

The Gospel of Matthew

Edited by
JOSEPH VERHEYDEN,
JENS SCHRÖTER,
and DAVID C. SIM

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Studies on Its Composition,
Theology, and Early Reception

Edited by

Joseph Verheyden, Jens Schröter,
and David C. Sim

Mohr Siebeck

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Preface

The better part of the essays in this volume were originally presented at a colloquium held at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at KU Leuven from 3–5 December, 2018. The colloquium was linked to an international research project studying texts and traditions from the perspective of identity creation that is coordinated by colleagues from Australian Catholic University (ACU), Durham University and KU Leuven (J. Verheyden).

The editors wish to acknowledge the substantial financial support they received from ACU in organising the colloquium.

Joseph Verheyden
Jens Schröter
David Sim

Abbreviations

ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BiTS	Biblical Tools and Studies
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
EKK	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar
ETL	Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses
EvT	Evangelische Theologie
EWNT	Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament
FzB	Forschung zur Bibel
HeyJ	The Heythrop Journal
HTKAT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
ICC	International Critical Commentary
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JSHJ	Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus
JSNT	Journal for the Study of the New Testament
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament. Supplement Series
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
NICNT	The New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	The New International Greek Testament Commentary
NT.S	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NTA.NF	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen. Neue Folge
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTS	New Testament Studies
RGG	Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies. Monograph Series
TLZ	Theologische Literaturzeitung
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZKT	Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche

Introduction

JOSEPH VERHEYDEN, JENS SCHRÖTER, AND DAVID C. SIM

The Gospel of Matthew is placed first in the canon of the New Testament part of the Christian Bible. For that reason, it has traditionally been given a special place among the gospels. The fact that it was, from early on, attributed to one of the apostles obviously contributed to its significance. The fact that it contains quite a lot of material that is not found in the Gospel of Mark, its commonly accepted source, added to its importance. It soon became the gospel that was apparently most widely circulated and received, and the one that for a long time was thought to be the oldest gospel. All of this helped to promote Matthew's gospel to a status that it has never lost throughout the history of its interpretation, even though its place among the gospels has changed over time.

The present volume offers a collection of essays on the importance of Matthew's gospel and the special place it takes among the canonical gospels from the perspective of what is characteristically or distinctively "Matthean" about it. This common focus provides ample occasions for interesting analyses of core aspects of Matthew's composition technique, his theology, and his reception in mainstream Christianity. At the same time, it tries to throw light on questions of a broader character with regard to the composition history of the gospels in the formative years of Christianity, the strategies an author can use to create distinction, and the selection process that seems to have played in the reception history of these gospels. This is done along three lines of research, each of them with its own long history not devoid of important developments. The first line is that of Matthew's use of his sources and his place in the genealogy of the gospels. Matthew has long been considered the oldest gospel, but in modern scholarship it has gradually been moved to a middle position between Mark and Luke, or at least to a position after Mark. Most recently several scholars have even defended the view that Matthew's is the last of the three synoptic gospels, tributary to the two that preceded it. These developments clearly have important consequences for assessing the distinctive character of this gospel and its significance among its peers.

Three aspects are addressed in more detail. Christopher Tuckett (Oxford) enters in dialogue with two recent studies that have drawn attention to specific aspects of the Synoptic Problem: Robert Derrenbacher's monograph on *Ancient Compositional Practices and the Synoptic Problem* (2005) and Alan Kirk's *Q in Matthew: Ancient Media, Memory, and Early Scribal Transmission of the Jesus Tradition* (2016). The two have in common that they open up the perspective and invite studying the relationship between the first three gospels involving other aspects than the mere "synoptic look" and use these to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the various synoptic theories that are on the table. The first element is not an uncommon one in much of recent scholarship; the other is not always developed and assessed to its full significance. Derrenbacher has drawn attention to the practical aspects of working with written sources in antiquity. Kirk adds to it the role of memory and memorising in handling and transmitting these sources. Tuckett is sympathetic to both approaches and proposes additional support for Derrenbacher's, but he is slightly more critical for Kirk's, questioning the notion and indeed existence of authoritative Christian writings at this early stage and challenging Kirk on how to explain the differences there clearly are in Matthew's handling of Mark and of Q.

Daniel A. Smith (Huron University, London, ONT) focuses on Matthew's handling of his second source, Q. He argues that the diverse ways in which the evangelist transformed the material, language and interests of Q reveal the value of the source. Smith examines Matthew's at times quite creative redactional tendencies in working with Q material that show his dependence on the source. Among the compositional techniques Matthew uses are modified copying and transposing material and repetition of Q stock phrases and vocabulary, but also imitation of Q phraseology in a Markan context and combining Q with new material. Smith illustrates this from well-chosen case studies.

Florian Wilk (Göttingen) studies Matthew's "third source," his use of Old Testament material, especially in presenting Jesus in the context of Jewish prophetic tradition. Wilk first surveys relevant material relating to John the Baptist, Jesus, and the disciples, offering synopses of Matthew's reworking of Mark or Q material in this respect. He follows up with a survey of how Jesus is presented as citing from Scripture, or referring to it, as part of the message he wishes to convey. This plays a particularly important role in controversies, but it also is used in contexts in which Jesus is said to address his disciples. Matthew presents Jesus as "Ziel und Ende" of the Jewish prophetic tradition in as much as he brings this tradition to fulfilment.

The second line of studies deals with a selection of important theological themes that receive special attention in Matthew's gospel and are there presented in a specific and in part also innovative and distinctive way that goes beyond what the evangelist had found in his sources. The questions to be addressed in this

respect have to do with the context and reasons why Matthew decided to go beyond tradition by adding new material, some of which may have its roots in tradition, but some certainly also stems from his pen and was meant to answer or solve issues that he or his community thought to be vital. This part contains six essays.

Ernst Baasland (Oslo/Stavanger) contributes an essay on Matthew's reworking of the Sermon on the Mount (Jesus "Inaugural speech"). He surveys the role played by Q, Mark, and Sondergut material in Matthew's composition, dwells on the "Jewish" character of the discourse and the source material incorporated in it, and adds a substantial comparison with how Matthew devised his other discourses on the basis of source material. While recognising the uncertainties that remain, Baasland nevertheless concludes quite firmly that Matthew is best not called the "author" of his own discourses, but rather looks more (like something of) a compiler.

