

The Macrostructure of Matthew's Gospel: A New Proposal

An important question in studying Matthew is how the book is structured. The results of studies of this issue vary considerably. The differences are so great that it is sometimes seriously doubted whether the first gospel in fact has a clear basic structure⁽¹⁾. The diversity of solutions can partly be explained by the complexity of the subject, and partly also by lack of agreement on the methods to be used. Such a study can be undertaken from a diachronic perspective but it is better to do so from a literary-synchronic perspective⁽²⁾. The task with which the exegete is faced in the latter case is described by D.R. Bauer as follows: "a) to determine the major units and sub-units within the Gospel, and b) to identify the structural relationships within and between these units"⁽³⁾.

Through the differences in the chosen research perspective, the existing proposals for the structure of Matthew vary widely. I will not

⁽¹⁾ Cf. R.H. GUNDRY, *Matthew. A Commentary on his Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids 1982) 11: "the Gospel of Matthew is structurally mixed".

⁽²⁾ In the case of a diachronical approach, the attention is focused on the *Kompositionsgeschichte*: the question is then whether and to what extent Matthew, in writing his gospel, was influenced by compositional characteristics of his sources. See e.g. B. STANDAERT, "L'Évangile selon Matthieu: Composition et genre littéraire", *The Four Gospels* (ed. F. VAN SEGBROECK – C.M. TUCKETT – G. VAN BELLE – J. VERHEYDEN) (BETL, 100-B; Leuven 1992) II, 1223-1250; M.E. BORING, "The Convergence of Source Analysis, Social History and Literary Structure in the Gospel of Matthew", *Society of Biblical Literature. Seminar Papers* 33 (1994) 598: "Reflections on the way Matthew put his narrative together might be expanded to include the composition history of the document, and not only the compositional features". According to U. LUZ, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (EKK I/1; Zürich 1985) I, 16-17, Matthew was so strongly bound to his sources "daß man nicht bei der Strukturanalyse diachrone Fragen ausklammern kann" and therefore he formulates as a first methodical thesis: "Methodisch kontrollierbar fragen kann man allein nach der vom Evangelisten *bewußt beabsichtigten* Gliederung, nicht nach einer unabhängig davon auf der Textebene allein existierenden Struktur".

⁽³⁾ D.R. BAUER, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel. A Study in Literary Design* (JSNTSS 31; Sheffield 1988) 13. What literary and rhetorical techniques must be taken into account in a structural analysis is formulated by H.J.B. COMBRINK, "The Macrostructure of the Gospel of Matthew", *Neotestamentica* 16 (1982) 6-10.

present a complete description of the *status quaestionis* here but will restrict myself to a number of representative examples (sections 1 and 2). In section 3, I will present a new proposal for the structure of Matthew.

1. Narrative blocs and discourses alternate

According to B.W. Bacon, Matthew has divided his gospel, by analogy to the books of Moses, into five blocs, which are so independent of each other that they can be considered as five books⁽⁴⁾. He bases this idea on two phenomena. The first is that a discourse by Jesus is concluded five times with a stereotypical formula (καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν κτλ. in 7,28; 11,1; 13,53; 19,1; 26,1); according to Bacon, this formula introduces a deep caesura in the text. The second phenomenon is that each discourse (D) is preceded by an introductory narrative section (N) that always forms a whole with the relevant discourse. In total, this pattern (N + D) occurs five times, so that Matthew consists of five books, of which the first begins in 3,1 and the last ends in 25,46. The five books are framed by a preamble (Matt 1–2) and an epilogue (Matt 26–28). In a scheme:

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| Preamble | 1,1–2,23 |
| Book 1 | 3,1–4,25 (N) and 5,1–7,27 (D); formula: 7,28–29 |
| Book 2 | 8,1–9,35 (N) and 9,36–10,42 (D); formula: 11,1 |
| Book 3 | 11,2–12,50 (N) and 13,1–52 (D); formula: 13,53 |
| Book 4 | 13,54–17,20 (N) and 17,22–18,35 (D); formula: 19,1a |
| Book 5 | 19,1b–22,46 (N) and 23,1–25,46 (D); formula: 26,1 |
| Epilogue | 26,3–28,20 |

The view of Matthew's Gospel consisting of five books has been supported by literary analyses of C.R. Smith⁽⁵⁾. His two main arguments are: 1. the Gospel of Matthew alternates between narrative and discourse, and 2. each narrative introduces a theme on which the following discourse subsequently expounds. The Gospel's underlying principle is constituted by five consecutive narrative-discourse pairs, in each of which a specific theme relating to the Kingdom is being elaborated.

⁽⁴⁾ B.W. BACON, "The Five Books of Matthew Against the Jews", *The Expositor* VIII, 85 (1918) 56–66; ID, *Studies in Matthew* (New York 1930). Largely followed by R.E. BROWN, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (The Anchor Bible Reference Library; New York 1997) 172.

⁽⁵⁾ C.R. SMITH, "Literary Evidence of a Fivefold Structure in the Gospel of Matthew", *NTS* 43 (1997) 540–551.

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|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Introduction | Genealogy (1,1-17) | |
| The foundations of the kingdom | First Narrative (1,18-4,25) | First Discourse (5,1-7,29) |
| The mission of the kingdom | Second Narrative (8,1-9,38) | Second Discourse (10,1-42) |
| The mystery of the kingdom | Third Narrative (11,1-13,9) | Third Discourse (13,10-53) |
| The family of the kingdom | Fourth Narrative (13,54-17,27) | Fourth Discourse (18,1-35) |
| The destiny of the kingdom | Fifth Narrative (19,1-23,39) | Fifth Discourse (24,1-25,46) |
| Conclusion | Passion Narrative (26,1-28,20) | |

It is obvious that this proposal enriches Bacon's ideas with new elements. To this it ought to be remarked that the introduction is restricted to the genealogy, and that the third discourse does not begin until 13,10.

The placing of the formula shows where the discourses end, but not precisely where they begin⁽⁶⁾. Does the Sermon on the Mount begin in 4,23, in 4,25 or in 5,1? Does the Mission Discourse start in 10,5b, in 9,35 or in 9,36? Does the Community Discourse begin with the disciples' question in 18,1, with the dialogue between Jesus and Peter in 17,24-27 or with the passion prediction in 17,22? Does the discourse in Matt 23 in fact form a whole with the Eschatological Discourse in Matt 24-25? These questions already indicate that the strict distinction between N and D is rather artificial. This impression is strengthened when we include Matt 1-2 and 26-28 in the debate. Bacon labels these parts as the prologue and the epilogue, respectively, and therefore they do not form part of the five books that Matthew consists of. Especially for Matt 26-28, this is hardly convincing, since these chapters are indisputably the dramatic climax of Matthew's story of Jesus. Given the distinction between N and D, Matt 1-2 and 26-28 can also be categorised under N. Or in other words, the alternation between N and D is not characteristic of 3,1-25,46 only, but of the entire book. This opinion is defended by C.H. Lohr. According to him, Matthew consists of six narrative sections and five discourses (Matt 23-25 is seen as one discourse). He argues for a concentric ordering with the Parable Discourse as the centre of the entire book⁽⁷⁾:

⁽⁶⁾ This issue is discussed by T.J. KEEGAN, "Introductory Formulae for Matthean Discourses", *CBQ* 44 (1982) 415-430.

⁽⁷⁾ C.H. LOHR, "Oral Techniques in the Gospel of Matthew", *CBQ* 23 (1961)

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|----|-------|---|
| A | 1–4 | Narrative 1: Birth and beginnings |
| B | 5–7 | Sermon I: Blessings, entering kingdom |
| C | 8–9 | Narrative 2: Authority and invitation |
| D | 10 | Sermon II: Mission Discourse |
| E | 11–12 | Narrative 3: Rejection by this generation |
| F | 13 | Sermon III: Parables of the kingdom |
| E' | 14–17 | Narrative 4: Acknowledgment by disciples |
| D' | 18 | Sermon IV: Community Discourse |
| C' | 19–22 | Narrative 5: Authority and invitation |
| B' | 23–25 | Sermon V: Woes, Coming of the kingdom |
| A' | 26–28 | Narrative 6: Death and rebirth |

According to Bacon, each discourse is linked up with the narrative bloc that precedes it. This view is based on the fact that he attributes a concluding function to the stereotypical formula. This has been disputed by a number of authors. They point out that this formula does not so much have a concluding function but rather a linking one⁽⁸⁾. After all, it is important that this formula is always found in a subordinate clause introduced by ὅτε that is combined with a main clause relating to the continuation of the story. The consequences of this view for the segmentation of Matthew have been elaborated as follows by P. Rolland⁽⁹⁾:

| | | |
|------------|------------|---|
| Prologue | 1,1–4,16: | From the Old to the New Testament 1. Infancy Narratives (1,1–2,23) 2. John the Baptist and Jesus (3,1–4,16) |
| First Part | 4,17–9,34: | The Kingdom of God is at Hand 1. Introduction and Discourse (4,17–7,29) 2. Narrative section (8,1–9,34) |

427. A concentric ordering has also been presented by COMBRINK, “Macro-structure”, 16: A: 1,1–4,17; B: 4,18–7,29; C: 8,1–9,35; D: 9,36–11,1; E: 11,2–12,50; F: 13,1–53; E': 13,54–16,20; D': 16,21–20,34; C': 21,1–22,46; B': 23,1–25,46; A': 26,1–28,20 (similarly in H.J.B. COMBRINK, “The Structure of Matthew’s Gospel as Narrative”, *TynBul* 34 (1983) 61-90 (here 71). This segmentation of the text differs considerably from Lohr’s mainly in segments E', D' and C'.

