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ARTICLE

From Unfulled Rag to New Cloak: Lukan Clarifications on a Markan Theme

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Abstract

Mark 2.21 uses unusual terminology in describing the 'patch of an unfulled rag' (ἐπίβλημα ῥάκους ἀγνάφου) as well as in relation to what happens when the patch subsequently fails (αἴρει τὸ πλήρωμα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τὸ καινὸν τοῦ παλαιοῦ καὶ χεῖρον σχίσμα γίνεται). While Matthew largely repeats Mark's version verbatim (with only minor changes), Luke appears to make substantive changes to the 'parable'. Several scholars have suggested that Luke lacked an understanding of the facts and rendered the situation entirely improbable. However, if one takes account of terminology associated with fulling processes in antiquity, recently illuminated by archaeologically grounded studies of ancient fulleries, Luke's version emerges as a plausible interpretation of his predecessor's and, in the other direction, certain interpretive possibilities in Mark's account become legible.

According to a common view, Jesus' analogy of the patched cloak in Mark 2.21 was so difficult to understand that Luke felt the need to alter the passage entirely. In brief, Mark's Jesus punctuates his apparent debate with the disciples of John and the Pharisees about fasting with the imagery of garment repair and wineskins. In doing so, however, on this view Mark's account of the old cloak and new patch relies on apparently unusual terminology, the 'patch of an unfulled rag' (ἐπίβλημα ῥάκους ἀγνάφου), and includes an ambiguous description of what happens when this patch fails (αἴρει τὸ πλήρωμα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τὸ καινὸν τοῦ παλαιοῦ καὶ χεῖρον σχίσμα γίνεται). For its part, Luke's version depicts a person rending a new garment to patch an old one, and its logic of repair appears to run differently from that in Mark. Scholars have not been slow to note the differences. Franz Cremer, for instance, imagined that Luke came to his own highly improbable version from an inadequate understanding of the Markan material,[1] while Morna Hooker claimed that Mark's meaning 'was apparently incomprehensible to Luke'.[2] Others, in slightly more muted tones, note that Luke 'considerably clarifies' the Markan old/new contrast[3] with the result that the Lukan version 'is a complete reinterpretation of the difficult sentence in Mark 2.21b'.[4] The present argument

[1] Franz Gerhard Cremer, 'Lukanisches Sondergut zum Fastenstreitgespräch: Lk 5,33–39 im Urteil der patristischen und scholastischen Exegese', *TThZ* 76 (1967) 129–54, at 136–7.

[2] Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel according to Saint Mark* (BNTC; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991) 100.

[3] Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (Sacra Pagina 3; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1991) 98.

[4] François Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002) 193.

runs somewhat in the opposite direction: far from finding Mark unintelligible, Luke's version indicates that the Markan analogy was understood simply in relation to the process and vocabulary related to ancient fulling.[5] To be sure, the Lukan version lacks certain of Mark's ambiguous phrases, and there are several interpretive quandaries related to Mark 2.21 that pose genuine difficulties to interpreters, which have resulted in a range of solutions over time.[6] Nevertheless, understanding Luke's version as an historically plausible interpretation of Mark's not only aids in understanding the later writer's redaction of the source material, but also clarifies what could be at stake in the Markan material. To see this clearly, the present argument begins by examining Mark 2.21–2, focusing in particular on the difficult terminology. From there, it turns to explore ancient fulling practices, which will help to situate Mark's cloth analogy, before turning to Luke's rewriting of Mark in Luke 5.36. In addition to clarifying the interpretive relationship between the Lukan and Markan versions, attending to the temporality of the fulling process helps to illuminate the relation between the patched cloth and wineskin examples in which changes across their respective life cycles are in view.

1 Interpretive Quandaries of Mark 2.21

Following on from his appeal to the incongruity of fasting with wedding celebrations, Mark's Jesus shifts abruptly to two material examples of incongruity.

> Οὐδεὶς ἐπίβλημα ῥάκους ἀγνάφου ἐπιράπτει ἐπὶ ἱμάτιον παλαιόν· εἰ δὲ μή, αἴρει τὸ πλήρωμα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τὸ καινὸν τοῦ παλαιοῦ καὶ χεῖρον σχίσμα γίνεται. καὶ οὐδεὶς βάλλει οἶνον νέον εἰς ἀσκοὺς παλαιούς· εἰ δὲ μή, ῥήξει ὁ οἶνος τοὺς ἀσκοὺς καὶ ὁ οἶνος ἀπόλλυται καὶ οἱ ἀσκοί· ἀλλὰ οἶνον νέον εἰς ἀσκοὺς καινούς.[7]
>
> No one sews an ἐπίβλημα ῥάκους ἀγνάφου onto an old cloak, otherwise αἴρει τὸ πλήρωμα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, the new from the old, and the tear becomes worse. And no one puts new wine into old skins, otherwise the wine ruptures the skins and the wine and skins are destroyed. But new wine into new skins! (Mk 2.21–2)

In the immediate context and at some distance, the gist of these analogies appears tolerably clear: the newness signified by Jesus and his ministry is out of step with the oldness signified by the fasting of John's disciples and the Pharisees.[8] And yet, on this reading 'the

[5] Only two earlier scholars I am aware of have tried to argue that Luke got Mark 'right'; C. W. Atkinson, 'The New Patch on an Old Garment (Matth. IX.16, Mark II.21, Luke V.36)', *Expository Times* 19 (1919) 233–4 and F. C. Synge, 'Mark ii.21=Matthew ix.16=Luke v.36: The Parable of the Patch', *Expository Times* 56 (1944) 26–7. These rarely discussed essays offer a partial precedent for the present argument. Some of their lexical points remain relevant (if undeveloped; see further below), though their approach to redaction and reception is largely outdated. Principally, the present argument is not that Luke got Mark 'right' but that understanding his interpretation illuminates an historically plausible reading of Mark 2.21 that accounts for various of its difficult features.

