Jesus' Resurrection Appearances in 1 Cor 15,5-8 in the Light of the Syntagma ὤφθη + Dative

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Abstract: The aim of the present article is to establish the meaning of ὤφθη + a dative of indirect object in the light of its usage in *koine* Greek in general and in the LXX and related Jewish literature. Such a thorough analysis of the syntagma reveals that it is not very suitable as a proof of the factuality of the appearances of the Risen Christ and *eo ipso* of His resurrection. In the light of the use of the formula in *koine* Greek it seems much more probable that its primary function in the context of 1 Cor 15,5-8 is to announce the salvific dimension of the event as the beginning of eschatological salvation and as the present warranty of the future fulfilment of the resurrection of (all) the dead.

Keywords: Paul, resurrection, appearances, ὤφθη.

In his monograph "Die Auferstehung Jesu" Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, commenting on 1 Cor 15,3ff, observed: „Vier Aussagen folgen einander in dieser Reihenfolge: Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν … ἐτάφη … ἐγήγερται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ … ὤφθη. Dies ὤφθη wiederholt sich dann noch dreimal; darin liegt daß die Reihe der Aussagen in ihm ihren Höhepunkt und ihr Ziel erreicht."[1] The emphatic repetition of ὤφθη followed by a dative of indirect object will be the subject of this presentation. My aim is to establish the meaning of the expression in the light of its usage in *koine* Greek in general, in the LXX and related Jewish literature, and finally in its immediate Pauline context.

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1 K. H. Rengstorf, *Die Auferstehung Jesu. Form, Art und Sinn der urchristlichen Osterbotschaft* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt ³1955), 35. Similarly J. Kremer, *Das älteste Zeugnis von der Auferstehung Christi* (Die Botschaft Gottes. Neutestamentliche Reihe 22; Leipzig: St. Benno-Verlag 1968), 75 ("Die mehrmalige Wiederholung von ὤφθη zeigt überdies an, wie sehr es auf diese Aussage ankommt").

1. ὤφθη + Dative of the Indirect Object in the non-Jewish Hellenistic Literature – Some Linguistic Observations

In Greek literature seeing can be expressed by a whole series of verbs[2]. One of these is ὁράω which in absolute use means 'to see' or 'to look', and with the accusative of direct object its sense is 'to see something' or 'or perceive something'. This verb is particularly irregular: in the present, the imperfect and the perfect tenses it is constructed with the ὁρ-stem, while the aorist passive as well as the future passive are built mainly from the ὀπ-stem[3], and the aorist active from the ἰδ-stem.

The point of interest of the present study is the use of the ὀπ-stem of the verb (the aorist passive and the future passive forms). The electronic database of *Thesaurus Linguae Graece* (TLG "D"), prepared by the University of California (1985), along with the Silver Mountain Software program (TLG Workplace 6.0) which allow one to search the texts contained in the TLG "D" provide an unprecedented opportunity to perform exhaustive background checks for any New Testament word or expression. In our case the strings consisted of any possible aorist and future passive form of ὁράω (ὀπ-stem). The time period covered by the search extends from the 4th century B.C. to the 1st century A.D. Such extension should allow all possible *koine* uses of the verb to be considered and a statistically significant number of occurrences to be taken into account. In our period, there are 744 total occurrences of the aorist and future passive forms of ὁράω, of which 223 occur in Jewish Hellenistic or Christian literature, and the remaining 521 occur outside this corpus. A closer look at these 521 cases yields two significant findings each of which impact on the meaning and function of the combination ὤφθη + dative of the indirect object.

First of all, the *morphologically* passive forms of the verb appear only rarely accompanied by the complement ὑπό with the genitive (8 ×), which rules out the possibility of taking them as straightforward passives[4]. Moreover, the absence

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2   K. Dahn – W. L. Liefeld under the entry "See, Vision, Eye" (*The New International Dictionary of the New Testament Theology* [ed. C. Brown] [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House 1986] III, 511-521) lists 6 verbs. According to J. E. Louw–E. A. Nida, *The Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies ²1989), the semantic field of "See" contains 33 verbs to which one should also add few dozens of their nominal derivatives.