Jens Schröter (Berlin) looks for Matthew's place in formative Judaism and Christianity and finds it somewhere in between Mark and the Pharisees ("Mark to his left, the Pharisees to his right"). The gospel basically is the product of a reworking of a source dealing with the message and ministry of Jesus (Mark) and the portrayal of a conflict with Jewish religious circles. Matthew in part rewrites and "corrects" Mark with regard to the status of the law for Jesus and his followers and the importance of a mission outside the Jewish orbit. On the other front he faces criticism, quite ironically, of those who think Jesus poses a danger for maintaining the law. The two fronts are of course connected in their opposite positions, but Matthew promotes a viable way to safely steer his ship through the sandbanks.

Boris Repschinski (Innsbruck) revisits recent scholarship on the vexed question in how far Matthew's gospel is engaged in a confrontation with the ruling political powers. Against the view that Matthew is critical of Rome and utmost vocal about it (see, e.g., W. Carter, D. Sim), Repschinski argues that its evangelist is rather more sceptical about any earthly political power and develops a model in which the notion of power itself is transformed and heavenly power substitutes and discards any sort of earthly power. Matthew is not blind for acts of oppression in this world and the suffering that comes with it, but the answer he provides is not revolt, or not the type of revolt one naturally associates with opposing oppression, but the promotion of a different world order altogether. Jesus preaches distancing and evokes an eschatological future in which God will triumph, but judgment vocabulary is remarkably downplayed when compared with similar passages on the end of times in his sources.

Anders Runesson (Oslo) deals with the same topic but from a different angle. Taking his clue from notorious passages, such as Mt 27:25, Runesson argues that Matthew should not be read as an attempt at excusing Rome at the expense of Jewish authorities (or "Judaism" as a whole) in assigning responsibility for the

trial and death of Jesus. Reading Matthew as reflecting an inner-Jewish conflict in which “the Roman factor” plays a not unimportant role, Runesson finds the context and background of the gospel in a perspective that regards Rome and the highest Jewish religious authorities as mere tools for executing God’s plan, but makes the Pharisees the real cause of Jerusalem’s downfall.

Carolin Ziethe (Heidelberg) studies the role of the title and notion of the “son of David” in Matthew’s gospel in light of the soteriological interests of the evangelist. Presenting Jesus as the Messiah, son of David and son of God, situates him in a complex web of traditions that are partly interconnected, especially also when looked on it from the soteriological connotations that are linked to the titles. As son of David, Jesus is the saviour of Israel, but at the same time he is also the obedient son of the Father. The latter is particularly useful in interpreting the fate of this self-proclaimed son of David. His death, in turn, is a crucial factor in the salvation process that was inaugurated with his ministry. Ziethe emphasises the links between Christology and soteriology, and between these two and the future of Israel as seen by Matthew, which means, a future that includes “the nations” and in this respect is firmly rooted in biblical tradition.

Heiko Wojtkowiak (Göttingen) studies Matthew’s soteriology from an eschatological angle. Matthew stresses the importance of action, understood as living in accordance with God’s will, over confessing in order to be saved, elaborates at great length the topic of judgement, including vivid descriptions of punishment and reward, and gives much emphasis to that of the Kingdom over belonging to the community which does not seem to have such an importance in this respect. Wojtkowiak pays due attention to Matthew’s handling of his source material, all while pointing out that the evangelist keeps focused on his own interests, among them the purpose of reading theological tensions in an eschatological perspective.

The third line of research addressed in this volume is that of the earliest reception of the gospel, which in its own way may help to highlight Matthew’s importance and singularity within the gospel tradition. Indeed, quite contrary to Mark and Luke, whose gospels seem to have gone largely unnoticed, Matthew was massively received from the very beginning and all through the second century. Things did not change fundamentally for him once the other gospels (Luke, John) also started to be received on a broader scale, as Matthew seems to have maintained its place as the favourite of early Christian commentators. The central question that is addressed in this respect is: why Matthew and why so massively and persistently? This is illustrated from three case studies focusing on important figures in the early history of Christianity.

Paul Foster (Edinburgh) concentrates on Ignatius of Antioch. He opens with some methodological reflections on how to discern and identify literary de-

pendence on synoptic traditions (or the gospels), then makes his plea for Ignatius' literary dependence on Matthew's gospel as illustrated from a couple of case studies, before widening the horizon to argue for Ignatius' being familiar with other gospel traditions (though not other gospels). Foster adds two more topics when asking whether Ignatius may have personally been acquainted with Matthew and exploring how the so-called longer recension of Ignatius' letters shows further influence of dependence on the gospel. Foster has put together a solid dossier in favour of Ignatius' familiarity with the gospel as one source of inspiration in composing his letters.

Joseph Verheyden (Leuven) studies evidence for Irenaeus' dependence on Matthew as the leading gospel among the four when it comes to exploiting it for arguments in fighting off opponents. Matthew is one of the four, on equal foot with the others, yet also the one Irenaeus favours in practice when looking for ammunition. Matthew's is the gospel he turns to for formulating the decisive argument in a reasoning. And Matthew's is the source of inspiration for putting together an argument. Verheyden analyses several cases to illustrate how Irenaeus handles this one gospel in a most favourable and respectful way.

Ian Boxall (CUA Washington) focuses on Origen's *Commentary on Matthew*, studying how the work came about, how it builds on the gospel's popularity in the previous century, and how the interpreter finds inspiration and solutions in this gospel for addressing contemporary issues in matters of ecclesiology and biblical exegesis. Boxall also studies through several examples how Origen makes his reading of Matthew fit the horizon and concerns of a gentile-Christian readership, but also how he handles Matthew's parables and interest in apocalyptic scenery, and even how his own radical ideas on asceticism have marked the interpretation of Matthew by later generations.

Together, these three lines of research, or three approaches of Matthew's gospel, even though of necessity selective, may give the reader useful insights in how Matthew handled his sources in a given Synoptic hypothesis, how he dealt with some important theological themes, and how he was received and appreciated by early Christian authors.