⁽⁸⁾ This is formulated — slightly too strongly — as follows by U. LUZ, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, I, 19: “... καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν etc. in 7,28; 11,1; 13,53; 19,1; 26,1 schließt syntaktisch nicht eine Rede ab, sondern leitet eine neue Etappe der Erzählung ein!”.

⁽⁹⁾ Ph. ROLLAND, “From the Genesis to the End of the World. The Plan of Matthew’s Gospel”, *BTB* 2 (1972) 156: “We deem it preferable to consider the transition formula five times repeated [...] as a connecting link, and to join to each discourse the narratives that follow instead of those that precede”. See also W. SCHMAUCH, “Die Komposition des Matthäus-Evangeliums in ihrer Bedeutung für seine Interpretation”, ID., ... *zu achten aufs Wort*. Ausgewählte Arbeiten (Göttingen 1967) 64-87.

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|-------------|-------------|--|
| Second Part | 9,35–12,50: | The Lost Sheep of the House of Israel 1. Introduction and Discourse (9,35–10,42) 2. Narrative section (11,1–12,50) |
| Third Part | 13,1–17,27: | I will build my Church 1. Discourse (13,1–58) 2. Narrative section (14,1–17,27) |
| Fourth Part | 18,1–23,39: | The True Israel 1. Discourse (18,1–35) 2. Narrative section (19,1–23,39) |
| Fifth Part | 24,1–28,20: | The Final Victory 1. Discourse (24,1–25,46) 2. Narrative section (26,1–28,20) |

The division into five parts is retained, but the five sections are different from Bacon's. They do not consist of N + D, but of D + N. The concluding chapters (26–28) are no longer in an isolated position. Furthermore, it is remarkable that Rolland detaches Matt 23 from the Eschatological Discourse, but his classifying this chapter as a narrative section testifies to an urge for regularisation.

After this reversion of the ordering (D + N instead of N + D), a compromise between the two views was bound to emerge. This compromise was suggested by D.L. Barr⁽¹⁰⁾. He argues that the discourses are not only connected to the narrative material that precedes them, but also to the narrative material by which they are followed (pattern: N ← D → N). Schematically, his proposal is as follows: Matt 1–4 (N) ← 5–7 (D) → 8–9 (N) ← 10 (D) → 11–12 (N) ← 13,1–52 (D) → 13,53–17,27 (N) ← 18 (D) → 19–22 (N) ← 23–25 (D) → 26–28 (N).

These examples will suffice to illustrate the discussion on the structure of Matthew on the basis of the two phenomena signalled by Bacon: the stereotypical formula and the alternation of N and D. I will conclude this overview with a critical appraisal.

(1) The formula itself always concludes a discourse, but the complete sentence of which it forms a part also links up with what follows. It is not possible to gather from the formula where the discourse begins, nor does it show where the narrative that follows the discourse exactly ends. For the precise determination of these boundaries, other criteria must be applied.

(2) The subdivisions mentioned are based on "une distinction

⁽¹⁰⁾ D.L. BARR, "The Drama of Matthew's Gospel: A Reconsideration of Its Structure and Purpose", *Theology Digest* 24 (1976) 352: "The discourses are not dividers, but connectors, linking two sections of narrative together".

artificielle et rigide entre narration et discours”⁽¹¹⁾. That it would be advisable not to make this rigid distinction is apparent from the lack of unanimity on the precise demarcation of D and N. The clearest example of this is that Matt 23 is classified as D by one author and as N by another (and this notwithstanding the fact that we are dealing here with an uninterrupted monologue by Jesus!). Moreover, the sharp distinction between N and D suggest that the five long discourses are detached from the rest of Matthew’s story of Jesus and that they always interrupt this story. This position is untenable for, as character text, the discourses are principally embedded in the narrator’s text. Moreover it is remarkable that also narrative texts in Matthew have a discursive character.

(3) Furthermore, I would like to point out two other phenomena. Firstly, in the parts classified as N, Jesus also speaks frequently and sometimes at some length: apart from 11,2-3.7a, Matt 11 only consists of words spoken by Jesus; 12,25-45 contains a monologue by Jesus, that is only interrupted in 12,38-39a by a remark from his listeners; Matt 19–22 contains many statements by Jesus. Secondly, the reverse can also be observed: the parts that are labelled D contain some narrative sentences, which remind the reader that the character text is embedded in the narrator’s text (13,10.36; 18,21-22).

2. *A story in three acts*

A second proposal for the structure of Matthew, that continues to be influential, was developed by E. Krentz and was subsequently propagated by J.D. Kingsbury and D.R. Bauer⁽¹²⁾. Their point of departure is the parallelism between 4,17 and 16,21. Both verses open with ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς, followed by an infinitive (κηρύσσειν καὶ λέγειν in 4,17; δεικνύειν in 16,21) and a brief summary of the content of Jesus’ words. These verses would have a macrosyntactic function and serve as the captions of two long sections, the first (4,17–16,20) about Jesus’ proclamation of the kingdom and the second (16,21–28,20) about his journey to Jerusalem and about his passion,

⁽¹¹⁾ D.W. GOODING, “Structure Littéraire de Matthieu, XIII,53 à XVIII,35”, *RB* 85 (1978) 233.

⁽¹²⁾ E. KRENTZ, “The Extent of Matthew’s Prologue. Toward the Structure of the First Gospel”, *JBL* 83 (1964) 409-414; J.D. KINGSBURY, “The Structure of Matthew’s Gospel and His Concept of Salvation-History”, *CBQ* 35 (1973) 451-474; ID, *Matthew. Structure, Christology, Kingdom* (London – Philadelphia 1975) 1-39 (Chapter I; same title); BAUER, *The Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*.

death, and resurrection. These two sections are preceded by a long text (1,1–4,16) that functions as a prologue that informs the reader on Jesus' identity. This introductory part also has a caption that relates to the content of the entire part (βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ). In this perspective, the Gospel according to Matthew consists of three parts:

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|------|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| I. | 1,1–4,16 | Jesus as a Person |
| II. | 4,17–16,20 | His Proclamation |
| III. | 16,21–28,20 | His Passion, Death, and Resurrection |

In his book *Matthew as Story*, Kingsbury has elaborated this basic pattern further⁽¹³⁾:

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|------|-------------|--|
| I. | 1,1–4,16 | The Presentation of Jesus |
| II. | 4,17–16,20 | The Ministry of Jesus to Israel and Israel's Repudiation of Jesus |
| | | 1. 4,17–11,1 The Ministry of Jesus to Israel |
| | | 2. 11,2–16,20 Israel's Repudiation of Jesus |
| III. | 16,21–28,20 | The Journey of Jesus to Jerusalem and His Suffering, Death, and Resurrection |
| | | 1. 16,21–25,46 The Journey of Jesus to Jerusalem and His Activity in the Temple |
| | | 2. 26,1–28,20 The Betrayal, Condemnation, Crucifixion, and Resurrection of Jesus |

Within this proposal, that does justice to the narrative character of the gospel, the stereotypical formula following Jesus' five discourses has a linking rather than a dividing function. However, there are deep caesuras between 4,16 and 4,17 and between 16,20 and 16,21.

That part I (1,1–4,16) is a textual unit is clear, according to the authors of this option, by two phenomena: a) this long text fragment shows explicit interest in Jesus' identity; b) his vicissitudes are regularly presented as the fulfilment of statements from Scripture. We do not only encounter these two phenomena in 1,1–2,23 but also in 3,1–4,16. It is true that the christological interest emerges strongest in Matt 1–2, where Jesus is referred to in various ways (1,1.16.23; 2,2.6.15.23), but this line culminates in 3,17 where God himself calls him his beloved Son. The four formula quotations in Matt 1–2 (1,22–23; 2,15.17–18.23) are also followed up in 4,14–16.