3   One finds also passive by-forms of aorist and perfect constructed from the ὁρ-stem , 23 occurrences in the period of our interest, but they do not change anything in the global picture as long as they do not occur in the construction with the dative of the indirect object.

4   Cf. J. Schlosser, "Vision, Extase et apparition du Ressuscité", *Résurrection. L'après-mort dans le monde ancien et le Nouveau Testament* (eds. O. Mainville – D. Marguerat) (Monde de la Bible 45; Genève: Labor et Fides 2001) 150-151. For the indication of the logical subject as the only real sign of the true passive cf. E. Schwyzer, *Griechische Grammatik II, Syntax und syntaktische Stilistik: Auf der Grundlage von Karl Brugmanns griechischer Grammatik. Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft* (München: Verlag C. H. Beck ⁶2013), 237.

of ὑπό with the genitive indicates that the point of interest in the usage of the verb is not so much its agent (logical subject) but rather the *intrinsic* visibility of the grammatical subject. In other words, when the verb is employed, the question is not who sees/saw somebody or something but who/what is or became manifest. Surprisingly, this observation remains true even in the few exceptional instances where the verb is not only followed by the complement of agent but also where this complement/agent is particularly emphasized inasmuch as those who see/saw are "everybody": ὑπὸ πολλῶν, ὑφ᾽ ἁπάντων, ὑπὸ πάντων, ὑπὸ πλείστων[5]. In all these cases, in fact, the exaggerated number of seers does not serve to make the reality which was seen more factual and better certified but rather to enhance the description of its splendor and intrinsic visibility. From these observations it seems logical to conclude that the usage of the passive forms of our verb is not suitable nor particularly appropriate in situations which seek an ascertainment *de visu* of a fact or a proof that something occurred. In such probative instances, because the precise identity of the one who saw and his/her credibility are of primary importance, it would have been crucial that the witness(es) were clearly mentioned.

The second finding regards the construction where the aorist/future passive form of the verb is followed by the dative of an indirect object. It is not very frequent in the corpus of the non-Jewish Hellenistic literature (in the TLG "D" collection it occurs only 33 times). However, even if infrequent, the expression is employed by some authors who are well known both for their grammatical competence (Dionysius Trax[6], Carystius[7], Sosibius of Laconia[8]) and literary excellence (Demosthenes[9], Chrisippus[10], Clearchus[11], Palaephatus[12], Dionysius of Halicarnassus[13] and especially Plutarch[14] and Arrian of Nicomedia[15]). This calls into question the opinion that such a construction represents something unnatural in Greek and, therefore, has to be a rough (and possibly erroneous) translation

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5   Respectively: Aristoteles, *Fragmenta varia* 5.30.191.26; Demosthenes, *Or* 15 4.3; Dionysius Halicarnassensis, *Antiq Rom* 11.39.2.4 and 11.39.6.1.

6   *Fragmenta* 58.1.

7   *Fragmenta* 10.18.

8   *Fragmenta* 11.5.

9   *Ep* 4.11.15.

10   *Fragmenta logica et physica* 346.4.

11   *Fragmenta* 8.3.

12   *De incredibilibus* 27.12 and 13.

13   *Antiq Rom* 1.70.2.8.

14   *Pel* 30.3.2; *Sert* 22.11.2; *Agis* 53.2.1; *Mar* 5.4.2; *Pomp* 42.6.4; *Alc* 32.1.2; *Cor* 3.5.2; *Pyrrh* 2.3.4; *Cic* 55.5.5; *Galb* 15.4.3; *De fortuna Romanorum* 323.C.11; *De Alexandri magni fortuna aut virtute* 330.B.6; *De sera numinis vindicta* 564.F.2 and 565.E.11.