[6] On the ancient reception of this passage, see esp. Franz Gerhard Cremer, *Die Fastenansage Jesu: Mk 2,20 und Parallelen in der Sicht der patristischen und scholastischen Exegese* (BBB 23; Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1965) while the varied reception of the very similar Matthean parallel is surveyed in Ian Boxall, *Matthew through the Centuries* (Wiley Blackwell Bible Commentaries; Hoboken: Wiley, 2019) 165.

[7] Text given according to *Novum Testamentum Graece Post Eberhard et Erwin Nestle* (ed. B. Aland, *et al.*; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012). All translations are my own except where otherwise indicated. Note that bibliographic information for editions of ancient works is provided with the initial reference to each.

[8] This general contrast is widely noted; cf. Joachim Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (EKK; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1978) 116; Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Peabody: Hendrickson,

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conclusion of the two parables are certainly different: new wine goes into fresh skins, but an old garment presumably needs to be patched with a piece of old material.'[9] We can add to this that a new garment presumably would not need any patch at all, making the presenting issue of relative fit irrelevant. Moreover, the phrases left untranslated above present several quandaries. I will take them in order.

The first problem is determining how to understand the phrase ἐπίβλημα ῥάκους ἀγνάφου. The opening word in this phrase is a general term for a covering which is often used more specifically in relation to textiles.[10] In the present context, as the object of the verb ἐπιράπτειν (to sew) and with its textile material elucidated by the subsequent genitives, reading ἐπίβλημα as a patch to cover an implied tear in the old cloak is generally accepted. The second term, ῥάκος, broadly denotes a strip of cloth though outside the context of medical treatises it tends to carry the connotation of 'rag' or 'tatters', from Homer's depiction of Odysseus' ragged disguise to Epictetus and beyond.[11] Josephus, for example, uses the term to refer to the strip of cloth cut by David from Saul's robe (*Ant.* 6.285–9). It is worth noting, moreover, that outside these gospel texts and their later commentators, ῥάκος never modifies ἐπίβλημα.[12] In light of this, however, it is not clear in what way Mark can refer to this 'rag' as something 'new' (καινός) in contrast to what is old (the cloak).[13] Even in medical contexts, a (hopefully) clean – even (possibly) fresh – ῥάκος is not referred to as 'new'.[14] This pattern of use belies the presentation of information in the BDAG entry. There, uses in medical contexts are not differentiated from others, while the passage from Josephus noted above is combined with a reference to Jer 45.11 (where the 'rags' are

2002) 67; David S. du Toit, *Der abwesende Herr: Strategien im Markusevangelium zur Bewältigung der Abwesenheit des Auferstandenen* (WMANT; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2006) 34–5.

[9] Hooker, *Mark*, 100.

[10] Note the evidence in LSJ *s.v.* ἐπίβλημα II, where it is applied to items as small as embroidery and fabric bandages as well as to outer mantles. Gregory Nyssen uses the term ὕφασμα (something woven) for ἐπίβλημα in his rewriting of this pericope in his *Hom. in Cant*. 11 (ed. Hermann Langerbeck; *Gregorii Nysseni in Canticum Canticorum* (Gregorii Nysseni Opera 6; Leiden: Brill, 1960)).

[11] See Homer *Od*. 13,434; 14,342; cf. the continuation of this language and reference in Strabo *Geog*. 1.2.2 and Plutarch *Quomodo* 52D; Euripides *Hel*. 1079; Jer. 45.11; Epict. *Diss*. 1.29.45, 2.8.15–16. The 'rags' are associated with sackcloth and mourning in Plutarch *De sup*. 168D and poverty in *Quaest. conv*. 632E. Origen *Frag. in Prov*. (MPG 17.224 ll. 23–7) contrasts the finery of wedding garments with flesh rent into rags. Also, it can refer to other (broken) fragments, as in Plutarch *Luc*. 18.6 where a broken crown (διάδημα) is referred to as a 'cursed fragment' (ὦ κατηραμένον…ῥάκος) or be used metaphorically as in Aristotle *Rhet*. 1413a7. The medical use is extremely common, see further in n. 14 below.

