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E D B

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THE ENTRANCE OF JESUS IN JERUSALEM ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW: AN EXAMPLE OF ORTHODOX HERMENEUTIC

1. Introduction

If someone heard about the hermeneutics of the Orthodox Church a few years ago he would think that it was the Patristic Hermeneutics. However, the Orthodox Christians nowadays do not just quote the commentators Fathers as the only correct or proper hermeneutical approach of biblical texts. On the contrary Fathers have been used less in comparison with the past and not so as just to prove the correctness but as a testimony of one specific hermeneutic choice of their time. Nowadays the hermeneutic method which is prevalent in Orthodox Churches is the historical-critical and several other modern hermeneutic approaches are used assistingly, which are now used by all Christian confessions. The contribution of philological and social sciences was significant in the last two decades. The most interesting issues which may arise with their contribution are utilized as much as possible. Attempting to interpret the quote I chose to present we will see this in the most characteristic way. Thus the interpretation is never static but dynamic. It evolves and adjusts itself according to the time and place of modern readers.

2. The narration of the entrance of Jesus in Jerusalem

The narration of the entrance of Jesus in Jerusalem is recorded from all the writers of the gospels (Matt. 21:1-10//Mk. 11:1-11//Luk. 19:28-38//Joh. 12:12-19) but there are some noticeable differences. However, as far as the interpretation is concerned, the scholars agree that the most difficulties are found in the version of Matthew.¹ The below differences are most typical. Only Matthew (21:5) and John (12:15) use the quotation of Deutero-Zechariah (Zech. 9:9) but in a different way, giving the narration intense messianic aspect. In John's narration, the incident of the mission of the two disciples to find and bring the donkey for

¹ J.D.M. DERRETT, «Law in the New Testament: The Palm Sunday Colt», in *NovT* 13(1971), 241-242; R. BARTNICKI, «Das Zitat von Zach 9:9-10 und die Tiere im Bericht von Matthäus über dem Einzug Jesu in Jerusalem (Mt 21:1-11)», in *NovT* 18(1976), 161-166.

Jesus is missing. Moreover, the event of finding the animals is extremely brief in Matthew's narration (21:6) in comparison with the corresponding of Mark's (11:4-6). Bethphage is mentioned in the three Synoptics, while there is no report of Bethany in Matthew.

3. The Matthean version: Matt. 21:1-10

The most difficult problems concern the verses Matt. 21:2, 5 and 7. Everything is related to the animals which are mentioned in the narration. That is, if it is about one or two animals, if it is about a donkey, a horse or a mule and if Jesus according to Matthew rides one or two animals at the same time, since this impression is wrongly given by reading verse 5. There is no doubt that the earliest version of the narration is the one from Mark, which Luke follows precisely. Here the animal which is mentioned is clearly one. Matthew however, differentiates from Mark's narration and quotes Zech. 9:9, presenting it in a different way, and in this way he forms a different version than the one we find in John. Thus, only Matthew gives the impression in his narration that the animals are two, a female donkey and its colt.

This specific narration early constituted a lectionary reading on Palm Sunday. Later its interpretation by the Orthodox Church met with diversity and faced difficulties. Let's go back in the details of the very narration and we will see thoroughly below the course of its understanding. At first, the event of the mission of the disciples to find the two animals in Matt. 21:2 raises plenty of questions and is interpreted in various ways, so that it is understood that they took the two animals and they brought them to Jesus without their owner being involved in the narration. There is no evidence in any narration that Jesus and the owner knew each other. Here Matthew presents Jesus being knowledgeable about exactly what is going to happen next. One of the most possible explanations of this, is that Jesus makes use of the statute of drudgery, with which the kings of Israel in the past and the Romans in his time, obliged their subjects in mandatory work for their sake. The residents of the countryside knew that their animals could often be used either with them or without them. The presence of the owner ensured that the animal would be returned to them and it wouldn't be abandoned somewhere they didn't know. From the four narrations of the gospel writers, only in Mk. 11:3 the promise that Jesus will return the animal to its owner is given. In Matt. 21:3 there is a completely different meaning with the assurance that the owner of the animals will send them to Jesus immediately. The justification of this action according to Matthew is made with the words coming from Jesus «The Lord needs them» in verse 3, which sounds extraordinary, since it shows Jesus as the legal owner of the animals. The fact is indeed that here Jesus is presented to demand as a king the property of others for his own sake. In this way the reader is foretold that his greatness is going to be revealed afterwards.

In Matt. 21:2 is clearly said that the donkey is female and it has a colt. There isn't such piece of information in the other gospel writers. In Mark (11:2, 4, 5, 7) and in Luke (19:30, 33, 35) the word «colt» is used (an animal without defining its

sex²), which has never been ridden yet and in John the phrase «young donkey» at first in the verse 12:14 and then in 12:15 «donkey's colt» (still one animal). The relative terminology is different among the parallel narrations with the only exception of the case of Mark and Luke who agree with each other. This fact caused trouble among scholars since the first centuries, as they had difficulty in understanding from the different terminology, at first if it is about a donkey, a mule, or a horse and then, if one or two animals are mentioned.

In Matt. 21:5 the first four words come from Isa. 62:11 but afterwards we see the quotation of Zech. 9:9. This specific quotation from the prophet Zechariah composed at the time of the New Testament a well-known prophetic text, which referred to the blessing of Jacob to Judas according to Gen. 49:11.³ Both of these Old Testament texts mention a messianic king, who will come riding a donkey and he will bring peace to all the nations. The way with which the Zech. 9:9 is translated in the text of LXX gives the impression that the animals are two.⁴ In the Hebrew text the animal is one, but it is mentioned twice. Having studied Hebrew poetry in recent years, scholars found that the philological structure of Zech. 9:9 is connected to the known phenomenon of parallelism according to which the content of the first verse is repeated in the second verse with different words.⁵ Perhaps the most known paradigm is Joh. 19:24 «They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots». In our passage Deutero-Zechariah did not mean to refer to a messiah who will come riding two animals at the same time. This makes Matthew to note in the verse 7 «they brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them».

Matthew seems to translate the Hebrew text of Zechariah in 21:5⁶ but he accepts the terminology of the LXX text. The indefinable colt of Mark now with the quotation of Zech. 9:9 changes completely and becomes a donkey's colt so that the prophecy is fulfilled. This is suggested by the successive of the relative definitions in Zech. 9:9, as the verse makes specific the kind of animal which is mentioned with the last two definitions. Matthew noticed that he could change the *colt* of Mark with the phrase «on a donkey, on a colt» of Zechariah where there is not the word donkey (ὄνος) and in this way he is consistent to his theological thought that the prophecies of the Old Testament are fulfilled by Jesus.

According to a different assumption the reference to two animals in the narration (21:2 and 7) is not a translation mistake of Matthew as he was trying to understand Zech. 9:9, but in an attempt to interpret Gen. 49:11, where two animals are

² O. MICHEL, «ὄνος, ὄνακιον», in *TDNT* 5, 283-286; U. LUTZ, *Matthew 21-28: A Commentary*, III, Fortress Press, Minneapolis-Augsburg 2005, 7.

³ «Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine».

⁴ Very interesting is the information by Origen for different words in other translations. Cf. *Commentarium in Evangelium Matthaei* 16, 16,179-193.

⁵ S.V. McCASLAND, «Matthew Twists the Scriptures», in *JBL* 80(1961), 145.

⁶ W.C. ALLEN, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to S. Matthew* (ICC 26), Scribner, New York 1907, 219.

mentioned.⁷ The quotations Matthew 21:2, 5 and 7 and Gen. 49:11 mention two donkeys, the foal and its mother. Thus, Matthew theologically presents Jesus as the legal heir of the throne of David (21:5 and 9). Another possibility searches other texts of the Old Testament to find references in two donkeys. In 2 Sam 16:1-2 and more specifically in Hab. 3:2 (LXX) with the phrase «a couple of saddled donkeys» seem to prove that Matthew, as the rabbis did later, pointed this element as an indication of the messianic era. The reason though that the animals become two in Matthew is not theological. This does not serve some specific cause apart from the literally fulfillment of the prophecy. For the rabbinic Judaism, the eschatological messiah will be as the first messiah, Moses. In Exod. 4:19-20, where two animals are mentioned in the text of LXX, of course it plays a very important role but it is not known in which time it started to be used as an indication of Messianism. In Matthew's gospel Jesus is presented as the new Moses in some parts. In addition the second chapter of Matthew is surely affected by the Exod. 4:19-20. This however is not enough for us to accept that Matthew uses the Zech. 9:9 taking into account the Exod. 4:19-20.⁸