⁽¹³⁾ J.D. KINGSBURY, *Matthew as Story* (Philadelphia 1988) 40–93. We encounter the same refinements in BAUER, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 73–108.

Kingsbury further emphasises that there is only a slight caesura between Matt 2 and Matt 3: the particle *δέ* in 3,1 has a linking function, and *ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκεῖναις* bridges a long period of time, also in Exod 2,11 (LXX), while the story continues⁽¹⁴⁾. There is not a deep caesura between 4,11 and 4,12 either since the name Jesus, last mentioned in 4,10, is not repeated in 4,12.

Matt 1,1 is interpreted as the caption covering the entire part I. To support this opinion, Kingsbury — in imitation of Krentz — points to Gen 2,4a and especially to Gen 5,1. In the Septuagint, *βίβλος γενέσεως* in Gen 5,1 introduces a textual unit (5,1–6,8), that consists of a genealogy and a subsequent narrative section. In Matthew, we also encounter a genealogy (1,1–17), followed by a long series of stories (1,18–4,16; so not merely 1,18–2,23). Within the entire book, part I has the function of a prologue; in preparation to the description of Jesus' ministry (from 4,17 onwards), the reader is informed, in 1,1–4,16, on Jesus' identity.

Parts II and III are both coherent text units. The caption of part II (4,17) is recapitulated in a number of summaries (4,23–25; 9,35; 11,1b)⁽¹⁵⁾. Similarly, the caption of part III (16,21), the prediction of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection, is repeated in 17,22–23 and 20,17–19. This latter aspect was somewhat refined by T.B. Slater, who points out that 26,2 should also be included in the series mentioned by Kingsbury⁽¹⁶⁾.

It is astonishing that this division into three is still so popular⁽¹⁷⁾, for it is some time ago now that F. Neiryck's apposite criticism has accurately revealed the weak link in the entire construction⁽¹⁸⁾. He

⁽¹⁴⁾ The time adjunct in Exod 2,11 in the LXX is not exactly the same as in Matt 3,1. The LXX has *ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταῖς πολλαῖς ἐκεῖναις*.

⁽¹⁵⁾ In order to express their function as foundation of the story, summaries are labelled as 'Basisberichte' by K. BERGER, *Formen und Gattungen im Neuen Testament* (UTB 2532; Tübingen – Basel 2005) 388–391.

⁽¹⁶⁾ T.B. SLATER, "Notes on Matthew's Structure", *JBL* 99 (1980) 436: "As a mere corrective to Kingsbury, the three passion-predictions are 17:22–23, 20:17–19, and 26:2, with 16:21 being more a redactional statement than a prediction".

⁽¹⁷⁾ See the divisions in: J. GNILKA, *Das Matthäusevangelium* (HTKNT, I/2; Freiburg – Basel – Wien 1988) II, 524: Vorgeschichte: 1,1–4,16; 1. Hauptteil: 4,17–16,20; 2. Hauptteil: 16,21–25,46; Passion und Ostern: 26,1–28,20.

⁽¹⁸⁾ F. NEIRYNCK, "La rédaction matthéenne et la structure du premier évangile", *ETL* 43 (1967) 41–73; F. NEIRYNCK, "APO TOTE HRXATO and the Structure of Matthew", *ETL* 64 (1988) 21–59.

acknowledges the parallelism in the formulations of 4,17 and 16,21⁽¹⁹⁾, but he disputes the argument that ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο indicates the beginning of a new section. To this end, he calls attention to the fact that ἀπὸ τότε also occurs in Matt 26,16, where it refers to the preceding verses (26,14-15).

In 16,21 and 4,17, the time adjunct ἀπὸ τότε is also very closely connected with the event narrated immediately before. According to Neiryck, the sentences introduced by ἀπὸ τότε do belong to a passage that started earlier: 4,17 is an integral part of 4,12-17; 16,21 introduces a new turn in the conversation between Jesus and his disciples in the neighbourhood of Caesarea Philippi (16,13-28); 26,16 forms the conclusion of 26,3-16. Within the gospel as a whole, these three pericopes occupy an important place: all three introduce a new phase in Jesus' ministry. Neiryck thus attributes a function to the three pericopes that is related to the function that Kingsbury gives to 4,17 and 16,21. Still, there is an important difference. Within Kingsbury's division, there is first a period in which Jesus proclaims the kingdom (4,17–16,20), and then a period in which his suffering, death, and resurrection are central (16,21–28,20). According to Neiryck, the different phases cannot be separated so rigidly. On the contrary, it can be said that they overlap — at least partly. Also after 16,20, Jesus speaks many times about the kingdom (in 26,29 for the last time); the reverse is also true: Jesus' death is touched upon before 16,21 (e.g. in 9,15 and 12,14.40). Interesting is also Neiryck's suggestion to include 26,3-16 in the series of passages that introduce a new phase. After this passage, the events that have been announced since 16,13-28 come to a head.

I will conclude this section with three critical remarks on details from Kingsbury's argument:

(1) According to Kingsbury, the three parts of which Matthew consists each have their own caption (1,1; 4,17; 16,21), the content of which is elaborated in the section which they introduce. Much can be said against this. How can the content of 1,1 (Jesus is the son of David, the son of Abraham) be reconciled with Kingsbury's claim that part I culminates in 3,17 where Jesus is called the Son of God? There is also a certain tension between 4,17 and part II: in 4,17, only Jesus' proclamation is mentioned, while part II also focuses on his acts (see

⁽¹⁹⁾ Except for Matthew, ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, nor in the LXX. The time adjunct ἀπὸ τότε can be found elsewhere: Ezra 5,16; Pss 75,8; 92,2; Qoh 8,12; Matt 26,16; Luke 16,16.

e.g. 11,2). The caption in 16,21 anticipates events that are not extensively elaborated until the passion narrative and hardly covers the content of 16,21–25,46.

(2) The substantive correspondence between the caption of 4,17 and the summaries in part II (4,23-25; 9,35; 11,1b) is only relative. The summaries regularly have διδάσκειν and κηρύσσειν; however, 4,17 has κηρύσσειν and λέγειν. Furthermore, the summaries also mention Jesus' acts, especially his healings (θεραπέυω). Even more importantly, these summaries do not occur after 11,1b whereas part II does not end until 16,20. To a lesser degree, this same objection applies to the relation between the caption in 16,21 and the passion predictions in 17,22-23 and 20,17-19. If, following Slater, 26,2 is also added to this series, the passion predictions are more or less evenly spread over part III.

(3) Kingsbury describes 4,17–16,20 as “the ministry of Jesus to Israel and Israel’s repudiation of Jesus”. It bears witness to little feeling for nuance that Kingsbury lumps together the Jewish leaders and the people under the all-encompassing term “Israel” and that he speaks of a negative reaction of the entire Jewish people to Jesus’ words and deeds.

3. *The Macrostructure of Matthew’s Gospel: A New Solution*

In this section, I will present a new proposal concerning the macrostructure of the Gospel according to Matthew, with the starting point that this gospel is a narrative text, a story about Jesus. The narrator offers his main character ample opportunity to speak. These sections are to be considered as character’s text and are as such embedded in the narrator’s text. The same goes for the five discourses held by Jesus that the narrator, judging by his concluding formula, presents as textual units. We must do justice to these units when answering the question which sub-structures can be recognised in the book. Nonetheless, these do not themselves present us with the key to the determination of the macrostructure.

In this section, I will take a closer look at a number of textual phenomena that have a structuring function. I will begin by discussing a characteristic that the Gospel according to Matthew has in common with every other narrative text: the events related take place in a certain temporal and spatial setting (a and b). Assuming the distinction between “kernels” and “satellites”, I will step by step develop a new solution (c-g).

a) Temporal information

The book of Matthew covers the period round the birth of Jesus up till his resurrection from the dead. This juncture is expanded further backward and forward by means of references to the past (retrospections) and to the future (anticipations). The farthest point in the past to be mentioned in Matthew is the creation of the world (19,4.8), and the furthest point in the future is the coming of the Son of Man (24,3.27.29.39) or the end of the age (13,39.40.49; 24,3; 28,20). Twice, the narrator indicates that, from a temporal point of view, he stands at great distance from the events that he narrates. In 27,8 and 28,15, he mentions two phenomena that originate in the period described in the book but that "to this day" are still well-known or influential.