[12] This is according to a proximity search in TLG; the same observation applies to ῥάκος and ἐπιρράπτω. Outside the NT and commentators, the term ῥάκος occurs with ἐπιβάλλω mainly in medical contexts (i.e., not related to fixing garments); e.g., Aëtius *Iatricorum* 16.79.3. In the only other instances, of which there are two, Cassius Dio (according to a later epitomist of his work) speaks of covering a statue of Agrippina before Nero with the phrase ῥάκος αὐτῷ ἐπέβαλον (*Hist*. 62.16.2a), while Heliodorus depicts an old man stripping off his ragged clothing with ἐγυμνώθη μὲν τῶν ἐπιβεβλημένων ῥακῶν (*Aeth*. 7.7.2).

[13] The argument offered by both Atkinson, 'The New Patch', 234 and Synge, 'Mark ii.21', 27 (apparently independently) that this awkward phrase was originally a scribal annotation amounts to special pleading as there is no manuscript or patristic evidence to support them. Synge in fact notes that this possibility, 'if it cannot be proved, cannot be disproved', which is not very compelling.

[14] This is also according to a proximity search for ῥάκος and καινός (within 10 words) on TLG. Of the ten authors who use the term ῥάκος the most according to TLG, seven are medical writers (in order: Aëtius, Hippocrates, Galen, Hippiatrica, Paulus, Oribasius). The only instance where the two terms are used in relatively close proximity is in Oribasius *Coll. med*. 13α8.5 (*Oribasii collectionum medicarum reliquiae* (ed. J. Raeder; *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum* 6.1.1-6.2.2; Leipzig: Teubner, 1933), quoting Dioscorides Pedanius), where the terms refer to two different objects. For a more typical use of ῥάκος, see Galen Nat. Fac. 2.2, where he suggests different straining options, or *De comp. medic*. 12.794.16, where he describes how to make a particular bandage.

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specified as 'old') as justification for interpreting Mark 2.21 as 'a patch made of a piece of new cloth'.[15] 'Piece' is an unwarranted gloss for ῥάκος, and it obscures the question facing readers of this verse: why would Mark refer to this ῥάκος as 'new'? This quandary is only deepened when we turn to the third term, ἀγνάφος, which normally applies to an item of clothing which has not been to the fuller, and therefore is implied to be new, a point to which I will return shortly.[16] What, then, is this 'new' rag of unfulled cloth and where does it come from?

The second quandary relates to the phrase αἴρει τὸ πλήρωμα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, in which both the subject of the verb and the meaning of the term πλήρωμα are unclear. Taking the second issue first, given its connotations of completeness, it is unusual for πλήρωμα to refer to a rag (ῥάκος), and yet the apparently parallel movement of the πλήρωμα away from some object (ἀπ' αὐτοῦ) *and* the phrase τὸ καινὸν τοῦ παλαιοῦ suggest together that the πλήρωμα is associated with the new object, namely the ἐπίβλημα ῥάκους ἀγνάφου. Generally, the lexical issue is resolved by taking the term to indicate that which fills a given space (rather than completeness itself), though this remains problematic insofar as the evidence for such a definition is not clear. Both LSJ and BDAG point to Mark 2.21 for this definition though the secondary example in LSJ does not support such a 'filler' interpretation.[17] The entry in BDAG is even more problematic. Under the gloss 'that which makes someth. full/complete, supplement, complement', it opens with a citation from Appian (*Mithr*. 47.185), in which πλήρωμα denotes a *full* sum of money, and follows this with the comment 'lit. of the patch on a garment Mt 9:16; Mk 2:21'. There is a manifest mismatch between the first example and the ostensibly 'literal' application of a supposed common meaning in the synoptic passages: in the former, the term speaks to completeness as such (the full, final sum of money) rather than something supplemental that *makes* an item complete. In support of its interpretation, moreover, BDAG cites F. C. Synge's 1844 article on the passage from *Expository Times*, though in that piece, Synge argues specifically *against* identifying πλήρωμα with the patch; for him, it is more plausibly taken as the whole of the *new* garment.[18] In light of this lack of πλήρωμα-as-filler evidence, perhaps a better approach would be to take πλήρωμα as designating the entirety of the patch that lifts away from the old garment (rather than the patch itself tearing), though the identity of the 'fullness' remains unclear.

Further, while the majority of commentators and translations take τὸ πλήρωμα to be the subject of the verb αἴρειν, this leaves the formally active and normally transitive αἴρει without an obvious object.[19] On the other hand, no other clear candidate presents itself as an alternative subject for the verb, though scholars have suggested either the person

[15] BDAG *s.v.* ῥάκος, 2.

[16] So, among others, see M.-J. Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Marc* (Études bibliques; Paris: Gabalda, 1966) 48 and Gnilka, *Markus*, 116, though the latter does not appear to appreciate that fulling was principally performed on sewn clothing, rather than cloth straight from the loom.

[17] This is the interpretation reflected in both LSJ and BDAG *s.v.* πλήρωμα. In the case of LSJ, the only other instance provided for the gloss 'piece inserted to fill up' is Rufus *De corp. hum. app*. 216 (*Oeuvres de Rufus d'Éphèse* (ed. C. Daremberg and C. É. Ruelle; Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1879)). There, however, the πλήρωμα does not designate a small part filling up a space but rather the *whole* of the twisted web of flesh that fills internal cavities of the human body: Σὰρξ δὲ τὸ ἐν τοῖς σπλάγχνοις μεταξὺ τῶν ἀγγείων πεπηγὸς, ἅμα ὑφή τις καὶ πλήρωμα τοῦ πλέγματος τῶν ἀγγείων, ὡς μὴ κενὰ τὰ μεταξὺ ᾖ.