Matthew and the Synoptic Problem

CHRISTOPHER TUCKETT

Study of the Synoptic Problem continues to attract a significant level of interest, at least amongst some. It is probably true to say that the most widely held solution to the Synoptic Problem remains some form of the “Two Document Hypothesis” (2DH) with its twin poles of the theory of Markan priority and the existence of some kind of “Q” source. However, both these poles have been questioned, especially in recent years. In the second half of the twentieth century, the theory of Markan priority was radically questioned by advocates of the “Griesbach/Two Gospel hypothesis” (2GH), arguing that Mark was a later conflation of Matthew and Luke.¹ And more recently, the existence of Q has been questioned by advocates of the so-called “Farrer hypothesis” (FH), accepting the theory of Markan priority but arguing for Luke’s knowledge and direct use of Matthew to explain agreements in the “double tradition” (rather than the existence of a Q source).² These two alternatives to the 2DH are perhaps the most influential alternatives to the 2DH over the last 50 years or so:

¹ See especially W.R. FARMER, *The Synoptic Problem: A Critical Appraisal* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), whose publication effectively marked the beginning of the revival of the GH/2GH in the modern era. Further significant publications defending the theory include D.L. DUNGAN, “The Purpose and Provenance of the Gospel of Mark according to the ‘Two-Gospel’ (Owen-Griesbach) Hypothesis,” in W.R. FARMER (ed.), *New Synoptic Studies* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983), 411–40; various essays in D.L. DUNGAN (ed.), *The Interrelations of the Gospels*, BETL 95 (Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peters, 1990); A.J. McNICOL *et al.*, *Beyond the Q Impasse: Luke’s Use of Matthew* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996); D.B. PEABODY *et al.*, *One Gospel from Two: Mark’s Use of Matthew and Luke* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2002); D. NEVILLE, *Mark’s Gospel – Prior or Posterior? A Reappraisal of the Phenomenon of Order*, JSNTSup 222 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002).

² The name given to the theory has varied. In the modern era, the theory is often traced back to the programmatic essay of A. FARRER, “On Dispensing with Q,” in D.E. NINEHAM (ed.), *Studies in the Gospels in Memory of R.H. Lightfoot* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), 57–88; see also M.D. GOULDER, “On Putting Q to the Test,” in *NTS* 24 (1978), 218–34, and *Luke: A New Paradigm*, JSNTSup 20 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989); M.S. GOODACRE, *The Case against Q: Studies in Markan Priority and the Synoptic Problem* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2002); essays in M. GOODACRE and N. PERRIN (eds.), *Questioning Q: A Multi-dimensional Critique* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), and J.C. POIRIER and J. PETERSON (eds.), *Markan Priority without Q*, LNTS 455 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark,

other solutions have been proposed by individuals from time to time but have never gathered so much common support as the 2GH and the FH.³

The effect of these modern challenges to the “standard” solution to the Synoptic Problem has not generally been to change the dominant view; but such challenges have served to highlight the provisional nature of any proposed solutions and to tone down any claims to “certainty” in the field. Further, the modern debates have helped to clarify the way in which all our proposed “solutions” to the Synoptic Problem are “hypotheses,” and represent simplifications and idealisations of what was probably a far more complex situation in reality.⁴

As well as toning down unwarranted claims to certainty about solutions to the Synoptic Problem, more recent studies have focused to an increasing extent on the physical, and social, realities of the production of written texts in the first century as perhaps throwing light on theories of synoptic origins. Such issues are not necessarily entirely new,⁵ but the last 20 years or so have seen an ever-increasing focus on the physical realities of writing and reading, the activity of authors and scribes in using sources (with greater attention perhaps to the ways in which other Greco-Roman authors at the time used sources in writing their

2015); F. B. WATSON, “Q as Hypothesis: A Study in Methodology,” in *NTS* 55 (2009), 397–415, and *Gospel Writing: A Canonical Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013).

³ The list is almost endless! In the modern era, see the work of e.g. Boismard, Gaboury, Rolland; in the slightly earlier period (i.e. the first half of the twentieth century), the Augustinian hypothesis (Mark using Matthew, Luke using Mark and Matthew) was defended by a number of (mostly Roman Catholic) scholars, perhaps under the influence of pressure from Pontifical Biblical Commission. In the most recent period, one might mention authors advocating some form of Matthean posteriority: see R. K. MACEWEN, *Matthean Posteriority: An Exploration of Matthew’s Use of Mark and Luke as a Solution to the Synoptic Problem*, *LNTS* 501 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015); A. GARROW, “Streeter’s ‘Other’ Synoptic Solution: The Matthew Conflator Hypothesis,” in *NTS* 62 (2016), 207–26, and “An Extant Instance of ‘Q,’” in *NTS* 62 (2016), 398–417; also the defence of a “Proto-Mark” theory by D. BURKETT, *Rethinking the Gospel Sources* (London/New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), and *The Case for Proto-Mark*, *WUNT* 300 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018).

⁴ To take one example, all the main “solutions” to the Synoptic Problem today posit the use of one gospel by two other evangelists (for the 2DH and the FH, Mark was used by Matthew and Luke; for the 2GH, Matthew was used by Luke and Mark). For the purposes of critical analysis and debate, it is almost always assumed that the earlier source used by both later writers was effectively the same text. Yet it seems highly unlikely that the later two writers will have had access to the same *manuscript* of the earlier source: almost certainly they will have used different manuscripts. And in a pre-printing era, it is inevitable that the text will have been changed in any copying process, so that the exact text of two manuscripts will never be identical. On the hypothesis that, say, Matthew and Luke used Mark, with a presumption (usually unstated) that it was exactly the *same* textual version of Mark used by both, is clearly a simplification of what was originally a more complex situation. On “hypotheses” as “solutions” to the Synoptic Problem, see further J. S. KLOPPENBORG, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 50–4: “hypotheses are heuristic models intended to aid comprehension and discovery; they do not replicate reality” (51).

⁵ See e.g. W. SANDAY, “The Conditions under Which the Gospels Were Written, and Their Bearing upon Some Difficulties of the Synoptic Problem,” in *Id.* (ed.), *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1911), 3–26.

own works), as well as cognizance taken of the importance of memory in the writing process. For many, consideration of these issues have focused attention on some aspects of the Synoptic Problem very acutely and raised serious questions about the viability, or plausibility, of various source theories. Indeed, such considerations have thrown up questions about almost all current source theories and have shown us that no theory is immune from difficulties, problems and potential anomalies.

