

Aleksandra Brand, [Aleksandra.Brand@rub.de](mailto:Aleksandra.Brand@rub.de)  
Ruhr-Universität Bochum  
Lehrstuhl für Neues Testament

### The glorified value of two lepta – the role of money in Mk 12,41-44

The New Testament texts offer a decidedly positive position on a sacrifice in the temple contrasts with the criticism of the temple offering in Mk 12:41-42/Lk 21:1-4. Temple offering becomes precisely the place of worship, as a medium to build a relationship with God. In her action as a pious and self-determined person who is also able to act out of her poverty and participate in cultic life, it's a widows offer of two Lepta which became a marker of determining values in the teaching of Jesus: By appreciating the value of her two lepta as so much higher, Jesus not only includes her, but even places her as above the others.

It is recognizable that the money dimension plays a decisive narrative role and comes together with a very sensitive portrayal of people on the margins of society (Theißen, 2003). The important aspect with regard to the motif of money, is that the poor widow *has* savings that she can invest and contribute to the system of temple sacrifice. In a scientific tradition where pauperism was dominant as the catchword for social criticism in the Old and New Testaments (Stegemann/Stegemann, 1997; Koch, 2014), this fact is extremely remarkable.

Poverty can paralyze and make inactive, and widows are part of the personae miserae (Stol, 2016). But: Participation in economic life, which is an elementary part of life even for the marginalized group of widows in ancient times is one way of escaping invisibility and way out of injustice. The gospels of Mark and Luke gives a theological argumentation (Becker: 2019), which leads to an ethical orientation.

The core of this approach is the interpretation of the dimension of the economical doing with money, which reverses value relations, but works with the medium, which belongs to the reality of the people. It tries to give an answer to the question, which is lifting up to newest research (Becker, 2019): *Why* is the gift of the widow so much more than the sacrifice of the others (see Mk 12,43)?