15   *Ana* 3.21.10.7 and 4.19.5.4.

of a Hebrew idiom[16]. Its occurrence in the works of distinguished Greek authors does not mean, however, that the expression had been simply borrowed by the Jewish Hellenistic writers from non-Jewish sources. In fact, there are sufficient reasons to recognize the genuinely Hebrew origin of the construction in the Jewish Greek texts. Its presence in non-Jewish Greek sources, even if infrequent, guarantees, however, at least that the LXX and generally Jewish usage was not only grammatically correct and perfectly understandable in the entire Hellenistic world but also that it had literary precedence in a non-Jewish environment[17].

2. ὤφθη + Dative of the Indirect Object in the LXX and Related Jewish Literature

First of all let us note that the presence of the stem ὀπ- in the LXX and the related Jewish literature is quite impressive, especially if one takes into account the so called relative frequency, i.e., the number of instances in relation to the volume of the entire corpus. There are 196 occurrences in the LXX, writings of Philo, the Old Testament Greek Pseudepigrapha and in the writings of Josephus (respectively: 112 + 32 + 16 + 36), against 521 occurrences within the entire bulk of non-Jewish writings in the centuries IV B.C. – I A.D. The Jewish usage follows the pattern of the non-Jewish literature inasmuch as the passive forms are, with one exception, never followed by the complement ὑπό, the exception being one case in Josephus (Ant 7:298). This exception simply confirms also for Jewish sources the rule we discovered studying the Hellenistic usage of the verb, namely, that its passive forms are not used to confirm the factuality of an event seen nor to confirm the activity of the one who saw it. In this specific case (Ant 7:298), the aorist passive of ὁράω underscores the simple fact that the grammatical subject of the verb (king David) did not remain hidden but happened to be detected and, therefore, was exposed to mortal danger.[18]

The aorist passive of ὁράο followed by a dative of the indirect object (and a few times by its prepositional equivalent) occurs about 50 times in the LXX,

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16   About "un hébraisme" in the LXX speaks A. Pelletier, "Les apparitions du Ressuscité en terms de la Septante", *Bib*. 51 (1970) 76-77.

17   The expression appears even in the classical Greek, see, e.g., Euripides, *Iphigenia at Aulis* 678. Pace Kremer (*Das älteste Zeugnis*, 76) who talks about "die im klassichen Griechisch ungebräuliche Form".

18   As the formulation itself indicates: γενόμενος ἔκλυτος ὤφθη ὑπό τινος τῶν πολεμίων ("When he [David] was quite tired out, he was seen by one of the enemy … who turned back, and ran violently to slay their enemy's king; but Abishai, Joab's brother, appeared suddenly, and protected the king with his shield, as he lay down, and slew the enemy").

12 times in Philo, 7 times in Josephus and 6 times in the Old Testament Greek Pseudoepigrapha[19]. The expression occurs in different contexts, with different subjects and different indirect objects. On the one hand, the syntagma can have merely secular connotations and refers to a human action within an ordinary life: somebody makes oneself present unto another[20] or unto God[21]. It even indicates things which should not be shown to someone[22]. On the other hand, the expression may also refer to the realities which belong to the realm of God and which make themselves visible to somebody: angels (Exod 3,2; Jgd 6:12; 13:3.21), face (Exod 33:23), glory (Lev 9:23; Num 16:19; 17:7; 20:6; Isa 60:2), a magnificently caparisoned horse (2 Macc 3:25) and especially and most frequently God himself[23].

A closer analysis of the last case (God who makes himself seen to somebody) permits the following observations[24]:

1. None of the texts where the construction occurs give detailed descriptions of God's appearances. The information is reduced to what is strictly necessary: who, to whom and the mere action: "He appeared". Only the appearance in 1 Kgs 3:5 (to Solomon in Gibeon) is somehow elaborated, but it is also the only one which is clearly classified as a dream (καὶ ὤφθη κύριος τῷ Σαλωμων ἐν ὕπνῳ τὴν νύκτα).