It is however striking that, in many modern discussions of the Synoptic Problem, the Gospel of Matthew has often *not* been the prime focus of attention.⁶ In discussions of the 2DH, the focus has been, as often as not, on Mark, with attempts to show how Mark's contents and order are best explained by being the first gospel to be written and then used as a source by Matthew and Luke. Matthew does enter in this discussion in part, perhaps to consider the different order of Markan materials in the first half of the gospel; but this is generally felt to be reasonably satisfactorily explained (albeit in general terms) by Matthew's desire to create his five teaching blocks thematically arranged (Matthew 5–7, 10, 13, 18, 24–5) and by a general policy of being willing to change the order of his sources.⁷ More details about Matthew's rearrangement (e.g. in Matthew 8–9) are debated and disputed, but these are rarely felt to challenge the 2DH itself (though see below). For the "double tradition" material, the focus of attention has often been on Luke, and the alleged difficulty of explaining Luke's agreements with Matthew on the basis of Luke using Matthew alone (hence leading to the invoking of a Q source to explain the Matthew–Luke agreements). For whatever reason, the possibility that Matthew might have used Luke is very often summarily dismissed from any serious consideration at the outset of any argument.⁸

For the 2GH, the prime attention in the earlier years of its modern revival (in the work of Farmer and others) was again on the text of Mark, seeking to show that Mark could – and/or should – be explained as a secondary conflation of Matthew and Luke.⁹ In subsequent studies, more work was done on Luke, seeking to show that Luke's agreements with Matthew could and should be seen as a direct reworking of Matthew alone.¹⁰ But Matthew, as the putative first gospel in the sequence, was then left on its own and its own possible sources left unexplored (in one way quite rightly, since the Synoptic Problem seeks to explain the relationships between the three synoptic gospels, and hence to clarify the histo-

⁶ The recent book of Alan Kirk is one notable exception: see below.

⁷ On the 2DH, it is generally assumed that Luke preserves the order of Q mostly unchanged, and Matthew has reordered Q.

⁸ Why this should be so is not always clear (at least to me!). But see now more recent advocates of a possible Matthean posteriority paradigm (MacEwen and Garrow as in n. 3 above).

⁹ This was certainly the case in the work of Farmer and Dungan in the early days of the modern defences of the 2GH.

¹⁰ See e.g. the volume by McNICOL *et al.*, *Beyond the Q Impasse*.

ry of the tradition *after* the first gospel has been written).¹¹ Similarly, most modern advocates of the FH in arguing against the existence of Q, have focused on Luke's gospel, seeking to explain Luke's text as derived from Mark and Matthew; any discussion of Matthew has often been sidelined, it being simply assumed that Markan priority explains the Mark–Matthew agreements and any other possible sources which Matthew might have used are irrelevant to the study of the Synoptic Problem as such sources *ex hypothesi* do not relate directly to the Matthew–Luke agreements.¹²

However, Matthew has been to the forefront of discussion in relation to two recent discussions of the Synoptic problem with claims that Matthew's text could pose serious difficulties for the 2DH (especially Markan priority) – perhaps ironically both in the work of scholars who are staunch advocates of the 2DH: Robert Derrenbacher and Alan Kirk.

I. Derrenbacher

Robert Derrenbacher's important monograph was first published in 2005, and he has since written further essays.¹³ His work has above all highlighted the importance of taking note of how other ancient writers used sources and combined them into a new narrative,¹⁴ as well as focusing on the physical logistics of

¹¹ Though one may note here the way in which Farmer argued that Matthew may be the earliest gospel by virtue of the fact that it is the most "Jewish," and that later gospels reflected the way in which Christianity became less Jewish as the movement spread outside Palestine: see FARMER, *Synoptic Problem*, 227–8; the claim that Matthew is the most "Jewish" of the gospels and also best represents the viewpoint of the "historical" (and "authentic"!) Jesus, is developed further in W. R. FARMER, *The Gospel of Jesus. The Pastoral Relevance of the Synoptic Problem* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1994). Whether one can posit such a neat, unilinear development in the course of Christianity (and by derivation also in the chronological sequence of the canonical gospels) is at the very least debatable!

¹² Needless to say, there has been very considerable variation by advocates of the FH on the proposed sources lying behind Matthew, ranging e. g. from Goulder (advocating virtually no direct sources at all, the non-Markan material in Matthew being due to Matthew's creativity based on his knowledge and use of Jewish scripture) to Watson (advocating possible extensive sources available to, and used by, Matthew for a lot of his non-Markan material).

¹³ See R. A. DERRENBACHER, *Ancient Compositional Practices and the Synoptic Problem*, BETL 186 (Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 2005), and his further essays, including "The External and Psychological Conditions under which the Synoptic Gospels Were Written: Ancient Compositional Practices and the Synoptic Problem," in P. FOSTER, A. GREGORY, J. S. KLOPPENBORG, J. VERHEYDEN (eds.), *New Studies in the Synoptic Problem: Oxford Conference, April 2008. Essays in Honour of Christopher M. Tuckett*, BETL 239 (Leuven/Paris/Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2011), 435–57, and "Ancient Literacy, Ancient Literary Dependence, Ancient Media, and the Triple Tradition," in W. E. ARNAL, R. S. ASCOUGH, R. A. DERRENBACHER, P. A. HARLAND (eds.), *Scribal Practices and Social Structures among Jesus Adherents: Essays in Honour of John S. Kloppenborg*, BETL 285 (Leuven/Paris/Bristol, CT: Peeters, 2016), 43–70.

¹⁴ In this, Derrenbacher continues the work of Gerald Downing: see various essays in F. G.

handling scrolls and attempting to have sight of a written text whilst also using it as a source to write another text. He shows very well that the problems of handling a scroll and trying to write at the same time were considerable. The model of a scribe working at a large flat table, with a range of texts (including the one being written) spread out and visually available to the scribe at any one time, is simply unrealistic for the ancient world. The text written was generally held on one's knee, and it would have been possible to have sight of at most one other text being used to read from.¹⁵ Having sight of two other sources simultaneously would have been all but impossible. Thus the general approach by writers trying to use more than one source for their new text was to use one source at a time. Detailed micro-conflation of sources (at the level of individual words within a sentence) was very rare and would have been extremely difficult given the physical constraints imposed by reading and writing practices. Even harder would have been a process whereby the author of a new text would have tried to "unpick" details out of an earlier source text, perhaps extracting from that source what was *not* in another known source.