There are a number of indications that give an idea of the temporal organisation of Matthew's story about Jesus. In 1,2-17, the history of Israel is reviewed, starting with Abraham and culminating in Jesus. The episodes in 1,18-2,23 take place towards the end of the rule of Herod the Great and at the beginning of Archelaus' administration. There is a long time-span between the establishment of the young Jesus in Nazareth (2,22-23) and the ministry of John the Baptist (3,1)⁽²⁰⁾. An unspecified period of time passes between the temptation of Jesus in the desert (4,1-11) and the time when he decides to go and live in Capernaum (4,12-17). The summaries in 4,23 and 9,35 characterize in a few strokes of the pen the activities of Jesus in Galilee during a long period of time. In 11,12-13, a review of the history that has been told so far is to be found; the retroversion formulated here refers back to John's ministry as narrated in 3,1-17 (ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν ἡμερῶν Ἰωάννου τοῦ βαπτιστοῦ ἕως ἄρτι ...); together, John and Jesus have made the kingdom of heaven accessible, whilst "until John came" (ἕως Ἰωάννου) it was predicted by all the Prophets and the Torah⁽²¹⁾. In 11,25, we come across the time adjunct ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ, that is then repeated twice (12,1 and 14,1). This formula indicates that the time has come when Jesus confronts those around him with the necessity to make

⁽²⁰⁾ G. HÄFNER, "'Jene Tage' (Mt 3,1) und die Umfang des matthäischen 'Prologs'", *BZ* 37 (1993) 51, challenges the idea that there is a deep caesura between 2,23 and 3,1 and he considers the "in those days" used in 3,1 to be a "Verknüpfung von für den Evangelisten zeitlich zusammengehörenden Ereignissen".

⁽²¹⁾ In 11,12, ἀπό has an inclusive meaning and, in 11,13, ἕως has an exclusive one.

decisive choices. In Jerusalem, Jesus debates with various adversaries for a whole day in the temple (see 21,18: “in the morning”; 22,23: “the same day”; 22,46: “from that day”). Not until the passion narrative is the passage of time described with great precision⁽²²⁾.

For the rest, the indications of time offer little to hold on to in the determination of the temporal organisation of the story. The concrete temporal details merely have a function within the pericope in which they are to be found⁽²³⁾, or they make a connection with the previous passage⁽²⁴⁾. As a rule, τότε, that appears 90 times, has a binding function. An exception to this are the cases of ἀπὸ τότε (4,17; 16,21; 26,16); this temporal notion marks a new phase in the work of Jesus. In 4,17 ἀπὸ τότε marks the beginning of the period in which Jesus proclaims the coming of the kingdom of heaven. As has already been mentioned, this period of time starts as soon as he goes to live in Capernaum and not just after, and continues right up till his suffering and death. Whilst Jesus continues to preach the gospel of the kingdom, he also begins, in 16,13-28, to speak with his disciples about his pending death and resurrection. This marks the beginning of a subperiod that covers his stay near Caesarea Philippi up till two days before Easter (26,16). In 26,17, a new subperiod begins (marked by ἀπὸ τότε in 26,16), when he is indeed handed over to his adversaries.

From this analysis of the temporal information in Matthew, I have come to the following conclusions. There is an interval of time between 2,23 and 3,1 and also between 4,11 and 4,12. Jesus begins his ministry in 4,12-17. The summaries in 4,23 and 9,35 indicate that Jesus is acting as a teacher and healer for a long period of time in Galilee. In 11,2-24, a review is to be found of the ministry of John and Jesus. A new and crucial phase starts in 11,25. In 16,13-28, Jesus, at that time in the region of Caesarea Philippi, begins to speak of his suffering, death, and resurrection. The events announced come to a head in the passion narrative. This scenario, predicted time and again, begins with Judas looking for the most appropriate time to deliver Jesus up.

b) Topographical information

Most of the topographical details in Matthew are connected to Jesus. Although he lives in Nazareth (2,22) and Capernaum (4,13),

⁽²²⁾ See: 26,2.17.20.31.34.55; 27,1.19.45-46.53.57.62.63.64; 28,1.

⁽²³⁾ See 8,13; 12,1; 14,15.23.25; 15,28.32.

⁽²⁴⁾ See 13,1; 17,1; 18,1.

respectively, he does not have a permanent place of abode (cf. 8,20) and moves restlessly from one place to another.

This is a pattern which started right back in 2,1-23: following Jesus' birth in Bethlehem in Judea, Joseph takes him firstly to Egypt, and then to Nazareth in Galilee. Once an adult, he travels from Galilee to the desert of Judea to be baptized by John and he is led into the desert to be tempted by the devil. The temptations bring with them imaginary journeys to the holy city of Jerusalem and to a very high mountain. Following this, there is a sequence (4,12–20,34) in which various places and regions are mentioned. That Matthew uses the same order here as Mark in situating his story firstly in Galilee (4,12–15,20), then in the surrounding area (15,21–18,35), and finally in Judea (19,1–20,34) is not entirely convincing⁽²⁵⁾. Already in the part situated in Galilee (4,12–15,20), Jesus leaves Galilee and travels to the region of the Gadarenes (8,28-34); conversely, in 15,21–18,35 (that according to Allen should be situated “in the surrounding area of Galilee”), it is mentioned that Jesus and his disciples are in Galilee (17,22), in Capernaum to be precise (17,24). It is only from Matt 21 onwards that there is an obvious unity of place. In 21,1–28,15, the events related take place in Jerusalem or in the surrounding area of this city. The book ends, however, in the region in which Jesus was active for a long period of time: in 28,16-20, the risen Lord appears to the eleven on a mountain in Galilee.

Thus, at first sight, few connections are to be found in the spatial setting of the events related. However, the impression given here evaporates when we note that various topographical data are clustered together by means of three refrains that are connected to one another.

The first refrain was discovered by F. Breukelman and is to be found in 1,1–16,20⁽²⁶⁾. It can be recognized by the verb ἀναχωρέω (= to withdraw), that is used in seven cases to indicate a move to another place:

- 2,12-13 And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they (= the wise men) left (ἀνεχώρησαν) for their own country by another road. Now after they had left (ἀναχωρησάντων) [...]
- 2,14 Then Joseph [...] went to (ἀνεχώρησεν) Egypt.
- 2,22-23 But when he heard that [...]. And after being warned in a dream, he went away (ἀνεχώρησεν) to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, [...]

⁽²⁵⁾ This pattern is found in: W.C. ALLEN, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to S. Matthew* (ICC; Edinburgh 1947) LXIII-LXIV.

⁽²⁶⁾ F. BREUKELMAN, *Bijbelse theologie* (Kampen 1984) III, 144-166.

- 4,12 Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew (ἀνεχώρησεν) to Galilee.
 12,15 When Jesus became aware of this, he departed (ἀνεχώρησεν).
 14,13 Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew (ἀνεχώρησεν) from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself.
 15,21 Jesus left that place and went away (ἀνεχώρησεν) to the district of Tyre and Sidon.

That these sentences have the character of a refrain is clear from the fact that, apart from the verb ἀναχωρέω, they also have a number of other fixed elements: a) people close to Jesus or Jesus himself withdraw(s); b) they do this because they hear or perceive that Jesus is being threatened by his adversaries; c) this withdrawal brings him to a new location that is usually named explicitly; d) in four cases, the refrain is accompanied by a fulfilment quotation (2,15.23; 4,14-16; 12,18-21).

The whole series shows a certain amount of progression. Initially, the wise men and Joseph are the subject of ἀναχωρέω (2,12-13.14.22) but, from 4,12 onwards, this action is completed by Jesus himself. His life is threatened firstly by the local political leaders, Herod the Great (2,12-13.14) and his sons Archelaus (2,22) and Antipas (4,12; 14,13), but further on in the book, his circle of enemies is expanded with the Pharisees (12,14; 15,21), who are plotting his death. Progression can also be observed in the fact that Galilee, a region where initially Jesus is still safe (2,22; 4,12), is gradually becoming a hazardous area, as a result of which Jesus begins to avoid towns and villages, staying in uninhabited areas (14,13), and even venturing in the direction of the district of Tyre and Sidon, places inhabited by the gentiles (15,31). Having turned his back on the Pharisees and the Sadducees (16,4), he leaves for the region of Caesarea Philippi. These moves have the remarkable effect of increasing Jesus' radius of action: in fact, he meets large crowds even in uninhabited areas, and, although he knows that he has been sent only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel (15,24), he relents to a woman from the world of the gentiles and has mercy on her, too.