2. Very often the mention of God's appearance goes along with a reference to His word which encourages, entrusts with a mission or presents requirements. However, one finds also many occurrences where only the fact of God's being seen is mentioned so that His appearance constitutes the unique content of the entire event.[25] For this reason it seems too reductive to interpret our expression merely as an introductory formula to the main statement which would have as its subject God's revelation[26]. God's appearance has to have a sense and a value in itself and such a value is only enhanced when the context in-

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19   A comprehensive analysis of ὤφθη in the LXX and in the writings of Philo and Josephus one finds in B. Chirayath, *Paul's Exceptional Easter-Experience. An Exegetical-Theological Study of 1 Cor 15,8 in Relation to Acts 9,3-19; 22,6-21; 26,12-18* (Città del Vaticano: Urbaniana University Press 2002) 74-84.

20   For example: Gen 46:29; Exod 10:28; Lev 13:7; 1 Kgs 3:16; 1 Macc 9:27.

21   E.g., "all thy males shall appear before the Lord" (Exod 23:17; 34:23; Deut 16:16).

22   Unleavened bread or leaven (Exod 13:7; Deut 16:4), "a disgrace of a matter" (Deut 23:15: οὐκ ὀφθήσεται ἐν σοὶ ἀσχημοσύνη πράγματος).

23   Gen 12:7; 16:13; 17:1; 18:1; 26:2.24; 31:13 (LXX); 35:1.9; 46:29; 48:3; Exod 6:3; Lev 9:4; 1 Kgs 3:5; 9:2; 11:9; 2 Chr 1:7; 3:1; 7:12; Jer 38:3. One finds also the construction with the perfect tense in Exod 3:16; 4;1.5 and Judg 13:10.

24   We elaborate here on some remarks presented in Schlosser, "Vision, Extase et apparition du Ressuscité", 149.

25   Gen 18:1; 31:13; 35:1; Exo 4:.5; 6:3; Lev 9:4; Jer 38:3.

26   The classical opinion of W. Michaelis, "ὁράω", *TDNT* V, 315-382, especially 333 and 358-361.

dicates that God manifests Himself in order to direct, encourage, console, heal… . H. Kessler is perfectly right when he calls such appearances "sich manifestierende Heilgegenwart Gottes", i.e., salvific presence of God who makes himself manifest[27].

3. A glance at the occurrences of the Greek text in the *Hebrew Masoretic and Septuagint Parallel* by E. Tov – F. Polak shows that our syntagma coincides completely with the corresponding Hebrew text: subject + the Niphal of the verb *ra'ah* and preposition *el* followed by proper name/pronoun/noun of the indirect object[28]. This correspondence is a strong indication that the LXX expression depends on the Hebrew original and does not derive from Hellenistic Judaism[29]. This dependence on the Hebrew original requires that the expression be interpreted in the light of the Hebrew Bible and not simply within the general grammar of *koine*. In practical terms it means that the expression has to be interpreted as one of those cases where Niphal is not only reflexive but also factitive (Hiphil). Otherwise one runs the risk of not paying due attention to all the potentialities of the construction. In fact, understood in the paradigmatic case of Gen 12:7 as reflexive alone ("He manifested himself") the expression would lose the nuance of God's action as causative of Abraham's seeing. When reduced to a simple passive ("He was seen"), it would describe Abraham's seeing as the outcome of his own faculties exclusive of God's intervention. Philo in his comment in *De Abrahamo*, 79-80 explains the construction and its above mentioned double nature with perfect clarity: "But he, by reason of his love for mankind, did not reject the soul which came to him, but went forward to meet it, and showed to it his own nature as far as it was possible that he who was looking at it could see it. For which reason it is said, not that the wise man saw God but that God appeared to the wise man (οὐχ ὅτι ὁ σοφὸς εἶδε θεόν, ἀλλ' ὅτι "ὁ θεὸς ὤφθη" τῷ σοφῷ); for it was impossible for anyone to comprehend by his own unassisted power the true living God, unless he himself displayed and revealed himself to him."

4. In a portion of the texts the expression is used also in reference to a future or even better eschatological appearance of God himself (Ps 83,8; 101:17) or of His glory (Isa 40:5; 60:2; 2 Macc 2:8)[30]. Of primary importance in all these

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27   See H. Kessler, *Sucht den Lebenden nicht bei den Toten. Die Auferstehung Jesu Christi* (München: Topos plus ²2011), 150s.