Turning to the "standard" solutions to the Synoptic Problem with these principles in mind, Derrenbacher shows clearly that the 2GH and the FH face very considerable difficulties.¹⁶ The 2GH has to posit very considerable micro-conflation on the part of Mark (using Matthew and Luke). Some of the posited redactional activity by Mark could be construed as Mark using "one source at a time" (using Matthew and Luke alternately), but this does not work all the time. In particular, difficulties are raised by the so-called "Mark-Q overlaps" in the tradition.¹⁷ A common, general explanation of these texts on the 2DH is that Luke generally preferred the Q version, whereas Matthew sought to conflate the two versions. (Hence in very general, schematic terms, Mark has X, Luke has Y, Matthew has X+Y.) However, on the 2GH, Mark must have engaged in a detailed process in these texts of "unpicking," taking care to cut out the "Y" material (i. e. material shared by Matthew and Luke alone) from Matthew to leave only one part ("X") of the Matthean text. Such an "unpicking" procedure would be inherently extremely difficult, as well as probably requiring visual sight of

DOWNING, *Doing Things with Words in the First Century*, JSNTSup 200 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).

¹⁵ DERRENBACHER, *Ancient Compositional Practices*, 37–9. This does however assume that the author of the text was also the scribe, i. e. that the text was not being dictated. Whether this is a valid assumption is debatable.

¹⁶ See DERRENBACHER, *Ancient Compositional Practices*, 121–69, 171–209.

¹⁷ These are texts which, on the 2DH, were present in both Mark and Q (John the Baptist's preaching, the Temptation narrative, the Beelzebul controversy, the parable of the Mustard Seed, the Mission Charge, and perhaps one or two others). The descriptor "Mark-Q overlaps" might appear to be rather question-begging, since it presupposes the 2DH; however, the texts remain as part of the total evidence from the gospels and their detailed wording has to be explained on any source theory, both in and for themselves and also alongside all the rest of the evidence from the gospels.

two scrolls simultaneously. As such, the procedure implied by the hypothesis is extremely implausible and difficult to envisage in physical terms. Further, Mark's procedure here would appear to be directly contrary to his procedure posited elsewhere in the tradition: elsewhere, Mark chose precisely the material that is *common* to Matthew and Luke (perhaps as part of a deliberate policy); yet in these passages, Mark must have decided to avoid what was common to his sources and pick out only what was peculiar to one source.

A very similar criticism can be levelled against the FH in these "overlap" texts (though with the different evangelists in slightly different roles). Here it must have been Luke who engaged in this detailed "unpicking" process, including the "Y" material from Matthew and omitting the "X" material in Matthew and Mark. There is the problem of the inherent difficulty in undertaking such a process. Further, as with Mark on the 2GH, the proposed procedure seems to be contrary to Luke's use of his sources elsewhere. For according to the hypothesis, Luke must have followed Mark in the rest of the triple tradition, keeping to his order very closely (though not totally slavishly) and following the Markan wording as well; but in the "overlap" passages, Luke must have decided to shun the Markan version, extracting all the non-Markan bits from Matthew's version and using them alone. The inherent difficulties of the process, coupled with the decision to avoid Mark in these texts (while preferring Mark in most of the other triple tradition texts) creates difficulties for the hypothesis.

However, it is not only the 2GH and the FH which face difficulties in this respect. As Derrenbacher has pointed out, Matthew's version also presents problems for the 2DH.¹⁸ For the "overlap" texts involve Matthew having engaged in a detailed process of possible "micro-conflation," taking elements from each of his two sources and weaving them together in a very detailed way to produce his new version. It is true that Matthew on the 2DH escapes the criticism of having "unpicked" his sources; but still the detailed conflation required seems to go against the general policy adopted by other Greco-Roman writers combining sources where the general tendency was to use one source at a time.

Derrenbacher's suggestion for resolving the problem is that Matthew may have had visual contact with just one of his sources (probably Mark) and accessed the other (Q) via memory.¹⁹ He argues that this may be supported by the fact that, in these overlap passages, Matthew's level of verbal agreement with Mark is higher than with Q. Hence the apparent anomaly of Matthew's compositional activity, when compared with that of other contemporary writers, may

¹⁸ DERRENBACHER, *Ancient Compositional Practices*, 211–55.

¹⁹ His further suggestion that Matthew's use of Q might be more readily explicable if Q were available to Matthew in the form of a codex (rather than a scroll) is perhaps more uncertain. Kirk's work on memory (on which see below) might render otiose the "problem" (as Derrenbacher sees it) of Matthew being able to access material in widely separated contexts within Q if Q were in the form of a scroll.

not be so great after all. My own study of the detailed wording of these passages, and Matthew's compositional activity, may provide further corroboration of Derrenbacker's general case.²⁰ A close examination suggests that Matthew is not here engaging in any very detailed *micro*-conflation, using individual words one at a time from one source and then another: rather he is probably conflating at the level of slightly longer sense-units, combining one self-contained phrase or grammatical unit from one source with another. He may in fact be operating on the same principle of "one source at a time" as Luke is, though at a finer level detail and with smaller units of tradition. However, the arguments of this present essay may provide further, indirect support for Derrenbacker's overall theories about Matthew's relation to his sources.

II. Kirk

The recently published monograph by Alan Kirk has highlighted the possible significance of *memory* in any considerations of the Synoptic Problem,²¹ and the work has been highly praised and welcomed as making a very significant contribution to synoptic studies.²² Kirk's focus of attention is primarily the 2DH (though with some passing consideration of alternative hypotheses). His claim is that the 2DH has two fundamental weaknesses which it has failed to address and which critics have regularly pointed out.²³ These concern the rationale by which Matthew rearranged (a) the Q material in the first half of his gospel, and (b) the Markan material in Matthew 8–12. Kirk then seeks to address these alleged key problems, showing how Matthew's text can be adequately and plausibly explained.

²⁰ See C.M. TUCKETT, "Matthew's Conflation of His Sources," in J. VERHEYDEN and G. VAN BELLE (eds.), *An Early Reader of Mark and Q*, BiTS 21 (Leuven/Paris/Bristol, CT: Peeters, 2016), 67–107.