The fulfilment quotations connected to this refrain make it clear that Jesus' wanderings take place according to a certain plan and that they have already been announced in texts of the Scripture that are presented by the narrator as God's own words. Thus, Jesus does not travel so restlessly through fear of his enemies, but in obedience to God.

The refrain discussed focuses the attention on the constant that Jesus distances himself from Jerusalem and Judea, his native soil. This

movement ends in the region of Caesarea Philippi (16,13-28) and is altered by Jesus himself. As from this passage, we come across a new refrain that is expressed as follows.

- 16,21 From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.
 17,22-23 "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised".
 20,18-19 "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified; and on the third day he will be raised".
 26,2 "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified".

In 16,21 this refrain belongs to the narrator's text; in the three other cases, the narrator puts the words of the announcement into Jesus' mouth. The refrain can be recognized by the following fixed elements: a) Jesus travels purposefully and of his own free will; b) the journey takes him to Jerusalem (16,21; 20,17.18); c) he will be crucified there, but God will raise him up on the third day; d) the journey to Jerusalem is — just as those moves undertaken in 1,1–16,20 — covered by the ordinance of God (see $\delta\epsilon\iota$ in 16,21); e) the refrain anticipates the events related in 26,17–28,15.

At the time the events proclaimed are actually taking place in Jerusalem, a third and last refrain echoes:

- 26,32 "But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee".
 28,7 "... and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him".
 28,10 "... go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me".

These sentences are spoken by Jesus (28,32; 28,10) and by an angel of the Lord (28,7) and contain the following fixed elements: a) the speaker anticipates the period following the resurrection of Jesus; b) mention is made of a future reunion between the resurrected Jesus and his disciples; c) the reunion will take place in Galilee.

In the five concluding verses of Matthew (28,16-20), the raised expectation is fulfilled on a mountain in Galilee. This location results in a certain contrast between 28,16-20 and the long section in which the place of action is Jerusalem. In this case, Galilee is the base of operation for movement in every direction, the world over. From Galilee, Jesus sends his disciples to all nations with the promise that he will remain amongst them until the end of the age. Thus, in 28,16-20, the book ends with the beginning of a new journey, the starting

point of which (Galilee), the range (all nations) and the duration (till the end of the age) are indicated, whilst concrete details on the stages of the journey are not mentioned at all.

These observations lead me to the conclusion that, on the basis of the topographical information that differs greatly in itself, we can distinguish three patterns:

Pattern 1: Jesus flees from his enemies and thus expands his radius of action.

Pattern 2: He voluntarily travels to Jerusalem, where he is to suffer and die and be raised up by God.

Pattern 3: From Galilee, Jesus sends his disciples out to teach all nations until the end of the age.

These three patterns are connected to one another. Pattern 2 is partly a reversal of pattern 1, whilst pattern 3 is an extension of pattern 2. The three patterns are not separated from each other by rigid caesuras. Pattern 1 ends in the same textual unity (16,13-28) with which pattern 2 begins. In turn, pattern 2 reaches its peak in a textual unity (27,55–28,20), the last scene of which (28,16-20) touches on pattern 3.

c) Kernels with satellites or pericopes with a hinge function?

Having reached this point, I want to draw attention to a number of new insights in the structure of Matthew that are a result of a narrative analysis of this book. According to F. Matera, a long and complex story such as that of Matthew is more than just a sum of individual incidents⁽²⁷⁾. An important question is why the story that is being related passes in the way it does. This question concerns the plot or the intrigue of the book, that is to say, to the phenomenon that the individual incidents are arranged in a certain way in relation to one another by their mutual temporal *and* causal relations. Each individual episode does not weigh equally in the determination of the book's plot. Certain events initiate a turning point that influences the continuation of the story. Following S. Chatman, Matera calls such events "major events" or "kernels". They contribute to the fact that it becomes more and more likely that the story will end in a certain way and, in that sense, they are essential for the development of the plot of the book.

According to Matera, a turning point occurs as a rule in a relatively short passage that is followed by a series of sub-texts in which events are presented that are a consequence of the new step that has been

⁽²⁷⁾ F. MATERA, "The Plot of Matthew's Gospel", *CBQ* 49 (1987) 233-253.

taken in the kernel. Because these events (“minor events”) do not themselves offer new moments of choice, but instead elaborate on the one already made, they are not entirely indispensable. They do, however, fill the void between one kernel and the next.

Matera uses these theoretical distinctions to find an answer to three questions: a) What is the plot in Matthew?; b) Where are the “kernels” within the plot of Matthew’s Gospel?; c) What kind of narrative blocks does Matthew consist of?

In answering the first question, Matera assumes that the salvation history is the most central notion in Matthew. After all, the book does extend all the way from Abraham (1,1) to the end of the age (28,20). Within this huge framework, it describes how Jesus, on the one hand, is (or: was) united with the people of Israel and, on the other, how he increasingly becomes accepted by gentiles.

Matera sums up six passages in which there is a decisive turning point: 2,1a: the birth of Jesus; 4,12-17: the beginning of Jesus’ ministry; 11,2-6: John’s question; 16,13-28: the conversation in the district of Caesarea Philippi; 21,1-17: the cleansing of the temple; 28,16-20: the sending out of the disciples.

The first five kernels are accompanied by a number of satellites, together with which they form a narrative block; in the case of the last kernel, such satellites are absent:

| “Kernels”: | Narrative blocks: | Description: |
|-------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 2,1a | 1. 1,1–4,11 | The coming of the Messiah |
| 4,12-17 | 2. 4,12–11,1 | The Messiah’s ministry to Israel of preaching, teaching, and healing |
| 11,2-6 | 3. 11,2–16,12 | The crisis in the Messiah’s ministry |
| 16,13-28 | 4. 16,13–20,34 | The Messiah’s journey to Jerusalem |
| 21,1-17 | 5. 21,1–28,15 | The Messiah’s death and resurrection |
| 28,16-20 | 6. 28,16-20 | The great commission |

An adapted form of Matera’s hypothesis has been adopted by W. Carter⁽²⁸⁾. The following scheme shows what the modified plan of Matthew’s Gospel looks like.

| “Kernels”: | Narrative blocks: | Description: |
|-------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1,18-25 | 1. 1,1–4,16 | God is the origin of Jesus |
| 4,17-25 | 2. 4,17–11,1 | Jesus manifests God’s saving presence in his preaching and healing |

⁽²⁸⁾ W. CARTER, “Kernels and Narrative Blocks: The Structure of Matthew’s Gospel”, *CBQ* 54 (1992) 463-481. See also: ID., *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* (Peabody, MA 1996) 159-175.

| | | |
|----------|----------------|--|
| 11,2-6 | 3. 11,2–16,20 | Jesus' actions reveal his identity as God's commissioned agent, necessitating a response to the question of whether Israel will recognise him as God's Messiah |
| 16,21-28 | 4. 16,21–20,34 | Jesus speaks to his disciples about his death and resurrection, an event that also shapes discipleship |
| 21,1-27 | 5. 21,1–27,66 | In Jerusalem, Jesus is rejected by the Jewish leaders |
| 28,1-10 | 6. 28,1-20 | The resurrected Jesus commissions his disciples to a worldwide mission |

Both authors come to a total of six narrative blocks. All sorts of differences become apparent in their demarcation. Carter agrees with the caesuras recommended by Kingsbury between 4,16 and 4,17 and between 16,20 and 16,21. He also places a caesura between 27,66 and 28,1, which is hard to defend. With the exception of 11,2-6, the “kernels” suggested by Matera are also revised. Major modifications include the replacement of 2,1a (merely a subordinate clause) by 1,18-25 and 28,16-20 is no longer considered as a(n isolated) turning point in itself, but is given the status of a satellite of 28,1-10. The minor differences are that Matera's “kernels” are demarcated differently in three cases (4,17-25 instead of 4,12-17; 16,21-28 instead of 16,13-28; 21,1-27 instead of 21,1-17).

Both studies make it clear that certain passages have a macro syntactical function: they bring about a turning point in the plot, a turning point that is fleshed out in a large number of the subsequent pericopes. I agree with this principle, but also expand on it with the suggestion that such cardinal passages at the same time refer to the preceding block. With this double function in mind, I refer to them as hinge texts. In the following subsections, I will indicate which passages fulfil this double function and examine the scope of the narrative blocks that precede and follow these hinge texts.

d) Matt 4,12-17 and 26,1-16 as hinge texts within the book as a whole

Partly on the basis of the above, I will gradually develop a new outlook on the macrostructure of Matthew. My first step is that the book consists of a *corpus* (4,18–25,46), in which a continuous story is presented of Jesus' ministry, and that this *corpus* is contained in an overture (1,1–4,11) and a finale (26,17–28,20). The overture is connected to the *corpus* by means of a hinge text (4,12-17), whilst there is also a hinge text to be found in the transition from *corpus* to finale (26,1-16). In a schematic overview:

| overture | hinge | <i>corpus</i> | hinge | finale |
|----------|---------|---------------|---------|-------------|
| 1,1–4,11 | 4,12–17 | 4,18–25,46 | 26,1–16 | 26,17–28,20 |

The overture (1,1–4,11) is a textual unit, in which the narrator presents an image of the origin and identity of Jesus, and his future task. His origin is mentioned in Matt 1–2 (γένεσις in 1,1.18). Various descriptions clarify his identity: son of David, son of Abraham (1,1), Messiah (1,16), Emmanuel (1,23), king of the Jews (2,2), ruler or shepherd of the people of Israel (2,6), Nazorean (2,23), Son of God (2,15; 3,17). Jesus' future task is described twice: he will save his people from their sins (1,21) and he is to fulfil all righteousness (3,15). A disadvantage to the regularly applied term “prologue” is that it gives the impression that 1,1–4,11 is a non-narrative introductory section, like the prologue in John 1,1–18. The term “overture” does more justice to the fact that Matthew's story about Jesus already begins in 1,18. We can distinguish two sections within the overture as a whole (1,1–2,23 and 3,1–4,11)⁽²⁹⁾. The caesura between 4,11 and 4,12 is, however, much deeper than the one between 2,23 and 3,1; not until 4,12 does the public ministry of Jesus begin.

In the finale (26,17–28,20), Jesus' suffering and death and his resurrection are described. The term “finale” has been chosen in order to express that the passion narrative is an integrated constituent that forms the climax of the entire book.

The overture and the finale are connected with one another in many respects. The stories about the beginning of Jesus' life and the preparations for his mission point towards the passion narrative, and conversely, the last part points back to the beginning again⁽³⁰⁾.

The *corpus* covers the whole of Jesus' public ministry. That this lengthy piece is a literary unit is confirmed by the fact that the narrator has his main character hold five discourses that are arranged chiasmatically in relation to one another. The “programme” discourse at the beginning, the Sermon on the Mount, has a counterpart in the Eschatological Discourse; the Missionary Discourse and the Community Discourse discuss the disciples' mission and their mutual

⁽²⁹⁾ W. DAVIES – D.C. ALLISON, *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (ICC; Edinburg 1988) I, 286–287, are of the opinion that there is a deep caesura between 2,23 and 3,1.

⁽³⁰⁾ A detailed list of correspondences is to be found in W. WEREN, *Matteüs* (Belichting van het bijbelboek; 's-Hertogenbosch – Brugge 1994) 253–255.

relationships; the Parable Discourse has a central position and explains why the secrets of the kingdom are accessible to the disciples, whilst they are a mystery to outsiders.

The *corpus* of the book is connected to the overture and the finale by means of hinge texts (4,12-17 and 26,1-16). The first hinge text bridges 1,1-4,11 and 4,18–25,46. This can be clarified as follows. Jesus' move (4,12) is part of a continuous line that has begun in the overture (2,12-13.14.22) and that is later continued (12,15;14,13; 15,21). The many places mentioned in 4,12-17 are a continuation of the accumulating topographical information in Matt 2, whereby the similarities between 4,12-16 and 2,22-23 draw particular attention. Matt 4,12-17 is also connected to the preceding text by the mention, in 4,12, of John the Baptist, who had already been introduced in 3,1, and by the parallels between John's and Jesus' message (3,2 = 4,17). Finally, there are several connections between 4,12-17 and the *corpus*: Capernaum, Jesus' new home town, functions as the starting point for his wanderings through Galilee, and the kingdom of heaven remains an important subject throughout of his entire ministry.

Matt 26,1-16 functions as a hinge between the heart of the book and the finale. There is strong indication of this in the subordinate clause in 26,1 that gives a review of Jesus' ministry and, in this context, focuses on the five discourses ("all these words"). In 26,2, Jesus repeats his earlier announcements of his death (16,21; 17,22-23; 20,18-19), but by adding that the events announced will occur within two days, his statement at the same time functions as a heading to the passion narrative. The passage that follows (26,3-16) also anticipates the events to take place: together with Judas, the adversaries make preparations for Jesus' arrest (26,3-5.14-16), whilst the tender gesture by an anonymous woman is connected to his funeral (26,6-13).

e) Matt 16,13-28 as a hinge within 4,18–25,46

The next problem is the structure of the *corpus* (4,12–25,46). According to Matera, 16,13-28 is a textual unit. I support his criticism of the idea that this passage is split in two by ἀπὸ τότε on the grounds of the following considerations. This passage has a unity of place (in the district of Caesarea Philippi). Jesus is accompanied only by his disciples here. The text consists mainly of direct speech and regularly alternates between the parts where Jesus is talking to all the disciples (16,13-15.20-21.24-28), and the parts in which he is in dialogue with Peter (16,16-19.22-23), whereby we are struck by the contrast between

what Jesus says to Peter in 16,17-18 and his statement in 16,23⁽³¹⁾. The passage as a whole is framed by the two references to the Son of Man (an *inclusio*).

What then is the function of 16,13-28? Matera sees this part as a “kernel”, in which, for the first time, the journey of the Messiah to Jerusalem is mentioned; this journey is entered into in more detail in the satellite texts that follow (17,1–20,34). In my opinion, 16,13-28 extends much further than this: this passage points ahead to 17,1–25,46, because it is not until 26,2 that there is a signal that the recurring announcement of Jesus' death actually becomes reality. Matera does not mention that 16,13-28 at the same time offers a recapitulation of the material from 4,18–16,12. As a result of this double direction of focus, I consider 16,13-28 not so much as a “kernel”, but as a hinge within the whole *corpus*.

The hinge function of 16,13-28 appears from a number of textual phenomena. The first topographical pattern (to withdraw) ends in this passage, whilst the second pattern (to and in Jerusalem) starts in the very same part. Further, the connections with 4,18–16,12 are clearly obvious: the question put by Jesus to his disciples with regard to his identity is related to John's question of whether he is the one that was to come (11,2); that, according to some, he was John the Baptist is an echo of the opinion expressed in 14,2 by Herod Antipas; Peter's answer (“you are the Messiah, the Son of the living God”) links with the disciples' confession in 14,33; that the knowledge of Jesus' identity can only result from divine revelation is also expressed in 11,27. Apart from recapitulations of the preceding text, 16,13-28 also anticipates later parts: the word “church” is also used in 18,17 (and is not further mentioned in Matthew); the role assigned to Peter (to bind and unbind) is linked with the role mentioned in 18,18 of the local church; the combination of an announcement of the passion with the instructions to the disciples on the implications of being followers (16,21-28) is repeated in 20,17-28.

f) The structure of 4,18–16,12

The first part of the *corpus* (4,18–16,12) is again made up of two sections (4,18–11,1 and 12,1–16,12), that are connected to one another by means of a hinge text (11,2-30). In a schematic overview:

⁽³¹⁾ First of all, Peter is praised as the receiver of God's revelation; then Jesus reproaches him for his thoughts not being those of God; first he is indicated as being a rock and then as a stumbling block.

| | | | |
|------------|-----------------|------------------|------------|
| 4,18–16,12 | | 16,13–28 (hinge) | 17,1–25,46 |
| 4,18–11,1 | 11,2–30 (hinge) | 12,1–16,12 | |

Matt 4,18–11,1 opens with the calling of four fishermen (4,18–22) and closes with the instructions given to the twelve apostles (9,36–10,42). Although these two passages rather vary in length, a certain thematic similarity cannot be denied. Central in both cases is that Jesus assigns particular followers a task that is the continuation of his own mission.

One of the next structuring phenomena are the summaries in 4,23 and 9,35, that are practically identically worded (similarities in italics):

- 4,23 *Καὶ περιῆγεν ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ, διδάσκων ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶν καὶ κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας καὶ θεραπεύων πᾶσαν νόσον καὶ πᾶσαν μαλακίαν ἐν τῷ λαῷ.*
- 9,35 *Καὶ περιῆγεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὰς πόλεις πάσας καὶ τὰς κώμας, διδάσκων ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶν καὶ κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας καὶ θεραπεύων πᾶσαν νόσον καὶ πᾶσαν μαλακίαν.*

In each case, an *imperfectum iterativum* (περιῆγεν) is followed by three participles that shed light on the various facets of Jesus' ministry: to teach, to preach, and to heal. An echo of these summaries is heard in 11,1b: μετέβη ἐκείθεν τοῦ διδάσκειν καὶ κηρύσσειν ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν αὐτῶν. In this case, only Jesus' role as a teacher and preacher is mentioned, and not his role as a healer.

His role as a teacher is concretized in the Sermon on the Mount (4,24–8,1). Jesus' lengthy and uninterrupted monologue (5,3–7,27) is embedded in a narrative framework (4,24–5,2 and 7,28–8,1), in which a number of elements mentioned in the beginning are repeated at the end, but then in reverse order:

- | | | |
|----|------|-----------------------------------|
| a | 4,25 | ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ ὄχλοι πολλοὶ |
| b | 5,1 | ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος |
| c | 5,2 | ἐδίδασκεν |
| c' | 7,29 | ἦν γὰρ διδάσκων |
| b' | 8,1 | καταβάντος δὲ αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄρους |
| a' | 8,1 | ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ ὄχλοι πολλοί |

The role of Jesus as a healer is elaborated in 8,2–9,34, where he performs “deeds of power” (δυνάμεις), that are referred to in 11,20 as being “the deeds of the Messiah”. That he is someone with authority is obvious from his words (7,29) as well as his deeds (8,9; 9,6.8).

Jesus' second sermon, the Missionary Discourse (10,5–42), is preceded by a narrative introduction (9,36–10,4) and ends in 11,1a

with the stereotype formula already applied in 7,28. A number of elements from the narrative introduction to the Sermon on the Mount recur in 9,36-37:

| | | | |
|-----|---|------|--------------------------------|
| 5,1 | ἰδὼν δὲ τοὺς ὄχλους οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ [...] ἐδίδασκεν αὐτοὺς λέγων | 9,36 | ἰδὼν δὲ τοὺς ὄχλους |
| | | 9,37 | τότε λέγει τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ |

Matt 10,1 takes up the summarizing sketch of Jesus' work in 4,23 and 9,35: the twelve disciples are given the power to cast out unclean spirits and to cure every sickness and disease. Remarkably, they are not yet assigned the task of teaching; this does not happen until 28,20 (διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς), when they have heard everything Jesus has to say to them. In 11,1b, the only thing we hear is that Jesus journeys from one town to another in order to teach and proclaim his message.

In the above, 11,2-30 is labelled as a textual unit with a hinge function. This standpoint deserves further explanation. First, I will enter into the proposed demarcation: is 11,2-30 indeed a textual unit?

Matt 11,2-30 is almost entirely made up of direct speech that, with the exception of 11,3 is spoken entirely by Jesus. His words are only interrupted by short narrative sentences (11,7a.20.25a), that indicate to whom the speaker is talking. The coherence within 11,2-30 is also obvious from other phenomena. That 11,2-6 and 11,7-19 belong together, is evident on the grounds of an *inclusio* (11,2: "the deeds of the Messiah"; 11,19: "the deeds of wisdom"). The command given to John's disciples (11,4: "Go ..") is executed in 11,7 ("As they went away .."). Following John's question about Jesus, Jesus himself begins to speak about John. The narrative introduction in 11,7 resembles that of 11,20 (ἤρξατο, followed by an infinitive: λέγειν and ὀνειδίξειν, respectively). The time adjunct in 11,25 links not only 12,1 but also the section preceding 11,25.

And now the query as to the function of 11,2-30. In my opinion, 11,2-30 does not have the character of a new episode in the story that is being related. Rather, the reader is given the impression that the story is momentarily interrupted here for an interim balance. My suggestion that this passage functions as a hinge is based on the presence in the text of retrospective and anticipating elements. First, I will mention a number of retrospective elements.

In 11,2-6, John's followers ask the question whether Jesus is indeed the eschatological bringer of salvation (σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος). The term chosen reminds us of 3,11: ὁ δὲ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος. John allows the question to be asked as a result of news about τὰ ἔργα τοῦ

Χριστοῦ, a syntagm that is a recapitulation of the stories about Jesus' deeds in 8,2–9,34. "Hear" and "see" in 11,4 refer back to the Sermon on the Mount and the series of stories that follow in which Jesus proves in word and in deed that he really is the Messiah. The recital in 11,5 includes allusions to Isaiah (Isa 29,18-19; 35,5-6; 61,1) but, at the same time, it is a generalizing reproduction of individual cases that are described in 8,2–9,34⁽³²⁾. The concluding beatitude in 11,6 reminds us of the beatitudes in 5,3-12. In short: in 11,2-6, Jesus gives an evaluative review of his own ministry in answer to a question presented by John.

In 11,7-19, Jesus in turn asks a question about John, that he answers himself and that he seizes upon for an evaluative review of the Baptist's ministry. The question put three times to the people as to why they went to the desert (11,7.8.9) refers to 3,5 in combination with 3,1. John is not a man dressed in fine clothes (11,8), which fits 3,4 where he is dressed in a cloak made of camel's hair. Jesus' description of John in 11,10 is similar to the way in which John is presented in 3,3 by the narrator (in each case: οὗτός ἐστιν, followed by a quotation from the Scriptures). John's ministry is the last preparation for the coming of Jesus. According to 11,10, he comes ahead of Jesus (πρὸ προσώπου σου and ἔμπροσθέν σου); this corresponds with 3,11 in which it is said of Jesus that he will come after John (ὀπίσω μου). The past is further structured in 11,12-13. In these verses, an attempt is made to differentiate between prediction and fulfilment. The period of fulfilment has begun with the coming of John. Characteristic of this period is that the kingdom has a hard time of it (βιάζεται has a passive meaning: "suffer violence") and that adversaries (βιασταὶ has a negative connotation) try to prevent its growth. The contemporaries of Jesus and John also react in a negative way towards them (11,16-19). Matt 11,20-24 also reviews the events told earlier. That Jesus' powerful deeds in the towns did not lead to conversion relates to the stories about his deeds in 8,2–9,34 and to his call for conversion in 4,17. Capernaum, Jesus' own town (cf. 4,13; 8,5; 9,1), will bear the brunt.

Anticipating elements are to be found in particular in 11,25-30. The time adjunct ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ is mentioned in 11,25 for the first

⁽³²⁾ "The blind receive their sight": cf. 9,27-31; "the lame walk": cf. 9,2-8; "the lepers are cleansed": cf. 8,2-4; "the deaf hear": cf. 9,32-34, where a mute begins to speak; "the dead are raised" cf. 9,18-19.23-26; "the good news is brought to the poor"; cf. "the poor" in 5,3 and "the good news" in 4,23 and 9,35.

time and is repeated in 12,1 and 14,1. That God is the origin of the revelation is confirmed in 16,17. Most important is that, in 11,25-27, there is for the first time a split between those who are impervious to the revelation, and those who are receptive to it. This distinction dominates the chapters to follow, where an explanation is given (e.g. 13,10-17).

The interim balance in 11,2-30 is followed by a lengthy sequence (12,1-16,12), in which the moves of Jesus form a repeatedly recurring refrain (12,15; 14,13; 15,21). In 4,18-11,1, he was especially active in the towns of Galilee (cf. the adjuncts of place in 4,23; 9,35; 11,1), whereas now he spends more and more of his time in uninhabited areas⁽³³⁾.

Already in the first reading, it is apparent that the Parable Discourse is an individual subunit within this lengthy sequence (marked as such by the narrator in 13,53a). This discourse is flanked on two sides by narrative blocks (12,1-50 and 14,1-16,12), both of which start with ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ and which also show many other similarities: Jesus is forced to move due to his increasing conflicts with the Pharisees (mentioned in 12,2.14.24.38 and in 15,1.12; 16,1.6.11-12), whom he typifies as “a wicked and adulterous generation” (12,39.45 and 16,4). He is disturbed by their words (12,25-45), their traditions (15,1-20), and their teaching (16,1-12), and, at their request for a sign, he refers to the sign of Jonah (12,38-39 and 16,1-4); despite the opposition he tirelessly continues to heal the sick (12,9-14.15.22 and 14,14.35-36; 15,21-28.30-31).

That 14,1-16,12 is a coherent subunit is supported by three arguments: a) this section is strongly dominated by words that are related to food⁽³⁴⁾; b) in this part, frequent mention is made of the crossing of the lake (14,13.22-34; 15,39; 16,5); c) there are two retrospections at the end of 16,1-12: 16,9 refers back to the feeding of the five thousand in 14,13-21, and 16,10 to the feeding of the four thousand in 15,29-39.

The sequence thus defined has a concentric structure. Its heart is the Parable Sermon (C), which is surrounded by two short scenes (B: 12,46-50; B': 13,53-58), that have in common that Jesus' mother and

⁽³³⁾ I.e. 12,1: through the grain fields; 12,15: to an unidentified place; 14,13: to a deserted place; 14,23: up the mountain; 14,25ff: on the sea; 15,29: along the Sea of Galilee ... up the mountain (= in the desert, cf. 15,33).

⁽³⁴⁾ Such words are of course unavoidable in the two feeding narratives (14,13-21; 15,29-39), but they can also be found in 15,1-20; 15,21-28; 16,1-12.

his brothers and sisters are mentioned. Around these are again two longer parts (A: 12,1-45; A': 14,1-16,12), in which Jesus is in dispute with the Pharisees.

g) The structure of 17,1-25,46

The second part of the *corpus* (17,1-25,46) exhibits roughly the same pattern as the first part. It also has two long sections (17,1-20,24 and 21,18-25,46), that are linked to one another by a hinge text (21,1-17). In a schematic overview:

| | | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|------------|---------------------|------------|--------------------|-------------|
| 4,18-16,12 | | | 16,13-28 (hinge) | 17,1-25,46 | | |
| 4,18-11,1 | 11,2-30 (hinge) | 12,1-16,12 | | 17,1-20,34 | 21,1-17 (hinge) | 21,18-25,46 |

That 17,1-20,34 is a continuous sequence is determined especially by the new refrain that combines the various topographical information to form a long journey to Jerusalem. The refrain is introduced in 16,21 to return in its most complete form in 17,22-23 and 20,18-19; parts of it are also echoed in 17,9.12 and 20,28. In comparison with 4,18-16,12, Jesus now travels in the opposite direction. This impression is strengthened by the fact that stopping places are mentioned (a mountain, the lake at Capernaum, his house) that were also mentioned when he moved further away from Jerusalem and Judea. As from 19,1, he leaves Galilee and continues his journey through Judea, with Jericho being the last place he visits before arriving in Jerusalem. The journey to Jerusalem is thus divided into two routes (17,1-27 and 19,1-20,34). The first route brings him to Capernaum where he holds one of his lengthy discourses. Summarized:

| | | |
|----|------------|--|
| A | 17,1-27 | The first route: from the district of Caesarea Philippi to Capernaum |
| B | 18,1-35 | Discourse on the mutual relations within the community |
| A' | 19,1-20,34 | The second route: from Capernaum in Galilee to Jericho in Judea |

The journey's destination is reached in 21,1-17. This part is a textual unit, because it has unity of time. In Mt, the entry into Jerusalem and the cleansing of the temple both take place on the same day (in Mark, this covers two days). It is not until 21,17 that Jesus leaves the city to spend the night in Bethany⁽³⁵⁾. The passage also has

⁽³⁵⁾ Cf. GNILKA, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, II, 209: "Man könnte von einem Tag Jesu in Jerusalem sprechen, der durch Einzug und Tempelprotest gekennzeichnet ist".

unity of place, because the adjuncts of place in 21,1.10.12.17 are a continuation of one another that together create the impression of continuous movement. In the first nine verses, Jesus is in the vicinity of Jerusalem, in 21,10 he enters the city, in 21,12 he enters the temple and in 21,17 he leaves the city.

As Jesus reaches his destination in 21,1-17, we could consider this passage to be part of the preceding text. However, because on arrival he immediately undertakes a number of controversial actions in the temple, thus becoming involved in a short debate with the chief priest and scribes, who cross his path again later, we can also consider this passage as an introduction to the sequel. The connection with the preceding block is also clear from the indication of Jesus as the Son of David (in 20,30-31 as well as 21,9). The crowd mentioned in 21,8-10 are not inhabitants of Jerusalem but people who have travelled with Jesus to Jerusalem. They announce to the "whole city" that the man entering Jerusalem is a prophet, that his name is Jesus, and that he comes from Nazareth in Galilee. All this is information from earlier passages in the book. The places named, "the Mount of Olives", "the temple", and "Bethany", show a connection with the sequel; all these locations, entered for the first time in 21,1-17, recur in subsequent passages. In view of all these connections with the preceding text and what follows, we can again typify this passage as a hinge text.

After his arrival in Jerusalem, Jesus continues with the work he had been doing up till then: he heals the sick, debates with his adversaries and instructs his disciples. This is clearly expressed in the discourse he holds on the Mount of Olives (cf. "the mountain" in 5,1), in the presence of his disciples. In the sequence on Jesus' activities in the city, we can discern a clear structure:

| | | |
|-------------|-------------|---|
| 21,18-25,46 | | Jesus is active in Jerusalem |
| A | 21,18-22 | A fig tree withers |
| B | 21,23-23,39 | Debates with adversaries in the temple |
| A' | 24,1-2 | The temple shall be destroyed |
| C | 24,3-25,46 | Discourse: the coming of the Son of Man |

Some explanation is necessary here. The whole block (21,18-25,46) takes place — just as 21,1-17 — on one day (see 21,18; 22,23.46). It is the day after the entry into Jerusalem that is largely taken up with debates in the temple (21,23; 24,1). This lengthy part is framed by 21,18-22 and 24,1-2. The link between these short scenes can be explained as follows. In 21,18-22, Jesus, who is on his way

from Bethany to the temple, causes a fig tree to wither in the presence of his disciples. The tree is full of leaves but carries no fruit. The fig tree is an image of the temple (cf. the cleansing of the temple in 21,12-13 and the announcement of the destruction of the temple complex in 24,1-2).

Jesus culminates his activities in Jerusalem with the Eschatological Discourse. This takes place on the Mount of Olives, opposite the temple. The discourse is directed at his disciples and is about the long period between Jesus' resurrection and his parousia.

*
* *

The last step in my search is to combine the results in a scheme that renders a clear view of the macrostructure of Matthew, the various parts of which I will provide with headings. The result is printed at the end of this article.

What is new about this hypothesis is that it provides a layered image of the structure of Matthew's Gospel. At the first level, the structure is still coarse; at the second and third levels, the structure of the *corpus* (4,18–25,46) is presented gradually in more detail. What is also new is the insight that a number of passages function as hinges. Such a hinge text is linked with both the sequence that precedes it and the one that follows it. The size of these sequences is relatively large at the first level. At the second level, they are smaller and, at the third level, even smaller still.

These two new insights explain why earlier research on the macrostructure of Matthew has led to such diverse results. Too much attention has been paid to rigid caesuras, whilst a typical characteristic of the composition of Matthew is the relatively smooth flow of the story. The various sections of the book partly overlap. In the hinge texts, patterns that have already been set are repeatedly continued whilst, at the same time, new patterns are indicated that are then further developed.

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SUMMARY

The weakness of the proposals concerning the macrostructure of Matthew's Gospel made by Bacon and Kingsbury is that they depart from rigid caesuras, whilst a typical characteristic of the composition of this Gospel is the relatively smooth flow of the story. On the basis of the discovery that the various topographical data are clustered together by means of three refrains we can distinguish three patterns in the travels undertaken by Jesus. This rather coarse structure is further refined with the use of Matera's and Carter's distinction between kernels and satellites. Kernels are better labelled as "hinge texts". The following pericopes belong to this category: 4,12-17; 11,2-30; 16,13-28; 21,1-17; 26,1-16. Each of them marks a turning point in the plot and has a double function: a hinge text is not only fleshed out in the subsequent pericopes but also refers to the preceding block. It is especially these "hinge texts" that underline the continuity of Matthew's narrative and should prevent us from focussing too much on alleged caesuras.

Overview of the macrostructure of Matthew's Gospel

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| <p>1,1-4,11 Overture: Jesus' origin, identity, and mission</p> | <p>4,12-17 Hinge: Jesus' mission begins in Capernaum</p> | <p>4,17-25,46 Corpus: Ministry; five lengthy discourses</p> | <p>26,1-16 Hinge: Jesus is anointed and will be handed over</p> | <p>26,17-28,20 Finale: suffering, death, resurrection; start of the disciples' mission to all nations</p> |
| <p>4,18-16,12 Move away from Jerusalem and Judea</p> <p>4,18-11,1 Calling of the four fishermen; Messiah in word and deed; sending out of the twelve</p> <p>11,2-30 Hinge: review of the work of John and Jesus</p> <p>12,1-16,12 The kingdom, hidden and revealed</p> | | <p>16,13-28 Hinge: the Son of God is a suffering Messiah</p> | <p>17,1-25,46 Journey to Jerusalem and work there</p> <p>17,1-20,34 Journey to Jerusalem to suffer and die there</p> <p>21,1-17 Hinge: Arrival in Jerusalem and first confrontations in the temple</p> <p>21,18-25,46 Jesus is active in Jerusalem</p> | |