28   Pelletier, "Les apparitions du Ressuscité", 76, rightly speaks about meticulous fidelity of translation, which preserves even the order of the words and their number. For similar conclusions see also A. Vögtle, *Wie kam es zum Osterglauben* (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag 1975) 38; P. Hoffmann, "Auferstehung Jesu Christi", *TRE* IV, 492-493, and quite recently Schlosser, "Vision, Extase et apparition du Ressuscité", 149.

29   For the technical character of the expression see M. Harle (ed.), *La Bible d'Alexandrie. I. La Genèse* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf 1986) 53-54.

30   The same situation one finds expressed also with active form of the verb: Isa 33:10-11; 35:2; 66:18.

occurrences is the fact that such a visible (glorious) presence of God is the only event promised for the last times which automatically qualifies God's final appearance as a salvific event, or even better, as *the* form of final salvation. The text of 2 Macc 2:8 aligns the eschatological appearances of God with His appearances of the Exodus story and in the times of David and Solomon. Such an alignment permits the attribution of the salvific nuances also to all God's appearances described by the formula ὤφθη + dative of the indirect object, such as we discussed in point 2, and especially those instances where the appearance stands alone.

5. The formula, ὤφθη + dative of the indirect object is limited to the accounts of theophanies to the Patriarchs, to Moses and to the Desert generation, to the period of David and Samuel and finally (as a promise) to the final days. Significantly, it does not occur in accounts of the prophetic visions. A natural conclusion to draw from such an absence might be that there is a kind of qualitative difference between God's appearances and prophetic visions of Him[31].

Let us consider now what light the observations above might throw on the expression as it occurs in the New Testament, and especially in the text of 1 Cor 15, 5-8.

3. ὤφθη + Dative of the Indirect Object in 1 Cor 15: 5-8

The usual interpretation of the literary composition of the pre-Pauline proclamation in 1 Cor 15 is as follows:

> The two main parallel affirmations are (a) 'Christ died' and (b) 'he was raised.' Each is modified by a prep. phrase, 'for our sins' and 'on the third day,' and each has the addition, 'according to the Scriptures.' Each affirmation is concluded further with a short parallel assertion (a′) 'he was buried' and (b′) 'he appeared to Cephas.' The words *kai hoti* may be Pauline additions to emphasize the individual items, as Murphy-O'Connor has argued ('Tradition,' 583–84); and he is also correct in insisting that *Kēphā* belongs with *ōphthē* as part of the original formula[32].

The corresponding logic of this pre-Pauline material, according to the majority, could be summarized along these lines:

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31   For more about it see H.-W. Bartsch, "Inhalt und Funktion des urchristlichen Osterglaubens", *NTS* 26 (1980) 180-196, in particular 184. The only exception to the rule is represented by Jer 38:3. The author convincingly explains it as a textual-critical problem (p. 189).

32   J. A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 32; New Haven – London: Yale University Press 2008) 541.

> L'énumération s'accompagne d'une sorte de pondération: mort et résurrection apparaissent comme les faits de base confirmés respectivement par la mise au tombeau et par les apparitions. Quand on se place dans l'optique de la connaissance et de la communications, il convient de renverser l'ordre des facteurs : les apparitions viennent d'abordé et ce sont elles qui permettent à témoin de conclure à la réalité de la résurrection[33].

I am not going to discuss here the possible meaning of pre-Pauline material even if our philological discoveries would offer some criticism to the above reconstruction. For the purpose of this paper the point is that this pre-Pauline material is a part of a Pauline exposition, and that in this exposition what in some reconstructed original context could seem to be secondary and only subservient (appearance to Cephas only as an index of the factuality of the main event represented by Christ's resurrection) is in fact of the primary importance. In fact, Christ's death, burial and resurrection are mentioned only once, His appearance, instead, is not only placed as the last of the series and, therefore, in an already emphatic position, but it is the only element which will be repeated four times in the immediately following lines. To repeat the observation with which we started: "die Reihe der Aussagen in ihm ihren Höhepunkt und ihr Ziel erreicht."

Additional doubts about the commonly accepted literary organization of this Pauline text and its argumentative logic arise when one notices that instead of the parallelism of the type A ("Christ died") A' ("he was buried") and B ("he was raised") B' ("he appeared to Cephas"), the strictly literary correspondences favor rather an antithetic parallelism of the type A ("Christ died"), B ("he was buried"), A' ("he was raised"), B' ("he appeared to Cephas"):

ὅτι Χριστὸς	ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν *κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς*	A
καὶ ὅτι	ἐτάφη	B
καὶ ὅτι	ἐγήγερται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ *κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς*	A'
καὶ ὅτι	ὤφθη Κηφᾷ εἶτα τοῖς δώδεκα·	B'

According to this latter arrangement the final ὤφθη should be read against ἐτάφη[34], and not as a hypothetical index of the factuality of the event of Christ's resurrection. From this point of view it is also extremely significant that the event of resurrection is expressed in the perfect form of the verb (ἐγήγερται) which clearly points out that Paul's interest here is not so much its historicity but that he

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33   For many Schlosser, "Vision, Extase et apparition du Ressuscité", 134.

34   Such a probability was already seen by G. Schneider, "θάπτω", *EDNT*, II, 134: "A correspondence, now antithetical, probably also exists between ἐτάφη and ὤφθη." He does not notice, unfortunately, the same antithetical correspondence between ἀπέθανεν and ἐγήγερται and the common element κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς which strongly links the first ("Christ died") and the third ("he was raised") affirmation together.

"sets forth with the utmost possible emphasis the abiding results of the event"[35]. In fact, the antithetical correspondence between ἐτάφη and ὤφθη calls attention to the fact that in the appearance of the One who was buried and in His presence with the fullness of power, His concealment, His absence and His extreme weakness have been overcome[36].

The conclusion that Paul did not intend either primarily or even less exclusively to "prove" the factuality of Christ's resurrection by listing the beneficiaries of His appearances is completely consistent with the linguistic survey made above: in general, the construction is not interested in the identity of witnesses as proofs of appearances or in demonstrations of factuality; and this is specifically borne out in OT "appearance" texts employing the technical expression ὤφθη + dative of the indirect object. Moreover, whether the expression occurred in reference to secular objects or in reference to God and to His realm, the construction was never used to prove the factuality of events or of God's (or angels') existence. God's existence was self-evident both to the extradiegetic Holy writer and to any intradiegetic beneficiary of the appearances. The descriptions of God's appearances are, therefore, not apologetic but expressive of His (or his messenger's) salvific intervention, or they represent and express such a salvific action. Ultimately God's appearance is not only salvific but also represents the final shape of salvation.

If Paul in his usage of the expression ὤφθη + dative of the indirect object did not intend primarily to prove the factuality of the resurrection, what could his intention be? My view is that the Apostle stresses the appearances because he understands them not so much as an argument in support of the daß of Christ's resurrection but as clear indication of its *pro nobis*, i.e., of the salvific dimension of this event. In support of this interpretation is not only the semantic of the expression ὤφθη + dative of the indirect object in the LXX and related Jewish Hellenistic literature, but also the immediate Pauline context, and in particular Paul's own testimony that ἔσχατον δὲ πάντων ὡσπερεὶ τῷ ἐκτρώματι ὤφθη

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35   C. F. D. Moule, An *Idiom Book of the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1953) 15. See also M. Zerwick, *Biblical Greek. Illustrated by Examples* (Roma: Pontificio Istituto Biblico 1963) 91 (287): "What Christ' resurrection was for Paul, namely the beginning, once and for all, of the new αἰών, which is ours, is well illustrated by his use of the perfect along with three aorist in 1 Cor 15, 3: « Christ died (ἀπέθανεν) for our sins … and was buried (ἐτάφη) and is risen (ἐγήγερται — but English has to use past instead of the perfect on account of the following « on the third day ») … and He appeared (ὤφθη) to Cephas »."

36   Along similar lines see already M. Hengel, "Das Begräbnis Jesu bei Paulus und die leibliche Auferstehung aus dem Grabe", *Auferstehung – Resurrection. The Fourth Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium: Resurrection, Transfiguration and Exaltation in Old Testament, Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (eds. F. Avemarie – H. Lichtenberger) (WUNT II/135; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2004) 136-138.

κἀμοί (v. 8). I have presented elsewhere[37] a new understanding of the metaphor of miscarriage (ἔκτρωμα) in 1 Cor 15:8: a being not only born dead and/or incapable of living, but also deadly. In this double meaning this term describes the pre-Christian past of the Apostle as both lacking life (as being without Christ) and lethal (as a persecutor of the church of God). The metaphor at the same time constitutes the starting point of the transformation which occurred in Paul provoked by the appearance of the Risen One: from being dead to alive, and from causing death to being a life-giver (vv. 9-10). Such a metamorphosis is presented by the Apostle as a tangible proof of the power of the Risen One, who even now transforms the lives of his own, and *eo ipso* it is also the guarantee of final resurrection, when the good work already begun will be brought to its completion (cf. Phil 1:6). With his own itinerary Paul exemplifies the salvific character of Christ's appearance to him and thereby gives to all his readers a hint of how to interpret all the other appearances he mentioned earlier. All of them are in their own way, "sich manifesterende Heilgegenwart Gottes".

The Greek construction examined in this study yields no answer to the *vexata quaestio* of the what kind of seeing was involved in the case of the appearances of the Risen Christ. Our initial semantic analyses of the use of the passive forms of ὁράω have shown that it can be used for (1) ordinary seeing of material object and (2) for a real and objective visualizing of supernatural beings, normally invisible, made possible for the seer because of divine enablement, or even for (3) a kind of a vision that is clearly intellectual. The precise nature of the seeing is each time decided by the convictions of the one who tells the stories and does not have much to do with the semantics of the expression itself. However, if it is true that the use of ὤφθη does not require that the sense be that of normal vision, the normal vision, is not ruled out either[38]. The expression as such covers a whole range of visual phenomena and from a linguistic point of view one is not entitled to say anything more nor less than that. Let me, however, add that for non-linguistic reasons in the Pauline use of the expression at least the appearance to 'more than five hundred' (1 Cor 16:6) must refer to something close to normal vision, even if enabled by God. Otherwise, we would have to do with a synchronized ecstasy, rightly dismissed by R. Brown[39].

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37   A. Gieniusz, "'As a Miscarriage'. The Meaning and Function of the Metaphor in 1 Cor 15:1-11 in Light of Num 12:12 (LXX)", *The Biblical Annals* 3 (2013) 93-107.

38   See the similar conclusions of Chirayath, *Paul's Exceptional Easter-Experience*, 90-92.

39   R. Brown, *The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus* (New York: Paulist Press 1973) 91. Similarly Schlosser, "Vision, Extase et apparition du Ressuscité", 159.

4. Conclusion

Rudolf Bultmann in his famous "Kerygma und Mythos" called the first eleven verses of 1 Cor 15 the "fatal" piece of Paul's argumentation because of his attempt to prove the miracle of the resurrection as a historical event by means of a list of eye-witnesses[40]. The present study's proposals release the Apostle to the Nations from any such accusation. Obviously, it does not deny that for Paul the factuality of Christ's resurrection was self-evident and of fundamental importance (cf. 1 Cor 15:14-17). It only postulates that in composing the exceptionally long and notable list of beneficiaries of Christ's appearances, he does not aim at offering a proof of His resurrection but rather underscores the salvific dimension of the event, announces the beginning of eschatological salvation and offers the warranty of the future fulfilment in the resurrection of (all) the dead.

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[40]   R. Bultmann, *Kerygma und Mythos. Ein theologisches Gespräch* (Hamburg: H. Reich 1951) 44s ("Freilich auch Paulus selbst will einmal das Wunder der Auferstehung durch Aufzählung der Augenzeugen als historisches Ereignis sicherstellen (1.Kor.15,3-8). Wie fatal diese Argumentation ist, zeigt wider Willen Karl Barth, indem er den eigentlichen Sinn der paulinischen Aussagen weginterpretiert").

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