²¹ See A. KIRK, *Q in Matthew: Ancient Media, Memory, and Early Scribal Transmission of the Jesus Tradition*, LNTS 564 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016); see too his "Memory, Scribal Media, and the Synoptic Problem," in FOSTER *et al.*, *New Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, 459–82, and "The Scribe as Tradent," in ARNAL *et al.* (eds.), *Scribal Practices and Social Structures*, 97–115.

²² A whole issue of the journal *JSHJ* was devoted to the book, with four review essays of the book (by Rollens, Rodríguez, Derrenbacker and Goodacre) together with a response by Kirk himself (although it is slightly strange to have such an issue in a journal ostensibly focused on study of the historical Jesus: Kirk's book makes no real claim to be addressing such questions; he is primarily concerned with the way Matthew might have composed his gospel using Mark and Q, bearing in mind considerations about memory in the ancient world, and does not really raise issues about historicity.)

²³ KIRK, *Q in Matthew*, 151 (and elsewhere).

The claimed rationale for Kirk's study is slightly strange, as e.g. Goodacre has observed.²⁴ Not many critics of the 2DH have fastened on issues about Matthew's compositional activity in using Mark and Q in the early part of his gospel as a reason for questioning the 2DH itself. As noted above, a general policy on Matthew's part of forming his large teaching discourses has been thought adequate in general terms to explain Matthew's use of Q (at least for Matthew 5–7: there are also other issues concerning e.g. Q 7:18–35 which Matthew may have rearranged). So too Matthew's rearrangement of Mark has been seen as in need of some explanation, and the precise reasons why Matthew made the changes in order that he did have provoked some discussion and debate. Nevertheless, very few have used this to throw doubt on the underlying source hypothesis itself.²⁵

It is also worth noting that the same set of differences remains to be explained on any of the major source hypotheses currently advocated. The FH agrees with the 2DH in positing Markan priority and Matthew's use of Mark: hence the differences in order between Matthew and Mark pose exactly the same set of issues to be faced for both the 2DH and the FH. For the 2GH, the differences in order between Mark and Matthew are effectively the same as the differences between Luke and Matthew (since Luke and Mark agree): if the 2DH needs to explain how/why Matthew changed Mark's order, the 2GH needs to explain how/why Luke made the reverse changes in order to Matthew. Similarly, the rearrangements which Matthew must have made to Q on the 2DH arise from different orderings of double tradition material in Matthew and Luke; hence both the 2GH and the FH, which both posit direct use of Matthew by Luke, have to explain the differences in order by Luke's compositional activity using Matthew as his source. The changes involved are the reverse of those posited by the 2DH (for the 2DH it is Matthew changing Luke=Q, for the 2GH and FH it is Luke changing Matthew). But exactly the same set of differences requires explanation. The phenomenon in question – differences in order between Matthew and Mark/Luke in a block of triple tradition passages, and differences in order between Matthew and Luke in a block of double tradition – is of itself neutral in relation to the major source theories currently espoused. If the phenomenon poses a fundamental problem for the 2DH, it provides no less of a problem for the 2GH and the FH. However significant the problems created for the 2DH by this material are judged to be, the differences in order require some kind of explanation by advocates of all hypotheses.

Kirk claims that far greater allowance should be made for the role of memory in explanations of the Synoptic Problem and one writer's use of another as a source. Further, he argues strongly that one must locate the synoptic evangelists in their correct social locations. Far too often, the evangelists have been compared with elite Greco-Roman biographers, historiographers or rhetoricians.²⁶ In fact, the evangelists do not appear to be similar to these: their use of their sources does not show a wish or desire to engage in rhetorical paraphrase, nor do they show

²⁴ See M. GOODACRE, "Q, Memory and Matthew: A Response to Alan Kirk," in *JSHJ* 15 (2017), 224–33, 232–3.

²⁵ KIRK, *Q in Matthew*, 228, n. 11, cites Burkett, Sanders and Neville. It is true that Burkett and Neville do use the issue of Matthew's alleged use of Mark and Q here as a reason for questioning the 2DH: see BURKETT, *Rethinking the Gospel Sources*, 61–7; NEVILLE, *Mark's Gospel – Prior or Posterior?*, 267 (though Sanders, as cited by Kirk, does not). However, as noted above, very few others argue in this way as part of their critique of the 2DH and/or their reasons for advocating alternative hypotheses.

²⁶ See KIRK, *Q in Matthew*, 29–39.

interest in rhetorical techniques; and above all, they display virtually no desire to promote themselves – all the gospels are anonymous. Kirk suggests that the model which fits the synoptic evangelists better is that of what he calls the “scribal tradent.”²⁷ As “tradents” of their communities, they functioned as the repositories of the tradition, carefully preserving what had been handed on and passing it on to future readers/hearers in their texts. As scribes, they would have carefully memorised their sources (for Matthew on the 2DH, Mark and Q) and their use of their sources represents to a large degree their ability to access their material via memory. In the case of Q, Kirk argues that Q had been arranged via a series of *topoi*;²⁸ Matthew, in committing Q to memory, would have been aware of this and able to identify, and then access, these *topoi* in Q. For Mark, Matthew would have memorised Mark via the pericopes of the Markan story.

The use of Mark and Q by Matthew can then be satisfactorily, and fully, explained via Matthew’s accessing his sources via memory, once his overall editorial strategy has been clearly seen. In the case of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7), Matthew inserted Q’s Sermon at the first point in the Markan outline where Jesus is said to have “taught” (Mk 1:21; v. 22 is then used as the conclusion of the sermon in Mt 7:28). Matthew then expanded Q’s sermon by drawing forward into it all material for which there was no clear Markan “peg” on which to hang this later Q material. Matthew was heavily influenced by Q’s *topoi* arrangement (which governs his memorisation of Q): so he went forward (via memory) to relevant Q *topoi*, delving down into each *topos* once he had located it (probably via memory) and taking out relevant materials, in order, to suit his own *topos*-based arrangement in his version of the Sermon. In this way, Matthew’s rearrangements of Q can be generally satisfactorily explained.²⁹

For the material in Matthew 8–12, Kirk argues that Matthew was faced with the problem of trying to reconcile, and bring together in one narrative, two conflicting sources, with their own story lines and with overlapping traditions (notably the commissioning of the disciples and the Beelzebul controversy). Mark’s story is clear; Q too has a narrative sequence with the Sermon, the healing in Capernaum, the commissioning of the 12, and the Beelzebul controversy. After the Beelzebul controversy (common to Mark and Q) the narrative element in Q diminishes (as do the Q materials which Matthew has not already used up) and it becomes much easier to reconcile the two accounts. Matthew’s procedure is in principle the same as in his use of Q in the Sermon: he looks forward in Mark, and in Q, and brings forward at times material from his sources to an earlier position, but maintaining their relative sequence. The more precise reasons are worked out in detail. Kirk’s argument is that Matthew’s rear-

²⁷ KIRK, *Q in Matthew*, 40–2 and *passim*.