[18] Synge, 'Mark ii.21', 26; see further below. In fact, Synge's article also argues against the interpretation given in BDAG of the phrase ἦραν κλάσματα δώδεκα κοφίνων πληρώματα (Mk 6.43).

[19] Cf. the comments in Atkinson, 'The New Patch', 234. LSJ *s.v.* ἀείρω I lists the non-transitive glosses 'mount up' and 'to be high', respectively citing Xenophon *Hell.* 5.2.5 and Hipp. *De aere aquis* 6.7, though in both instances the form of the verb is manifestly middle (ἤρετο) or passive (ἀρθῆναι). This evidence points, then, not to non-transitive uses of the active verb form but rather to reflexive and passive uses which imply a certain object of the verb, namely the subject of the verb itself.

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implied in the opening οὐδεὶς, a reading anticipated already by some medieval interpreters or the patch (ἐπίβλημα) itself.[20] If either of these arguments hold, however, neither helps to make sense of the clause or the scenario more generally: either the person who sews on the patch now takes it away, for reasons left unexplained, or the patch itself takes the full (old or new) garment away from something else (but what?).[21] Alternatively, the more common view that the new patch (as a whole) lifts itself from the old garment presents an intelligible scenario but forces one to read both πλήρωμα and αἴρειν in unusual ways. However one looks at it, the Markan version of this analogy is difficult to parse.

Finally, the third quandary relates to the tear (σχίσμα): why is it worse after the new patch pulls (itself) away from the old garment? Is it because the patch was sewn to a larger area that is also now torn? Or is it because the patch is itself now lost as well? Despite the evident concern for preserving what is new, does this 'worse tear' suggest a care for the old garment as well? What is it about being unfulled that makes the rag so unsuitable as a patch for the old cloak?

As we shall see in due course, Luke's version clarifies each of these quandaries in its own way. Before turning to Luke 5, however, it will be helpful to locate the Markan language within the context of ancient fulling to better understand the framework within which Luke's rewriting works.

2 Ancient Fulling: Processes and Vocabulary

While there was long scholarly misunderstanding of the process, working out of a familiarity with the medieval practice, ancient fulling was not aimed at felting woollen products *per se*, nor is there evidence that fullers functioned as part of the textile production process itself.[22] Rather, in the ancient Greek and Roman world, fulling (γνάφειν, γνάπτειν, κνάφειν, *ars fullonia*) was the process for preparing a newly sewn garment for wear and for cleaning/refurbishing a worn garment, especially those made from wool, but also occasionally those made from silk or linen.[23]

At the risk of some generalisation, the fulling process proceeded as follows.[24] The work began with the soaping process, the aim of which was to work detergents (such as urine

[20] Respectively, Atkinson, 'The New Patch', 234 (and see Cremer, 'Lukanisches Sondergut', 142 for the medieval interpreters) and Synge, 'Mark ii.21', 26–7.

[21] The solution given in Synge, 'Mark ii.21', 26–7 is to argue that πλήρωμα refers to the quality of fullness characterises the 'new' garment from which the patch is taken. This reading effectively interpolates elements from Luke 5 into Mark, without noting the difficulties in the Markan version itself (see the comments on Synge's special pleading in n. 13 above). While the argument below will suggest that Luke's version is a plausible interpretation of Mark, I will resist a simple conflation of the two versions.

[22] The older view is well represented by the unsigned article '*Fullo* (κναφεύς, γναφεύς)' in William Smith, *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* (London: John Murray, 1875) 551–3.

[23] The best overview now is Miko Flohr, *The World of the* Fullo*: Work, Economy, and Society in Roman Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), while a helpful synthesis of earlier work is found in Alexandra Usateschu, *Fullonicae y Tinctoriae en el Mundo Romano* (Cornucopia 1; Barcelona: PPU, 1994), and the distinction of fulling from the textile production process was acknowledged already in A.H.M. Jones, 'The Cloth Industry under the Roman Empire', *The Economic History Review* 13 (1960) 183–92, at 190–1. Fulling silk and linen garments is noted in ch. 22 of Diocletian's Edict (see below). The arguments by Mark Bradley, '"It all comes out in the wash": Looking Harder at the Roman *fullonica*', *JRA* 15 (2002) 22–44 emphasise the cleaning activities of ancient fullers, though he does not account for the fulling of newly sewn garments.

[24] For this, I am mainly following Flohr, *World of the* Fullo, 98–112. It should be noted that the evidence for fulling from antiquity is simultaneously plentifully widespread and sparse. On one hand, we have numerous extant fulleries as well as visual depictions of the process (as in the images from Pompeii), legal documents (such as the Edict of Diocletian), literary references and other material remains. On the other hand, the extant fulleries are all ruins, the visual depictions are relatively few and hard to interpret, the legal documents are few and narrowly focused and the literary references rarely give a clear discussion of the process.

