

**Ballot 8**  
**The Greco-Roman Meal Tradition**  
**Dennis Smith**

Q1	The default historical context for early Christian social formation was the dining room in the house church.				
<b>Fellows</b>	0.79 Red	68% R	09% P	14% G	09% B
<b>Associates</b>	0.98 Red	94%	06%	00%	00%
Q2	The community meal of early Christians followed the model of the Greco-Roman banquet.				
<b>Fellows</b>	0.88 Red	73% R	18% P	09% G	00% B
<b>Associates</b>	0.96 Red	88%	13%	00%	00%
Q3	The worship of the community took place at the table during the symposium portion of the meal.				
<b>Fellows</b>	0.80 Red	64% R	18% P	14% G	05% B
<b>Associates</b>	0.96 Red	88%	13%	00%	00%
Q4	Early Christians gathered for meals because that is what groups did in the Greco-Roman world.				
<b>Fellows</b>	0.85 Red	68% R	23% P	05% G	05% B
<b>Associates</b>	1.00 Red	1.00	0.00%	00%	00%
Q5	Stories about meals of Jesus were generative of early Christian community meals.				
<b>Fellows</b>	0.45 Gray	14% R	32% P	32% G	23% B
<b>Associates</b>	0.27 Gray	06%	00%	63%	31%
Q6	Stories about meals of Jesus arose in the context of early Christian meal gatherings.				
<b>Fellows</b>	0.76 Red	59% R	14% P	23% G	05% B
<b>Associates</b>	0.88 Red	69%	25%	06%	00%
Q7	There was no trajectory of historical practice extending from the meal practice of the historical Jesus to the meal practice of the early church.				
<b>Fellows</b>	0.41 Gray	27% R	05% P	32% G	36% B
<b>Associates</b>	0.54 Pink	38%	19%	13%	31%
Q8	Early Christian groups adapted the Greco-Roman banquet in diverse ways.				
<b>Fellows</b>	0.94 Red	81% R	19% P	00% G	00% B
<b>Associates</b>	0.98 Red	94%	06%	00%	00%

**On the Voting Results for  
the Acts Seminar**

**Dennis E. Smith, Chair**

petrated over the course of a lifetime on some of his most respected and closest colleagues. MacDonald's argument had to do mostly with an argument within the Secret Mark discussion itself, namely, the question of whether Secret Mark might have actually pre-dated our current canonical Mark. This he holds as unlikely, since the Secret Mark passages would seem to break up narrative patterns he sees as original to Mark—patterns that reflect Mark's use of Homer. In the end, the Seminar agreed on the slimmest margin (.51, pink) with MacDonald that canonical Mark actually pre-dates Secret Mark. But on the question of authenticity, the Seminar rejected overwhelmingly the idea that Secret Mark is the product of a modern forgery. **4R**

# Spring Meeting 2009

The so-called Secret Gospel of Mark has come under criticism in recent years, accused of being a hoax perpetrated by Morton Smith, who in 1972 first proposed the existence of this ancient variation of Mark when he published a previously unknown fragment of a letter by Clement of Alexandria. Since Morton Smith died several years ago and can no longer defend his arguments, and since the original manuscript which he published in transcription is no longer available for scholarly study, the debate about the authenticity of Secret Mark has become particularly dicey.

Three papers were presented on this issue. Charles Hedrick ("Evaluating Morton Smith: Hoaxer Outed or Colleague Slandered?") and Marvin Meyer ("Secret Mark: The Debate Goes On") argued that Secret Mark was not a hoax by Morton Smith. Dennis MacDonald ("The Naked Truth about the Naked Youth: Why the Secret Gospel of Mark is a Modern Hoax") proposed that it was a hoax by Morton Smith, but rather than arguing for that position in detail he made a case that canonical Mark can be understood as is, without the variation provided by Secret Mark.

Hedrick answered the arguments recently proposed by Stephen Carlson (*The Gospel Hoax: Morton Smith's Invention of Secret Mark*, 2005). He noted that many of Carlson's arguments are ad hominem in nature and so should be dismissed, since, whether or not Morton Smith was the misanthrope that Carlson and others take him to have been, that does not make him a dishonest scholar. As for the opportunity of Smith to create such an ancient manuscript, Hedrick points out the difficulty of doing so under the field conditions in which he was working. Furthermore, Hedrick argues, it is exceedingly difficult to develop the skill to forge an ancient document and those who knew and worked with Morton Smith testify that he did not have that skill.

Meyer takes up the argument from a different perspective, noting how scholars such as Helmut Koester and John

**Ballot 1**  
**Secret Mark**  
**Hedrick, MacDonald, Meyer**

Q1 The Mar Saba letter is a modern forgery perpetrated by Morton Smith.

**Fellows** 0.11 Black 00% R 08% P 17% G 75% B  
**Associates** 0.02 Black 00% 00% 07% 93%

Q2 The Mar Saba letter is a modern forgery.

**Fellows** 0.15 Black 00% R 13% P 21% G 67% B  
**Associates** 0.13 Black 04% 04% 21% 71%

Q3 The Mar Saba letter is a copy of an ancient text.

**Fellows** 0.73 Pink 52% R 23% P 17% G 08% B  
**Associates** 0.81 Red 50% 43% 07% 00%

Q4 The Mar Saba letter preserves an ancient fragment of an authentic letter of Clement.

**Fellows** 0.58 Pink 10% R 60% P 21% G 08% B  
**Associates** 0.64 Pink 12% 73% 12% 04%

Q5 The Mar Saba letter preserves an ancient fragment of a pseudonymous letter of Clement.

**Fellows** 0.32 Gray 00% R 11% P 74% G 15% B  
**Associates** 0.42 Gray 00% 35% 58% 08%

Q6 Secret Mark is the precursor of canonical Mark.

**Fellows** 0.40 Gray 00% R 35% P 48% G 17% B  
**Associates** 0.49 Gray 12% 32% 48% 08%

Q7 Secret Mark postdates canonical Mark.

**Fellows** 0.51 Pink 17% R 23% P 56% G 04% B  
**Associates** 0.45 Gray 08% 32% 48% 12%

Q8 The story of the naked youth in canonical Mark is an imitation of Homer's story of Elpenor.

**Fellows** 0.32 Gray 04% R 13% P 57% G 26% B  
**Associates** 0.36 Gray 07% 25% 36% 32%

Q9 Secret Mark portrays the naked youth as a paradigmatic disciple.

**Fellows** 0.56 Pink 00% R 67% P 33% G 00% B  
**Associates** 0.47 Gray 04% 52% 26% 19%

Q10 Canonical Mark portrays the naked youth as a paradigmatic disciple.

**Fellows** 0.40 Gray 00% R 41% P 37% G 22% B  
**Associates** 0.37 Gray 00% 33% 44% 22%

Q11 The Secret Gospel of Mark should not be retitled.

**Fellows** 0.41 Gray 40% R 00% P 04% G 56% B  
**Associates** 0.45 Gray 43% 00% 04% 52%

Q12 The Secret Gospel of Mark should be retitled the Mystical Gospel of Mark.

**Fellows** 0.62 Pink 60% R 00% P 04% G 35% B  
**Associates** 0.65 Pink 64% 00% 05% 32%

Dominic Crossan have concluded that the Secret Mark fragments make good sense of difficult texts in Mark in regard to the *neaniskos* or youth. Therefore both Koester

**Ballot 5**  
**The Post Apostolic Consciousness in Acts**  
**Thomas Phillips**

Q1 The narrator and the apostles have different temporal locations in Acts.

**Fellows** 0.93 Red 80% R 20% P 00% G 00% B  
**Associates** 0.98 Red 94% 06% 00% 00%

Q2 The narrator is portrayed as post-apostolic in Acts.

**Fellows** 0.88 Red 65% R 35% P 00% G 00% B  
**Associates** 0.98 Red 94% 06% 00% 00%

Q3 Acts' primary portrayal of Paul is as witness rather than as apostle.

**Fellows** 0.89 Red 67% R 33% P 00% G 00% B  
**Associates** 0.92 Red 75% 25% 00% 00%

Q4 Paul's temporal location in Acts overlaps with both apostolic and post-apostolic times.

**Fellows** 0.88 Red 68% R 27% P 05% G 00% B  
**Associates** 1.00 Red 1.00% 00% 00% 00%

Q5 Acts' reluctance to describe Paul as an apostle is largely due to Paul's perceived failure to have the required relationship to the "previous events" (Acts 1:21-22).

**Fellows** 0.84 Red 52% R 48% P 00% G 00% B  
**Associates** 0.88 Red 63% 38% 00% 00%

Q6 Acts treats Paul as a post-apostolic witness with apostolic sanction.

**Fellows** 0.88 Red 64% R 36% P 00% G 00% B  
**Associates** 0.98 Red 94% 06% 00% 00%

Q7 It is likely that one of Paul's traveling co-missionaries would have portrayed himself or herself as post-apostolic.

**Fellows** 0.18 Black 09% R 05% P 18% G 68% B  
**Associates** 0.17 Black 06% 00% 31% 63%

Q8 The literary function of the "we"-sections of Acts strongly suggests that Acts was not composed by a close associate of Paul.

**Fellows** 0.91 Red 77% R 18% P 05% G 00% B  
**Associates** 0.94 Red 82% 18% 00% 00%

Q9 The use of the "we"-sections of Acts fits well within an early second-century context.

**Fellows** 0.83 Red 67% R 19% P 10% G 05% B  
**Associates** 0.92 Red 82% 12% 06% 00%

Q10 The "we"-sections of Acts provide compelling evidence for a first-century date of Acts.

**Fellows** 0.13 Black 05% R 10% P 05% G 81% B  
**Associates** 0.04 Black 00% 00% 12% 88%

and Crossan have concluded, on form critical grounds, that Secret Mark is a precursor to canonical Mark. When it was excluded from canonical Mark, as described in the fragmentary letter of Clement, then that left the problematic text in Mark 14:51-52. Meyer argues further that both

**Ballot 6**  
**And So We Left Troy-Troas**  
**Dennis MacDonald**

Q1 The first person narrative of the sea voyage from Troas in Acts 16:10–18 is written in imitation of first person narratives of sea voyages in Homer’s *Odyssey*.

<b>Fellows</b>	0.62 Pink	25% R	40% P	30% G	05% B
<b>Associates</b>	0.88 Red	64%	36%	00%	00%

Q2 The first person narrative of the sea voyage from Troas in Acts 20:5–15 is written in imitation of first person narratives of sea voyages in Homer’s *Odyssey*.

<b>Fellows</b>	0.65 Pink	25% R	45% P	30% G	00% B
<b>Associates</b>	0.88 Red	64%	36%	00%	00%

Q3 The first person narrative of the sea voyage in Acts 21:1–18 is written in imitation of first person narratives of sea voyages in Homer’s *Odyssey*.

<b>Fellows</b>	0.65 Pink	25% R	45% P	30% G	00% B
<b>Associates</b>	0.90 Red	71%	29%	00%	00%

Q4 The first person narrative of the sea voyage and shipwreck in Acts 27:1–28:16 is written in imitation of first person narratives of sea voyages in Homer’s *Odyssey*.

<b>Fellows</b>	0.67 Pink	30% R	40% P	30% G	00% B
<b>Associates</b>	0.90 Red	71%	29%	00%	00%

Q5 The narrator of Acts intends the reader to connect the first person narratives with the narrator.

<b>Fellows</b>	0.83 Red	57% R	33% P	10% G	00% B
<b>Associates</b>	0.95 Red	86%	14%	00%	00%

Q6 The narrator of Acts was a companion on Paul’s sea voyages.