²⁸ This was argued for extensively in A. KIRK, *The Composition of the Sayings Source: Genre, Synchrony, and Wisdom Redaction in Q*, N.T.S 91 (Leiden/Boston, MA: Brill, 1998).

²⁹ Details in KIRK, *Q in Matthew*, 184–224.

rangement of Mark is influenced in a significant way by Q. For example, Matthew is particularly concerned to prepare the ground for the Commissioning in Q 10, where the disciples are bidden to continue the work and ministry of Jesus (10:7 repeats 4:23 and 9:35), and where the disciples evidently too face the same fate of rejection as Jesus experiences. Thus Matthew pulls Mk 4:35–41; 5:1–20 forward to come after Mk 1:34, redacting both to enhance the theme of discipleship. In this way he brings the commissioning stories of Mark 6 and Q 10 into alignment. Meanwhile Q 7 (the Baptist material) is delayed until after this, though Matthew prepares carefully for it by his use of his sources in using Mk 2:1–22 and 5:21–43. He then resumes his position in the Markan outline at 2:23 and, continuing forward through Mark 3, the Beelzebul controversies of Mark 3 and Q 11 also line up neatly. There is no space here to go into the details of Kirk's, at times very dense, argumentation.³⁰ But it is striking to observe how Kirk claims that he can make sense of Matthew's procedure here if, and really *only* if, Matthew is using two sources with each influencing his use of the other. Thus he claims that the 2DH explains Matthew's text in a way that other source theories do not and cannot.

Kirk's study is clearly a major work in relation to study of the Synoptic Problem, and also in relation to study of Matthew's gospel. Above all he has shown how memory studies can impact and throw important light on the ways in which one can envisage an author like Matthew accessing his source(s). However, Kirk provides not only a very detailed explanation of Matthew's compositional activity in combining his postulated two sources Mark and Q in the first half of his gospel: he also gives a very detailed proposal (or set of proposals) for who Matthew was, his relationship to his community and above all his relationship to, and attitude to, his sources. In turn, this model has implications for the ways in which the sources may have been regarded in early Christian communities. There is not the time or space available here to discuss Kirk's detailed explanations for Matthew's reordering of his materials (on the 2DH).³¹ However,

³⁰ See KIRK, *Q in Matthew*, 25–97 for the whole discussion.

³¹ There are perhaps some questions to raise. For example, Kirk's argument that Matthew accessed Q by *topoi* is reasonable in theory; but in practice it requires Matthew sometimes, in developing a particular *topos* of his own, reaching forward for *topoi* in Q focused on quite different topics. E.g. the small unit in Mt 5:13–6 is said to be "a unified *topos* on doing good works" (KIRK, *Q in Matthew*, 193), formed by going forward in Q and extracting the salt saying of Q 14:34–5 and the light saying of Q 11:33. Yet according to KIRK, the former is part of a Q *topos* on the demands of discipleship (not just "good works": cf. *Composition*, 254–5) and the latter is the key, central saying in the Q version of the demand for a sign, the "light" being the evidence of Jesus' own words and actions (not the good works of Jesus' followers: cf. *Composition*, 199). This example also raises questions about Kirk's proposal that Matthew reached forward for Q materials where there was no clear Markan "peg" on which to hang them: in the case of Q 11:33, if this is in Q an integral part of the "demand for a sign" unit, then there is a very clear Markan "peg" which this can be linked with, viz. Mk 8:11–2. So too Kirk's suggestions about Matthew's general procedure in reaching forward in his sources to bring

er, there are one or two aspects of his more general picture which are perhaps open to discussion and I raise them here briefly. Kirk is surely right to emphasise the importance of memory in the production of written texts; nevertheless, I wonder if his proposed model of who Matthew was, and his relationship to his sources, may be not quite so persuasive.

Key to Kirk's analysis is his view that Matthew is a "tradent" in his community: he is a scribe whose role is to pass on the received tradition – tradition that has been received sometimes in written form, sometimes orally, but to do so *reliably*. Kirk does not deny in any way that Matthew might have at times changed the wording of his sources: Matthew is not a pure "copier" or "transcriber" of his sources.³² Nevertheless, the model that Kirk insists on (and he repeats it a number of times) is one of a Matthew who regards his sources as normative and authoritative; Matthew shares this point of view with his community and so Matthew sees his role as one of preserving this tradition and handing it on faithfully for others. Matthew is someone for whom both Mark and Q represent "normative" traditions possessing "authority" which are to be preserved and handed on in his new text.³³ Matthew has deeply imbibed the texts of Mark and Q, so much so that he knows them by heart, has them in his memory, and can thereby find his way around these texts relatively easily (though within the constraints imposed by the human brain's activity). Never really does Kirk suggest that Matthew undertakes any real criticism of his source materials. There may be at times some re-expression of the traditions due to Matthew's own context and situation;³⁴ but the overall model Kirk presents is one of a writer who has above all immense respect for his sources which are normative, authoritative, and whose substance is basically to be handed on unchanged (despite some adaptation to make them relevant for his present situation). Yet this general picture raises a number of questions.³⁵

material back, and maintaining the relative order of this anticipated material, does at times have to postulate more than a few exceptions to such a general policy (as well as assuming that Luke mostly preserves the order of Q very precisely).

³² E.g. Kirk takes over many of the older-style redaction-critical explanations of how Matthew redacts his source materials in chs. 8–9 to fit with his overall plan in structuring his narrative in the way he has, e.g. to enhance the theme of discipleship (in anticipation of Matt/Q 10).