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and fuller's earth) through the fabric.[25] This stage involved placing the garment in a tub with some detergent and then working it roughly with feet and hands. In the Hippocratic *De diaeta*, this part of the process is described as follows: 'And the fullers accomplish (their work) in this way: they stomp, they beat, they pull.'[26] This stage is also famously depicted in a frieze from house VI 8, 20–21.2 at Pompeii, in which four workers are standing in tubs, with one appearing to stamp on a garment while the others appear to be wringing theirs out. Once the dirt and grease had been suitably removed, the clothes were thoroughly rinsed to remove the detergents before they were dried, either over poles erected in the fullery walls or over a moveable wooden frame. (As is often the case with wooden material from antiquity, none of these have survived, but there are graphic depictions of fulling in which both drying options appear to be at work.[27]) The use of bats or clubs for felting the wool, as was common in medieval practice, is not evident in antiquity.[28] Nevertheless, while not primarily the aim, some shrinking and felting of the woollen fabrics would necessarily have happened in the laundering process.[29]

As well-known as these laundering activities are, however, they were less applicable to new garments than to those already used and 'must be seen as basic, preparatory stages' for the main part of the fulling process: polishing the garment.[30] This involved in the first instance carding the garment, that is, scraping the cloth to raise the nap (that 'layer of projecting threads or fibres on the surface of a woollen or other textile fabric') and then shearing off the raised nap to create a smoother, more uniform finish.[31] According to a common ancient etymology, the term γνάφος was derived from the verb κνάω, meaning 'to scratch', because this was the activity particularly associated with fullers.[32] Shearing was apparently necessary for new garments as well because the nap on an unfulled cloak could be extensive.[33] After shearing the nap, some garments may have been placed in a

[25] Pliny the Elder mentions the use of urine at HN 28.91 and perhaps fuller's earth (in curing gout by means of *argumento fullonum*) at HN. 28.66. On the chemical composition and use of fuller's earth, see G.J. Churchman, *et al.*, 'Clays and Clay Minerals for Pollution Control', *Handbook of Clay Science* (ed. Faïza Bergaya, B.K.G. Theng and G. Lagaly; Kidlington: Elsevier, 2006) 625–75, at 637; F. Bergaya, G. Lagaly, and K. Beneke, 'History of Clay Science: A Young Discipline', *Handbook of Clay Science* (ed. Faïza Bergaya, B.K.G. Theng and G. Lagaly; Kidlington: Elsevier, 2006) 1166, 1163–82 and elsewhere in that volume.

[26] Hippocrates *De diaeta* 1.14 (ed. Littré) –Καὶ οἱ γναφέες τωὐτὸ διαπρήσσονται, λακτίζουσι, κόπτουσιν, ἕλκουσι…

[27] See Flohr, *World of the* Fullo, 108–13 and Usateschu, *Fullonicae y Tinctoriae*, 31.

[28] Usateschu, *Fullonicae y Tinctoriae*, 34 *supposes* their use ('Se supone su existencia…') on the basis of a 'bat' being found in a dye works, used for mixing colours, though there is no clear archaeological or literary evidence to support this supposition. On the commonly misunderstood role of the fuller in the death of James the Just, see the discussion in Benjamin A. Edsall, 'A Note on Hegesippus's Account of the Death of James in Light of Ancient Fulling Practices', *forthcoming*.

[29] So Flohr, *World of the* Fullo, 62, who notes the chemical and mechanical processes that cause this shrinking.

[30] Flohr, *World of the* Fullo, 108.

[31] Hippocrates *De diaeta* 1.14 completes the description like so: 'by shearing the raised (nap) and by weaving (παραπλέκοντες, for repairs? Or is this "wrapping" as a drying process or even "mixing" pigments into faded garments?), they make (them) more beautiful'. The quoted definition of nap is from *OED* s.v. nap, n.^{2}, 1.b. Usateschu, *Fullonicae y Tinctoriae*, 37–8 has a discussion and an image of the sorts of shears used by fullers.

[32] See esp. the grammarian, *Philoxenus* Frag. 11, 668 (*Die Fragmente des Grammatikers Philoxenos* (ed. Christos Theodoridis; Sammlung griechischer und lateinischer Grammatiker 2; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1976)); cf. the links with the plant in Galen *Vocum Hippocratis glossarium* l.14 who also refers to it as an ἱπποφαὲς; cf. Pliny the Elder HN 27.91, and later in Oribasius *Coll. med*. 11.l.8.

[33] This features as a discussion point in Plutarch *Quaestiones Conviviales*. While discussing the way in which cloth can be both cool and warm, depending on the qualities of what is being covered, Plutarch notes that unfulled cloth can be used to insulate piles of snow from melting, thanks to the 'coarseness and dryness of the nap' (διὰ τὴν τραχύτητα καὶ ξηρότητα τῆς κροκύδος) which does not allow the cloth to weigh down on the snow; Plutarch *Quaest. conv.* 692A.

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press, though little about this part of the process is known or sure.[34] At other times, or for particular garments, various other finishing processes appear to have been used, including burning sulphur under the clothing (either to bleach white garments or for some other softening effect).[35] It is unclear, however, whether the sulphuring activities preceded or followed the polishing process.

In Greek texts, the most common item listed for fulling is the ἱμάτιον, and it appears to be the case that some other types of clothing were not fulled, either for financial, practical or aesthetic purposes.[36] In other words, and strictly speaking, it was not a necessary process and some garments may never have been fulled. There was a social status element to having finely fulled clothing, as opposed to only dressing in unfulled (or even dirty) garments.[37] Julius Pollux's discussion of the dress for different stage characters even suggests that the state of one's clothes – fulled or unfulled – carried a kind of semiotic weight, insofar as certain professions on stage are signified by varieties of fulled or unfulled garments.[38] That fulling was practised on new garments despite their usability off the rack (so to speak), also indicates a certain aesthetic and therefore social element to fulled clothing.

In papyrological lists of clothing and household items, ranging from the 3rd century BCE to the 2nd century CE, various garments are often (though not always) identified as fulled (γνάφος or ἀπὸ γναφείου) or unfulled (ἄγναφος). P. Merton 2.71 (c. 163 CE), for example, lists a number of items and their prices including a white, spartan style robe (στολὴ λευκὴ λακονησήμου) and white gown (σύνθεσις λευκή) which are both noted as being 'from the fullers' (ἀπὸ γναφείου), while the white shifts (κιτῶνες λευκοὶ) and the blanket and white cloaks (λῶδιξ καὶ ἱμάτια λευκά) are unfulled (ἄγναφοι).[39] The fact that cloaks (ἱμάτια) were commonly fulled, however, suggests that the designation ἄγναφος here indicates that they would not remain unfulled, only that they were currently unfulled, which is to say, new. In the later Prices Edict by Diocletian (c. 301 CE), prices for the production and treatment of certain garments are specified.[40] While the prices need not detain us here, the terminology in the Edict is in keeping with earlier papyrological material, which helps to establish the fact that the processes and terminologies did not shift dramatically between the first and third (or early fourth) centuries. In particular, ἱμάτια and other larger, external garments

[34] See Flohr, *World of the* Fullo, 116–17. A reconstruction of one such press can be found in Usateschu, *Fullonicae y Tinctoriae*, 39 and cf. the discussion of clothes wringing in Edsall, 'A Note on Hegesippus's Account', *forthcoming*.

[35] Indications of this are found in Apuleius *Metam*. 9.24 (*Apulei opera quae supersunt,* (3 vols.; ed. Rudolf Wilhelm Oskar Helm; Leipzig: Teubner, 1955)) where it refers to bleaching white clothes while Pliny *HN* 35.198 discusses using sulphur on colourful clothing and its softening effects in 35.175 (where whiteness or at least 'radiance' is also noted; *quoniam candorem mollitiamque confert*); see the discussion of the chemical and logistical aspects of this in Flohr, *World of the* Fullo, 117–18.

[36] See Flohr, *World of the* Fullo, 62.

[37] See the comments in Flohr, *World of the* Fullo, 64–72, who argues that the non-essential character of fulling identifies it clearly as a luxury, even if it was widely available.

[38] Julius Pollux *Onomasticon* 4.116–19, who notes minor manuscript variation on the word in question *ad loc*.). In contrast with the female tragic clothing (which is ποικίλον and includes many coloured garments, tiaras, veils and girdles, 116), the female comic tunic is simple – κωμικὴ δὲ ἐσθὴς ἐξωμίς·ἔστι δὲ χιτὼν λευκὸς ἄσημος, κατὰ τὴν ἀριστερὰν πλευρὰν ῥαφὴν οὐκ ἔχων, ἄγναπτος. ('Female comic clothing, one-sleeved tunic: It is an unassuming white shift, with no seam on the left side, un-fulled.') On the rhetorical role of clothing in ancient non-verbal communication, see esp. Angelika Starbatty, *Aussehen ist Ansichtssache: Kleidung in der Kommunikation der römischen Antike* (Münchner Studien zur Alten Welt; München: Utz, 2010).

[39] Cf. also the various designations of 'fulled' and 'unfulled' garments in BGU 7,1558 (c. 210–204 BCE) which lists an ἱματίου γνάπτρα (*sic*); P. Cairo Zen. 1,59092 (c. 257 BCE) which lists a single ἄγναφος tunic alongside a half-worn one (ἄγναφος α; ἡμιτριβὴς α); P. Cairo Zen. 3.59398 (c. 257 BCE) which lists fulled ἱμάτια and χιτῶνες; P. Bodl. 1,61d (2nd century CE) which is very fragmentary but appears to list unfulled garments alongside others.

[40] Siegfried Lauffer, *Diokletians Preisedikt* (Texte und Kommentare 5; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1971) 163–7.

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still appear to have been commonly fulled, even when new; every garment being fulled except one in Edict 22 is identified as 'new' (rudis/καινός).[41]

In turning back to Mark 2 and leading into the discussion of Luke 5, there are a few important take-away points from this discussion of fulling. First, the fulling process was not an essential part of woollen textile production, as in later periods, but rather was concerned with either cleaning and polishing old clothes or simply polishing newly sewn garments. In other words, Mark's language of an ἐπίβλημα ῥάκους ἀγνάφου that is καίνος raises the question: Why is a piece of cloth identified as being 'unfulled' and new unless it came initially from an already sewn garment? Second, and following on from that question, a garment that is 'unfulled' (ἄγναφος) has never been cleaned or finished (at least, not professionally), and while some garments may never have been fulled, newly sewn garments were naturally a large portion of the 'unfulled garment' category. The language of 'unfulled' even at times appears to be used for signifying that a garment is new. Third, the fulling process, during which the garment is washed in preparation for the principal tasks of carding and shearing, will have inevitably led to some shrinking (at least for woollen garments if not for the occasional linen or silk clothing sent to the fullers). With those points in view, let us turn to Luke 5.36 to see how it offers interpretive solutions to Mark's quandaries.