In Matthew, as in other texts as well, the words «donkey» and «beast of burden» are used everywhere in the New Testament, for the donkey. The phrase «on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden» of Matthew (in John it is «on a donkey's colt» and in this way it is clearly one animal) gives the impression that Jesus rides two animals at the same time and not one, as the prophecy in the Hebrew text of Zech. 9:9, namely in its true context. The translation of LXX is responsible for this change. Moreover earlier in Matt. 21:2 it is clear that they are two: a female donkey and its foal. Next this is confirmed by the verse 7. The word «donkey» of 21:5 being used without an article may be referring either to a female, or to a male donkey but in 21:2 and 7 it is clear that it is a female. In Matt. 21:5 there are two terms «donkey» and «colt», but the word «and» which is used there is not antithetical but explicative. Another suggestion considers that in the verse we have a philological schema which is called *hendiadys* «one through two». The second description suggests the young age of the animal. Thus in verse 5 we read about one animal even though we get the impression that they are two. Maybe it is more obvious according to the Translation in Modern Greek.⁹ Some scholars detect here a tradition which derives from Mk. 11:2, where he writes «a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat» as the reason for the presence of two animals in Matthew. In John 12:15 we see the expression «on a donkey's colt», which is translated in Modern Greek as «young donkey». In the previous verse (12:14) we also find the word *onarion*, which is used one and only one time in the New Testament, which is translated «young donkey».

⁷ C.A. HAM, *The Coming King and the Rejected Shepherd: Matthew's Reading of Zechariah's Messianic Hope*. Sheffield Phoenix, Sheffield 2006, 42.

⁸ W.D. DAVIES – D.C. ALLISON, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, t. 3, T&T Clark International, London 2004, 121. JEROME interprets in that way the entrance of Jesus in Jerusalem. Cf. *Epistulae* 22,24.

⁹ J. KARAVIDOPOULOS, «Citation de Zacharie dans le Nouveau Testament», in *DBM* 13(1994), 51.

The difficulty in understanding the phrase «and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them» of the verse 7 is if by «he sat on them» he means on the cloaks or on the animals. If we consider it by philological aspect, the first is more probable. But if we consider the context of the verse, the second suggestion seems more correct. In both cases we cannot imagine Jesus riding both animals at the same time.¹⁰ Unfortunately though that is what is being understood by the verse 7, although in this way the presence of two animals in verse 5 is confirmed. What is irrational is that there are scholars' suggestions of Jesus sitting on the female donkey and using its foal to put his legs as a footstool.

But how is the foal seen in Orthodox Churches? The word foal suggests a young animal, mainly a horse and secondly a donkey. Due to Matthew's intention to present Jesus as the peaceful messianic king with the deliberate use of Zech. 9:9, we will have to exclude the possibility of the horse for other reasons too, mainly symbolic. Jewish people did not consider highly of the horse. According to Deut. 17:16 the king of Israel shouldn't have possessed plenty of horses. This prohibition seems peculiar but in the book of Isaiah we can see why. The trade of horses with other countries, such as Egypt, was considered a danger for idolatry and if Jewish people were dependent on their horse they would not trust their God (Isa. 31:1). In ancient traditions the horse means many things, while its colour plays a very important role too. A white horse symbolizes victory and conquest,¹¹ while a brown horse symbolises war and bloodshed. Probably the readers of the book of Revelation at that time understood the symbolism of the four horses (Rev. 6:1-8). Donkeys are mainly used for transporting people all over Near East, while horses are mainly used for military purpose. Horses were expensive animals and were connected to the aristocratic class. In the texts a horse is mainly ridden by a victor hero or a conqueror. Therefore horses were not related to peace but to war. In Matt. 21:7 the second animal couldn't have been a foal of a horse. Horses were significantly expensive and they weren't abandoned tied by their owners.