³³ To take a few quotations at random: Matthew aims at "harnessing their [his two sources'] authority for his own re-enactment of the tradition" (KIRK, *Q in Matthew*, 261); Matthew "has no ideological agenda other than a determination to harness the authority of both his sources" (278); for Mark and Q as "normative" sources, see 231, 251, 291, 294, 299 ("both Q and Mark are normative for him and his community"), 302, 303 ("both Mark and Q are normative in Matthean circles. Matthew is keen to appropriate the authority of both.")

³⁴ See e.g. KIRK, *Q in Matthew*, 299: "Matthew is determined to consolidate the normative tradition in its received artifactual forms, while simultaneously engaging it with the tradent community's contemporary social and historical exigencies."

³⁵ In what follows, I presume, with Kirk, the 2DH: thus I am assuming the theory of Marcan priority and that Matthew had access to a "Q" source shared with Luke.

Why, if Mark and Q are sources of such high authority (both for Matthew himself and for his community) does Matthew never mention them? Why are they never explicitly cited or referred to as authorities? Matthew does cite other texts as authoritative, supremely those of the OT/Hebrew Bible. Moreover, he does so very explicitly, e. g. in the formula quotations, with introductory formulae to make it absolutely clear to the reader that a text is being cited and that this text has (scriptural) authority. Yet he never gives the slightest indication that he is using either Mark or Q. Indeed, from the gospel text itself, the reader is given no explicit indication that any other text giving information about Jesus existed. Luke does so in his prologue, referring to “many” others (πολλοί) who have attempted to give an account of the events he himself is about to describe (Lk 1:1), and some have argued that there may be a note of criticism in this reference.³⁶ But whatever Luke’s attitude to his predecessors, there is at least a (very) brief mention of them. There is nothing comparable in Matthew. It would seem that Matthew does not think it worth mentioning that he is not the first person to write such an account of Jesus’ life, or to refer in any way to his “authoritative,” “normative” sources. Further, in terms of figures and/or texts which have authority, it may be absurdly naïve to say so, but the most obvious authority figure or entity in the gospel is Jesus, not a written text. It may be that “Jesus” and Jewish scripture come into some kind of competition with each other (cf. Mt 5:21–48),³⁷ but at the end of day it is surely the teaching of *Jesus* that is ultimately the most important thing for Matthew (cf. 28:20), not the teaching of authoritative, normative sources such as Mark or Q.

On its own, such a silence might not be too significant and such an argument from silence may not be a strong one in isolation. Several Jewish writers at this (rough) time undertook a process of rewriting stories told in earlier books, often the Bible, without explicitly referring to their (evident) source(s). One has only to think of texts often included under the term “Rewritten Bible”: texts such as *Jubilees*, the Temple Scroll (11QTemple) from Qumran, and several others. None of these explicitly refers to an earlier account which they are evidently using to re-tell the story concerned, perhaps because the earlier tradition (in scripture) was so well known. Moreover, they often undertake this process of re-writing exercising a significant measure of freedom and inventiveness. However, the parallel with the situation of the gospels may be illusory. Whether Mark and Q were so well known that their existence was presupposed and could be assumed without any mention of them at all seems less plausible. No one else in early Christianity appears to know or cite these sources as texts (apart of course from Luke,

³⁶ See e. g. E. FRANKLIN, *Luke: Interpreter of Paul, Critic of Matthew*, JSNTSup 92 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 170; J. C. POIRIER, “Introduction,” in ID. and PETERSON (eds.), *Marcan Priority without Q*, 7.

³⁷ How far these so-called “antitheses” are setting up an antithetical contrast between what Jesus says and what was said τοῖς ἀρχαίοις is heavily debated.

though he uses them as Matthew does: he does not “cite” them). Further, as we shall see, Matthew’s use of Mark may involve a rather more significant level of correction and change, which would make the model of Matthew regarding Mark as a normative source rather more difficult.

A second problem is that the model proposed – of the existence of authoritative and normative texts within Christian communities generally – is hard to correlate with such knowledge that we have of early Christianity in the first century (and indeed beyond into the second century). It is of course the case that any such knowledge is woefully thin and patchy: we are aware of many gaps in the things we know, and there are probably an even greater number of gaps in things we do not know about at all. Nevertheless, there is no other evidence that early Christians possessed and valued written texts giving information about Jesus’ life and teaching, that they memorised these texts, and regarded them as authoritative and normative. Kirk’s model is similar in some respects to the older model proposed by Birger Gerhardsson, and a similar critique was brought against his general theory.³⁸ He proposed that the Jerusalem apostles formed a close circle in Jerusalem, carefully guarding and handing on Jesus traditions in a way similar to that of (later) rabbinic schools. But of this there is simply no evidence. And indeed much of the evidence we do have suggests a much looser process of handing on of Jesus traditions. This is shown by the gospels themselves (which show a considerable degree of freedom in dealing with the words of their tradition though this alone may not be decisive: cf. above); and this is confirmed by all the evidence (such as it is) we have of Jesus traditions being used in other contexts. Almost all of it suggests that the users of (or those citing) Jesus tradition did so either very freely themselves, and/or that they received their traditions in ways that suggest that the tradition had been handed down with a considerable degree of freedom. We do *not* generally see anyone carefully preserving, and then citing, a version of a tradition which is closely related to what we find in one of our written gospels. This applies to writers such as Paul, Ignatius, the authors of *1 Clement*, *2 Clement*, the *Didache*, and even as late as Justin Martyr. The same would apply too to the Gospel of John if it is thought to be dependent on one or more of the synoptics. Study of the use of Jesus traditions in many of the texts of the Apostolic Fathers is generally a complex business precisely because we do *not* find verbatim agreement with any of the texts of the gospels; and only very rarely do these later writers indicate that they think that they have a normative, authoritative *text* which they are citing.³⁹ The model then

³⁸ Cf. B. GERHARDSSON, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity*, Acta Seminarii Neotestamentici Upsaliensis 22 (Lund: Gleerup, 1961). For discussion of Gerhardsson’s theories, see C.M. TUCKETT, “Form Criticism,” in W.H. KELBER and S. BYRSKOG (eds.), *Jesus in Memory: Traditions in Oral and Scribal Perspectives* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 21–38.

³⁹ Perhaps the nearest one comes to this are the references to the “gospel” in the *Didache*: