

In several posts I have been emphasizing – possibly over-emphasizing – that if a first-century fragment of the Gospel of Mark does ever get published, and if it is in *fact* from the first century (which, I should stress, will be almost *impossible* to demonstrate conclusively), that it is very hard indeed to imagine that it will be any kind of game-changer, that it will tell us something different from what we already think. The reason I have been emphasizing this is because the evangelical Christian scholars who are making the headlines with their declarations about the discovery will almost certainly, once it is published, if it ever gets published, claim that it is evidence for their view that we can know what the original text says. See! We have a FIRST-CENTURY MANUSCRIPT!!!

So, consider these posts of mine as a kind of prophylaxis against future claims. I don't want to hear later that I'm just offering sour grapes when I say the same thing (that it is telling us nothing new) later, after the manuscript is published. And if it DOES tell us something new – Wow! Even better!

As a side note, one of the leading evangelical Christian textual scholars in the world, Peter William (he is an affiliated lecturer at Cambridge, in the UK, is Chair of the International Greek New Testament Project and is a member of the Translation Committee of the *English Standard Version* of the Bible), in a blog post yesterday <http://evangelicaltextualcriticism.blogspot.co.uk/2015/01/has-anyone-seen-first-century-mark.html>, says that (a) he has learned that Craig Evans, the spokesperson / scholar who has been talking most about these mummy masks and the first-century copy of Mark has never actually *seen*, let alone examined, this so-called first-century copy of Mark; (b) he doubts whether Dan Wallace...

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