Even though the mule is mentioned a lot of times in the Old Testament, it derives from the reproduction of two different species of animals (female horse and donkey) therefore the breeding of it in Judaism was forbidden (Lev. 19:19). It appears as a bizarre animal therefore it was considered unclean. Even though Solomon imported horses in his country, in 1 Kgs. 1:33 he appears to be riding a mule. The fact that this animal derived by crossbreeding is later used in the texts of the Fathers in a negative way so as to compare the situation of the heretics. For many years in modern Greece, scholars followed their allegoric preference of interpretation. If we see this narration on the grounds of historical critical method of interpretation, as nowadays it is adopted by biblical hermeneutics and by Orthodox Churches, it is made clear why Jesus enters Jerusalem riding a donkey (Matt. 21:1-7) and not a horse or a mule and in this way the prophecy is fulfilled (Zech. 9:9; Gen. 49:11). Having chosen this specific animal the text of the

¹⁰ W. COPPINS, «Sitting on Two Asses? Second Thoughts on the Two-Animal Interpretation of Matthew 21:7», in *TynBull* 63(2012), 275-290.

¹¹ D.A. HAGNER, *Matthew 14-28* (WBC 33B), Nelson, Nashville 1995, 594.

Old Testament is used and the possibility for Jesus to be presented as a conqueror or be connected to unclean animal is prevented.

This specific narration generally caused problems to Church as for its understanding. The text shows the great level of difficulty that there was in some parts of Paul's epistles but also the texts of Holy Bible generally as far as their understanding is concerned by the members of the first Christian communities. We can now see how this specific text and its interpretation affected various aspects of the Church's life until modern times.

4. Matt. 21:1-10 in the Church's life

The later Christian literature saw in terms of allegorical interpretation the donkey of Zech. 9:9 as the sinner man in general. The narration was used by Christian writers very early. Already in the 2nd century A.D. the first who uses it is Justin. In Justin *Apologia*, it is said that the advent of Jesus was prophesized by Moses in Gen. 49:10-11. What seems to be very interesting here is that Justin mentions that the donkey was tied in a vineyard out of the village, where the disciples were sent to.¹² There is no such piece of information in any of the four versions of the narration. Only in Mk. 11:4 he mentions that «and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street». Obviously Justin here links the Gen. 49:10-11 to the Zech. 9:9 being made the first of the later writers who makes this connection.

But Justin makes something else too. In *Apologia* 35,10-11 even though Justin wrongly understands the prophecy of Zephaniah, the text he quotes matches the one of the LXX, but its second part comes from Matt. 21:5. Justin, as Matthew did, adds in the verse the word donkey in the text which there is not in the text of LXX. In his work *Dialogus cum Tryphone*, in two parts (53, 2-4 and 88, 6) Justin quotes the two texts from the Old Testament to prove that Jesus is the Christ of the Lord for which Jacob and Zechariah have spoken. In the first it is clear that Justin follows Matthew from the terminology he uses and mentions two animals. The two animals now are interpreted allegorically and the foal symbolizes the gentiles, while its mother the Jews.¹³

One completely different interpretation of the two animals is made by Clement of Alexandria, since he sees the donkey and its foal to draw a chariot, which is driven by Christ.¹⁴ This understanding though had never been made part of the iconographic tradition of the scene of the entrance of Jesus in Jerusalem in Orthodox Church. On the other hand, Irenaeus refers to the event of the entrance of Jesus in Jerusalem on a donkey in an attempt to quote a row of texts from the Old Testament, which has been fulfilled by Jesus so as to prove his divine and his human nature.¹⁵ John Chrysostom talks about the immediate fulfillment of the

¹² JUSTIN, *Apologia* 32,6.

¹³ JUSTIN, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 53,4.

¹⁴ *Protrepticus* 12, 121,1-2.

¹⁵ IRENAEUS OF LYON, *Adversus Haereses* 3, 19,2; 4, 33,1; 4, 33,12.

prophecy in Matt. 21:2 and 5.¹⁶ Chrysostom regards that Jesus rode the foal and its mother followed it. It is typical that he borrows information from the other two Synoptics noting that the untamed foal accepted the bridle and it was ridden without any resistance something that declares the transformation of the gentiles into members of the Church.¹⁷ That is, he agrees with Justin. For Chrysostom the colt which was ridden by Jesus symbolizes the Church, while earlier symbolizes the unclean nations. From the time that Christ sat upon them they became clean.

The problem of the presence of two animals is trying to be solved by Cyril of Alexandria, while he takes notice of the different version of the narration in Mark and Luke. He resorts to the solution of the female donkey and its foal.¹⁸ But he also suggests that the foal was used as a means of transport by Jesus and its mother followed it. However this is not based on reality, since when a foal is capable of being ridden has already been separated from its mother. Since there are two animals we have to accept that the adult animal was used and the foal was following it, which is a common phenomenon for donkeys and horses. Great interest has the fact that Cyril mentions that the donkey belongs to the unclean animals and this gives him the opportunity to link allegorically the animal to the sinners.¹⁹ Much later for Luther the donkey of the narration symbolizes the old man. It has to be noted here that in the East the triumphal aspect of the entrance of Jesus in Jerusalem was highlighted and the same applies for the Roman Catholic Church. The Protestant world on the contrary, perceived this as the modesty and impoverishment of merciful Jesus.

After having seen all these the question now is what is the use of this specific narration in the worship and if problems are faced there as well. In the liturgical life of the Orthodox Church the text which was chosen as lectionary reading on Palm Sunday is Joh. 12:1-18. On the contrary in the West Matt. 21:1-17 was selected as the corresponding text. Already in the 7th century A.D. it was chosen as a lectionary reading in France and Italy. Particularly important is the information from *The Pilgrimage of Aetheria (Itinerarium Egeriae)*. In this text the way of celebrating the afternoon of Palm Sunday in Jerusalem is mentioned during which there had already existed in the 4th century A.D. worship procession from the Mount of Olives towards the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with the bishop riding a donkey and the pilgrims following it on foot chanting hosanna.²⁰ This custom was transferred from the East to the West and from the 11th century there have been reports about it in many areas. Already in the 10th century a statue makes its appearance which displays Jesus on a wheeled donkey. The Protestants objected to these customs and regarded them as paganistic. The consequence of all these oppositions was to limit this phenomenon from the 16th century and to make it disappear in the 18th century.

¹⁶ *In Matthaeum*, 49-52: PG 58,627.

¹⁷ *In Matthaeum*, 7-9: PG 58,629.

¹⁸ *Commentarii in Matthaeum* 228, 4-8.

¹⁹ *Commentarii in Matthaeum* 230, 20-22.

²⁰ *Itinerarium Egeriae* 31,2-4.

In Russia there are reports of a ritual of Palm Sunday from the 16th century, which was composed of a reenactment of the entrance of Jesus in Jerusalem. The most known reenactments such as this are recorded in Moscow during the time of 1558-1693, even though the custom originally started from Novgorod. The Metropolitan of Moscow and later Patriarch represented Jesus on the donkey but in the ritual a horse was used, which was led by the Char of Russia on foot holding the horse in one hand and branches of palm tree in the other.²¹ This procession started from Kremlin and finished in the Holy Trinity Cathedral, which later became known with the name Jerusalem. Until 1678 there were similar ritual processions in other Russian cities but then it was limited exclusively in Moscow until it was abolished by Peter the Great in 1697. Similar ritual processions were held during the enthronement of the Patriarch of Moscow but also of Bishops in other cities. In 2000 the custom was revived again in Rostov. A contemporary report is added in the above. In Philippines nowadays the custom is active.

We can now see the impact of the text in another aspect of the worship of the Church, as it is recorded through archaeological research. Nowadays the Orthodox hermeneutics also uses additionally methods of approaching the biblical texts with other fields of science. The archaeological report enlightens the understanding of the details of the narration of the entrance of Jesus in Jerusalem on a donkey. In 1967 a terracotta flask was discovered in Sardis with a relief decoration on both sides. On the one side there was a donkey bearing a sphere and on it there was a cross. This finding is dated in the early Byzantine period (400-616 A.D.) and it was found in one of the shops of the city. Such kind of flasks were produced for the practical need of the pilgrims of Holy Places, because in these flasks the pilgrims put holy water, olive oil or even soil so that they could take it with them in their return as a blessing.²² The two images of the particular flask symbolize according to archaeologists the triumphal entrance of Jesus to Jerusalem.