3 Interpretive Solutions in Luke 5.36

Luke's version of the cloth and wine parables are as follows.

> …οὐδεὶς ἐπίβλημα ἀπὸ ἱματίου καινοῦ σχίσας ἐπιβάλλει ἐπὶ ἱμάτιον παλαιόν· εἰ δὲ μή γε, καὶ τὸ καινὸν σχίσει καὶ τῷ παλαιῷ οὐ συμφωνήσει τὸ ἐπίβλημα τὸ ἀπὸ τοῦ καινοῦ. καὶ οὐδεὶς βάλλει οἶνον νέον εἰς ἀσκοὺς παλαιούς· εἰ δὲ μή γε, ῥήξει ὁ οἶνος ὁ νέος τοὺς ἀσκοὺς καὶ αὐτὸς ἐκχυθήσεται καὶ οἱ ἀσκοὶ ἀπολοῦνται· ἀλλὰ οἶνον νέον εἰς ἀσκοὺς καινοὺς βλητέον. [καὶ] οὐδεὶς πιὼν παλαιὸν θέλει νέον· λέγει γάρ· ὁ παλαιὸς χρηστός ἐστιν.
>
> No one attaches a patch torn from a new cloak (ἐπίβλημα ἀπὸ ἱματίου καινοῦ σχίσας) onto an old cloak. Otherwise the patch from the new both tears the new garment and does not fit with the old. And no one puts fresh wine into old wineskins. Otherwise the fresh wine tears the skins and it pours out and the skins are destroyed. But put fresh wine into new skins. And no one drinking old wine wants the fresh. For he says 'the old is better'. (Lk 5.36–9)

We noted above that identifying Mark's ἐπίβλημα ῥάκους ἀγνάφου was made difficult not only because of an under-determined quality of some terms, but more specifically because of the fact that the patch was simultaneously identified as a rag, unfulled and new. If, as we have seen, the fulling process was concerned with garments already sewn, then material designated as 'unfulled' will normally have been a completed garment. Indeed, as the evidence presented above shows, under certain conditions, the term ἄγναφος could itself indicate that a garment is new. When this use of ἄγναφος is read in conjunction with Mark's designation of the patch as 'new' (καίνος), Luke's account becomes legible within its predecessor's. On this reading, Mark's 'patch (made from) a rag from an unfulled garment' has been rewritten in Luke as a 'patch torn from a new cloak'.

[41] Notably O. Claud. 2,246 (125–175 CE, a letter about financial accounts) appears to use the term ἄγναφος metaphorically to mean 'new' or 'fresh', applied there to an account book (πιττάκις). The brevity of the letter makes it difficult to assess its significance for the present argument, though this interpretive possibility emerges more clearly if one remembers the etymological link with scraping note above.

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This new telling, then, is neither a 'transformation' nor 'complete reinterpretation' of the Markan statement (except to the extent that every interpretation offers a kind of 'complete' reinterpretation), but it does clarify an otherwise highly allusive appeal to fulling practices and terminology. Whether or not Luke considered this new version to be clearer than Mark or, if so, whether he considered this a necessary clarification as opposed to a stylistic change, is difficult to determine. If the argument above about the ancient context of Mark's fulling language is correct, though, then there is no reason to suppose a particular opacity for Mark's *terminology* in the phrase ἐπίβλημα ῥάκους ἀγνάφου. It remains the case, though, that certain syntactical quandaries would have remained even for ancient readers.

When we consider the second and third quandaries outlined above, relating to understanding the phrase αἴρει τὸ πλήρωμα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ and the excessive quality of the new tear in Mark 2.21, we can see how these are rewritten by Luke in such a way as to remove the apparent oddities in the Markan account while keeping in line with contemporary fulling practices. In the first place, Luke removes Mark's apparently unusual use of πλήρωμα and αἴρειν and replaces them with the phrase τὸ καινὸν σχίσει, in which the subject of the verb is the person implied in the earlier 'no one' (οὐδείς) and the formally active σχίζειν has a clear object, τὸ καινόν.[42] Further, the nature of the poor fit between the patch and the old cloak is clarified. While Mark laconically states the problem with the phrase 'the old from the new and the tear becomes worse', Luke explains that the ἐπίβλημα torn from the new garment 'does not fit with the old' and also tacitly clarifies why the tear is worse. In Luke's version, there are now two clearly delineated items harmed by this rash action: the new is ruined and the old remains unfixed. It is important to note, though, that neither the new nor the old is explicitly preferred here.[43] It goes without saying that one does not (normally) purchase a new garment and tear it to rags to repair old cloaks, but it does not follow from this that old cloaks are not valuable. Indeed, the fact that the owner in the parable wants to repair his old cloak points toward its continued usefulness. The old garment is not itself a problem; it only becomes one when the owner lacks the wisdom to recognise that a new (unfulled) garment would be ill-suited for the repair.