<b>Fellows</b>	0.02 Black	00% R	00% P	05% G	95% B
<b>Associates</b>	0.03 Black	00%	00%	08%	92%

Q7 The narrator of Acts assumed a pseudo identity as a companion on Paul’s sea voyages.

<b>Fellows</b>	0.86 Red	57% R	43% P	00% G	00% B
<b>Associates</b>	0.95 Red	85%	15%	00%	00%

Q8 Luke-Acts was originally composed under the pseudonym of Luke.

<b>Fellows</b>	0.44 Gray	05% R	38% P	43% G	14% B
<b>Associates</b>	0.62 Pink	07%	71%	21%	00%

Secret Mark and canonical Mark present the *neaniskos* as a paradigm of discipleship.

MacDonald makes a case for the sufficiency of the *neaniskos* stories in canonical Mark as they are. He argues that these stories represent an imitation in Mark of the story of Elpenor in Homer. In both cases, young men are presented who “reenter the narrative at dawn several days after their deaths (a symbolic death in the case of Mark’s fleeing youth).”

The ballot addressed the various issues associated with Secret Mark. Fellows and Associates rejected the propos-

al that the Mar Saba letter that Morton Smith published is a modern forgery. Rather, both Fellows and Associates affirmed that the letter is an ancient text and preserves an ancient fragment of an authentic letter of Clement. In regard to the relation of Secret Mark to canonical Mark, however, the voting took a puzzling turn. Fellows voted that Secret Mark postdates canonical Mark, contrary to the arguments of Koester, Crossan, and Meyer. However, they also voted against MacDonald’s argument that canonical Mark’s naked youth stories imitate Homer. Fellows agreed that Secret Mark presents the naked youth as a paradigmatic disciple, but disagreed that canonical Mark does. Finally, in response to a suggestion from the floor, Fellows and Associates voted that the Secret Gospel of Mark should henceforth be called the *Mystical Gospel* of Mark.

The so-called “we-passages” in Acts have long been a source of much debate. For many, they represent solid proof that the author of Acts was a companion of Paul. For others, they represent a literary motif that is used by the author in imitation of ancient literary models, particularly in the recounting of shipwreck stories. Papers by Thomas Phillips (“The ‘Post-Apostolic’ Consciousness in Acts: The ‘We’-Sections in Acts 16 and Beyond”) and Dennis MacDonald (“And So We Left Troy/Troas’: Pseudo-Luke’s Imitation of the ‘We-Voyages’ in Homer’s *Odyssey*”) have significantly advanced the discussion of these texts. Both argue that these passages are literary in form and do not indicate that the narrator was a companion of Paul.

Phillips argues that the “narrator” of Acts locates himself in a post-apostolic period. After Acts 15, Phillips proposes, the story moves to a “post-apostolic” era in which Peter fades from the scene and Paul becomes the predominant character. It is in this latter period where the “we-passages” occur, thus locating the narrator along with Paul in the post-apostolic period. Since neither Paul nor a companion of Paul would have accepted such a post-apostolic identity for Paul, Acts must have been written at a time well-removed from the time of Paul. Thus the “we-passages” reinforce the view that Acts was written in the early second century. Fellows and Associates both accepted Phillips’ thesis in all its particulars.

MacDonald proposed that the author of Acts wrote his shipwreck stories (Acts 16:10–18, 20:5–15, 21:1–18, 27:1–28:16) in imitation of first person sea voyage stories in Homer’s *Odyssey*. The Fellows voted pink on Homer as the source while the Associates voted red. MacDonald also argued that the narrator intended the reader to connect the first person narratives with the narrator but that this was a pseudo-identity for the narrator. Fellows and Associates concurred. However, Fellows voted gray on MacDonald’s argument that Luke-Acts was originally written under the pseudonym of “Luke;” Associates gave it a pink vote. **4R**