a means of expressing this truth through emphasis-

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Archidiecezji Białostockiej” 6 (25) 1997 no. 1 (104), p. 89–94; I. de la Potterie, *Zapowiedź Maryi w Starym Testamencie*, tłum. L. Balter, “Communio” 20 (2000) no. 6, p. 3–20. The resurrection of the Mother of the Messiah is not mentioned in the Old Testament literally. About biblical senses, cf. S. Szymik, *Sensy biblijne. Podział, charakterystyka. Kontrowersje*, “Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne” 47 (2000) z. 1, p. 5–25.

<sup>61</sup> This careful approach is quite comprehensible when we take into account the attitude of non-Catholics to the Assumption of Mary.

ing her dignity as the Mother of the Lord with the use of John's patterns (primary  $3 + 2$  and secondary  $5 + 2$ ), which is particularly visible in the writing of Matthew. Number 153 in Jn 21 : 11 is a numerical value of two key words of this title distinguished by the patterns. It is no coincidence, but the effect of special appreciation of the dignity of Mary as the Mother of the Lord, the origin of which is her Assumption.

*Poznań*

PAWEŁ MAREK MUCHA

## Keywords

Number 153, Mother of the Lord, the structure of the Gospel according to Matthew, Matthean genealogy, Matthean Infancy Narrative, Miracle Chapters in Matthew 8 : 1–9 : 34, Feeding the Multitude, the composition of the Gospel according to John, Jn 21 : 9–13, resurrection, Assumption of Mary

## Summary

### What was the Origin of Number 153?

The number 153 in John 21 : 11 is the numerical value of two key words of the Greek title “the Mother of the Lord.” This interpretation is based on serious arguments, above all on the analogy between Luke 1 : 43 and John 21 : 2. There are two key clues, or patterns, in John 21 : 2 which help to encrypt the Marian dignity as “the Mother of the Lord”: the primary pattern  $3 + 2$  and the secondary pattern  $5 + 2$ . These patterns were very well known and they were used in the main structure of Matthew, composition of the Miracle Chapters (Mt 8 : 1–9 : 34), the Matthean genealogy, Feeding the Multitude and John 21 : 9–13. In Matthew and John there are indirect analogies to the Greek title “the Mother of the Lord,” too. There is no doubt that at the beginning of Christianity Mary was merely called the “Mother of Jesus” or “His Mother.” It was much later in the apostolic times that the title “the Mother of the Lord” was emphasised. The view on Jesus’ resurrection was changed as well. In the early creedal formula the resurrection of Jesus was seen as the act of God who resurrected Jesus. Not until the Assumption of Mary was it perceived as an act of Jesus himself, who raised from the dead. The Assumption of Mary explains the change



of the theological view on Mary and the resurrection of Jesus. Her body was raised from the dead, just like the body of Jesus, Her Son, the Lord, so She really is the Mother of the Lord. John's patterns emphasise the dignity of Mary as "the Mother of the Lord" in the Gospels and they prove that Matthew, Luke and John knew about the Assumption of Mary.

## Streszczenie

### Co było źródłem liczby 153?

Liczba 153 w J 21, 11 jest wartością numeryczną dwóch słów kluczowych w greckim tytule „Matka Pana”. Ta interpretacja jest oparta na poważnych argumentach, przede wszystkim na analogii pomiędzy Łk 1, 43 a J 21, 11. W J 21, 11 są dwa klucze wskazówki, które pomagają odczytać godność Maryi jako „Matki Pana”: pierwotny schemat 3 + 2 oraz wtórny schemat 5 + 2. Te klucze wskazówki były bardzo dobrze znane i zostały użyte w głównej strukturze Ewangelii Mateusza; układzie tzw. sekcji cudów (Mt 8, 1–9, 34); Mateuszowej genealogii; cudzie rozmnożenia pięciu chlebów i dwóch ryb, a także w J 21, 9–13. U Mateusza i Jana są także bezpośrednie analogie do greckiego tytułu „Matka Pana”. Nie ma żadnej wątpliwości, że u początków chrześcijaństwa Maryja była nazywana tylko „Matką Jezusa” lub „Jego Matką”. Dopiero w późniejszych czasach apostoelskich podkreślano tytuł „Matka Pana”. Podobnie zmieniło się spojrzenie na zmartwychwstanie Jezusa. We wczesnych wyznaniach wiary zmartwychwstanie Jezusa było pomyślane jako czyn Boga, który wskrzesił Jezusa z martwych. Dopiero później zmartwychwstanie było uważane jako akt samego Jezusa, który samoistnie powstał z martwych. Wniebowzięcie Maryi było źródłem tego dziwnego fenomenu i całkowicie wyjaśnia zmianę teologicznego spojrzenia na Maryję i zmartwychwstanie Jezusa. Jej ciało zostało wskrzeszone z martwych, po prostu tak jak ciało Jezusa, Jej Syna, Pana, a więc była rzeczywiście Matką Pana. Janowe klucze wskazówki podkreślają godność Maryi jako „Matki Pana” w Ewangelii i dowodzą, że Mateusz, Łukasz i Jan znali fakt Wniebowzięcia Maryi.

## Słowa kluczowe

Liczba 153, Matka Pana, struktura Ewangelii Mateusza, Mateuszowa genealogia, Mateuszowa Ewangelia Dzieciństwa, sekcja cudów w Mt 8, 1–9, 34, cud rozmnożenia pięciu chlebów i dwóch ryb, kompozycja Ewangelii Jana, J 21, 9–13, zmartwychwstanie, Wniebowzięcie Maryi