It is not the first time that we see in Christian texts such kind of understanding, since the ritual entrance of king Zimrilim of the kingdom of Mari²³ is already recorded since the 18th century B.C. in a text of a royal document, which mentions the use of the donkey for this purpose. Therefore it exists as a symbolism at the time of Christ in Israel and generally in Near East and it was obviously known for Matthew to use it. Thus in the flask this symbolism was utilized and the cross was put on the back of the donkey, as in other cases some royal or divine symbols are put.

A greater problem was created in art which adopted the hermeneutic understanding of each era. The entrance of Jesus in Jerusalem has already been a beloved subject of Christian art from the 4th century A.D. We find it very early on sarcophagi which were discovered in the catacombs of Rome. There are relief samples of two different types on the sarcophagi. The scene of the entrance of Jesus in Jerusalem on the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus (4th century A.D.) includes

²¹ E. MUIR, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2005, 252-253.

²² G.M.A. HANFMANN, «The Donkey and the King», in *HTR* 78(1985), 422-423.

²³ ARM 2,37 and 6,76. K.C. WAY, *The Ceremonial and Symbolic Significance of Donkeys in the Biblical World*, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati 2006, 67. Cf. ANET 1.44-47.

one animal, probably a young donkey, while on another sarcophagus from Rome in the corresponding scene it includes two animals, where it is clearly obvious that it is about a female donkey and its foal. The fact that it was established very early as a representation probably suggests the desire of the Christians to retain in memory a triumphal event and not the passion and the execution of Jesus.

This particular scene constitutes a part of Dodecaorton (Twelve Great feasts) and therefore it can be found in all the Orthodox Churches. The hagiographers but also the artists who read the particular quote in every edition or translation of the New Testament they had, faced difficulty in portraying the narration with its variations. Firstly they had to choose which version they were going to follow. Therefore in some artists the image of the entrance of Jesus in Jerusalem presents Jesus most of the times sitting on a donkey (Mark, Luke, John). Many times there is the image of a mule instead of a donkey. This is a consequence of the mistaken interpretation of the narration probably in the versions of Mark and Luke. In other images Jesus is presented sitting on a donkey and its foal follows it (Matthew). In this case the adult animal is female. There are rare cases in which Jesus is presented in actually sitting on two animals. The problem in the interpretation of Matt. 21:5 is clearer in a fresco by Master of San Baudelio de Berlanga at the monastery of Baudelio de Berlanga (1125). It is worthy to also be noted that in images which come from Eastern Christianity, Jesus is always displayed to be sitting on the one side of the animal as if he was enthroned and using his one hand to bless his people.

The interpretation of Matt. 21:5 being seen by the translation of Zech. 9:9 but also Joh. 12:15 shows that the kind of the animal is a purebred donkey and not a mule or a horse. The king of Zion comes in peace and mildness on a donkey, which was also used in the past as a royal means of transport. His entrance in the city is not a military triumph. The horse, the mule and the donkey all constituted in different periods of time means of transport, even appropriate for kings, but they have different symbolisms in biblical literature. The animal that was ridden by a king shouldn't have been ridden by anyone before, but also it can't be ridden by anyone afterwards. The latter is more probable. If this is true, then we have a second reason to link the entrance of Jesus in Jerusalem to royal claims. Moreover the person who rides the donkey is superior to the one who walks (1 Sam. 25:20). The donkey of Gen. 49:11 and the one of Zech. 9:9 are the only examples of this kind, which in the Old Testament are related to the messianic era. In Mark's version (11:2 and 4) and in Luke's (19:30) by «a colt tied» the contribution of Gen. 49:11 is obvious so that it can become clear that Jesus is the Messiah from the tribe of Judas. Moreover, maybe this is the reason why Matthew deliberately omits to note the information from Mk. 11:4 that the animal was tied near a garden gate in the road so that he wouldn't contradict with Gen. 49:11, where the animal is found tied in a vineyard. Due to Matthew's version of the narration of the entrance of Jesus to Jerusalem practical problems were later created, since his narration did not agree with the ones of the other gospel writers. The aim of Matthew though was to prove above all that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament.

5. Conclusion

The choice of a single hermeneutical method in the pericope of the triumphal entrance of Jesus in Jerusalem should be inadequate to display its message. It should be impossible for the modern reader to understand the Matthean version. The use of a series of hermeneutical methods here proved that the collaboration between different approaches sheds more light upon a difficult text and explains better most of its problems.