In short, Luke's version represents a reading of Mark's 'unfulled patch' in light of ancient fulling practices, carried out on sewn garments rather than raw cloth. The vocabulary and syntactical changes noted here work together to draw out the implications of this recognisable social context even more clearly in order to emphasise the foolishness of the person ignorant enough to attempt such a repair.[44]

3.1 Concluding Observations

As noted earlier, the fulling process is not one that every garment had to undergo, but the state of being 'unfulled' suggests a particular time for that garment: it is new/fresh. It cannot remain in that state indefinitely because being new is inherently temporary.[45] If we are able to look back at Mark from Luke's later clarification, then, the point that emerges is not a permanent incompatibility of new and old, but rather a recognition of the same class

[42] Unlike the instances noted above, on this point the interpretation offered in BDAG *s.v.* σχίζω 1.A is reliable and easily demonstrated by the examples provided.

[43] Cf. Bovon, *Luke 1*, 193, who notes that Luke uses the term καινός in a 'purely positive sense' here, but that this does not necessitate a denigration of the old; see further below.

[44] The emphatic quality of Luke's critique is noted in particular by Pheme Perkins, 'Patched Garments and Ruined Wine: Whose Folly? (Mk. 2.21–22; Mt. 9.16–17; Lk. 5.36–37)', *The Lost Coin: Parables of Women, Work and Wisdom* (ed. Mary Ann Beavis; London: Sheffield Academic, 2002) 124–35.

[45] With the caveat that some garments may never have been fulled.

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of item (a ἱμάτιον) at two different stages of its life-cycle. The new is not intrinsically or permanently *better* than the old, but rather the incompatibility derives from the fact that they are out of step, even out of time, with one another. We might call this an occasional incongruity rather than an essential or intrinsic incongruity.[46] The issue at stake, then, is a proper recognition of the relevant time – here with respect to the ageing of garments but with clear reference to the issue of fasting that opens the pericope – and an ability to act appropriately in accordance with it: only a fool tries to repair an old garment with fabric taken from a new one. This view helps to make sense of Luke's pairing of the garment with the new wine/old skins vignette in which he explicitly says that the old is sweeter.[47]

Finally, there is a certain hermeneutical payoff for the present argument relating to the dynamics of intra-gospel reception, namely, highlighting the interpretive value of Mark's reception in later gospel works. While earlier scholars found Luke's rewriting of Mark to be unintelligible as an *interpretation* of Mark's account, this was due to (among other things, no doubt) their lack of familiarity with the ancient fulling process and its associated terminology. From the perspective of later fulling practices, Mark's 'unfulled rag' appears entirely absent from Luke's version. This is functionally equivalent to reading Mark's fulling language through the lens of much later practices and then judging Luke's version to be wanting for its lack of correspondence with practices that did not yet exist. Naturally, this obscures the interpretive value of Luke's version for understanding Mark. The present argument, though, is not that Luke simply 'got Mark right', but rather to the extent that the resources for Luke's later interpretation are legible in Mark – that is, insofar as we are able to understand Luke's account as a particular interpretive iteration of the Markan source – this later reception reflects an aspect of genuine interpretive potential in Mark. If some interpreters reject the reflexive interpretive value of later reception in the quest for the original (or authorial, or first-audience) meaning of Mark,[48] the present argument joins a growing chorus of scholars who point to the hermeneutical fecundity of such reception.

Competing interests. The author declares none.

[46] *Pace* Wolfgang Schenk, 'Die rhetorische Funktion der Fastenwarnung Mk 2,20', *Sayings of Jesus: Canonical and Non-Canonical* (ed. William L. Petersen, Johan S. Vos and Henk de Jonge; NovTSup 89; Brill: Leiden, 1997) 251–76, who argues that the fasting controversy presents an absolute contrast between Jesus' followers and others who fast. His argument downplays the temporality implied in the Markan analogies, and he dismisses Mk 2.20b as a *reductio ad absurdum*.

[47] This argument offers a straightforward reason for this verse in its present context, without appealing to later anti-Marcionite emphases or attempting to find a negative characterisation for the drinker of old wine (as in, e.g., Johnson, *Luke*, 100; Perkins, 'Patched Garments', 133) in this otherwise brief and underdeveloped comment. Bovon, *Luke 1*, 194 gives a particularly ambiguous account of Lk. 5.39 in which he claims that the verse is a later addition, that the old wine refers to the 'Jewish practice of fasting' *and* that it refers to the old Christian tradition 'in comparison to the more recent doctrinal deviations' at the end of the first century.

[48] A clear example of attempting to isolate Mark from his intra-gospel reception is seen in Schenk, 'Die rhetorische Funktion', 251–4. Further examples of rejecting the interpretive leverage of reception are detailed in James G. Crossley, 'The End of Reception History, a Grand Narrative for Biblical Studies and the Neoliberal Bible', *Reception History and Biblical Studies: Theory and Practice* (ed. Emma England and William John Lyons; Scriptural Traces 6; Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies; London: Bloomsbury, 2015) 45–59.

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