

Markus Tiwald (Ed.)

# The Q Hypothesis Unveiled

Theological, Sociological,  
and Hermeneutical Issues  
behind the Sayings Source

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# **The Q Hypothesis Unveiled**

Theological, Sociological, and  
Hermeneutical Issues behind  
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# Preface

The essays collected in this volume are the proceedings of an international conference on the Sayings Source Q held in Essen, Germany in August 2019. The scholars contributing to this volume generally support the Q hypothesis. Nevertheless, they want to submit their own conceptions to scrutiny. Especially the question as to whether Q scholars are driven by unscholarly projections or prejudices was subject to debate. Sometimes exegetes also follow trends and fashion. Therefore, the central topic of this volume is a critical self-reflection on the hermeneutical options (and perhaps also biases) in Q research.

My special thanks go to John Kloppenborg and Gerd Theißen. Both of them asked me repeatedly why actually so many Catholic Scholars engage in Q studies. In thinking about this question, the idea to reflect on our own projections and prejudices in our scholarly work on Q was born; and in my own contribution to this volume I try to provide my answer to these questions as well as I could. Kindly, Jens Schröter accepted to give the keynote lecture to this conference. His idea to “suggest a moderate, ‘soft’ version of the Q hypothesis as a perhaps more appropriate approach to Q and the Synoptic problem” seems a viable option to reach out to Q sceptics and to take the heat out of our discussions. Many thanks go to all the participants in this conference who contributed with their papers and willingly engaged in the discussions.

I want to express my special thanks that this volume was accepted in the BWANT series. Prof. Marlies Gielen and Prof. Reinhard von Bendemann as series editors are valuable friends and the cooperation with Dr. Sebastina Weigert and Florian Specker from Kohlhammer always has been a pleasure!

Last but not least my thanks go to my team: Especially Dr. Enrico Grube has invested lots of time in proofreading this volume, further Lothar Junker, Kathrin Wohlthat, Marie-Helén van Heys, Michaela Richter, Isabell and Frederik Lazar.

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Markus Tiwald



# Content

*Markus Tiwald*

Looking behind the Curtain:

An Introduction to the Volume ..... 9

*Jens Schröter*

Key Issues Concerning the Q Hypothesis:

Synoptic Problem, Verbal Reconstruction, and the Message of Jesus ..... 18

*Lukas Bormann*

Das Interesse an Markuspriorität, Logienquelle und Zweiquellentheorie

im deutschen Protestantismus des 19. Jahrhunderts ..... 41

*Christopher Tuckett*

The Reception of Q Studies in the UK:

No room at the inn? ..... 62

*Paul Foster*

The Rise and Development of the Farrer Hypothesis ..... 86

*Markus Tiwald*

The Investment of Roman Catholics in the 2DH and Q ..... 129

*Joseph Verheyden*

Introducing “Q” in French Catholic Scholarship

at the Turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century:

Alfred Loisy’s *Évangiles synoptiques* ..... 146

*Gerd Theißen*

Itinerant Radicalism:

The Origin of an Exegetical Theory ..... 175

*Marco Frenschkowski*

Itinerant Charismatics and Travelling Artisans –

Was Jesus’ Travelling Lifestyle Induced by His Artisan Background? ..... 191



*Sarah E. Rollens*

Where Are All the Women in Q Studies?:

Gender Demographics and the Study of Q..... 223

*Hildegard Scherer*

Learning Lessons on Q:

The 2DH and Q in Academic Teaching ..... 254

*Ralf Miggelbrink*

The Quest for the Historical Jesus and Q

in the View of Systematic Theology ..... 274

Contributors ..... 283

Index of Persons and Subjects ..... 285

Index of Primary Sources ..... 286

# Looking behind the Curtain: An Introduction to the Volume

Markus Tiwald

## 1. Features and Conceptions connected to the Q Hypothesis

This volume contains the proceedings of the conference *The Q-Hypothesis Unveiled: Theological, Church-Political, Socio-Political, and Hermeneutical Issues behind the Sayings Source*, funded by the DFG (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft), and convened by Markus Tiwald in Essen/Germany, 27–29 August 2019.

After several years in the research on the Sayings Source Q, I felt the urge to look behind the academic issues concerning Q and reflect on our scholarly assumptions on the second source that Matthew and Luke presumably used. Thus, the focus of this conference was *not* to demonstrate the accuracy or inaccuracy of the Q hypothesis, but to highlight our scholarly projections on the “Sayings Source”. The conference aimed at a somewhat self-critical reflection on our own hypotheses and on the background matters behind these assumptions. It might be a truism that even scholars dedicated to ‘objectivity’ are not completely free from projection and prejudice. Nevertheless, we seldomly discuss the motives behind our research and rarely reflect on fashions and trends that also permeate our scholarly discourses. The discussion as to whether a second source for the Gospels of Matthew and Luke exists certainly is a thorny question in itself, but it often leads to an ideological fervour that goes well beyond what is warranted by its academic object and sometimes assumes quasi-religious dimensions, for proponents as for opponents of Q alike. Here it might be helpful to ‘look behind’ the curtain and reflect on our *theological, church-political, socio-political, and hermeneutical conceptions that lie behind the assumption of Q*. For me as an advocate of the Q hypothesis this is a matter of academic honesty. Thus in my own contribution to this volume I try to reflect my own projections and motives that set me on the Q trail. Going behind the mere discussion of Q’s plausibility allows for a glimpse at the *primum movens* of our scholarly engagement. Such reflections do not devalue our recent work, but helps to contextualize it within the broader horizon of our presuppositions.

## 2. The Contributions in this Volume

### 2.1. Keynote Lecture: Opting for a ‘Soft’ Q Hypothesis

*Jens Schröter, Key Issues Concerning the Q Hypothesis: Synoptic Problem, Verbal Reconstruction, and the Message of Jesus*

Kindly, Jens Schröter has accepted to give the keynote lecture to this conference. His meticulous habilitation on the reception of logia-traditions in the Gospel of Mark, in Q, and in the Gospel of Thomas (*Erinnerung an Jesu Worte*, 1997) certainly was a milestone in the research of oral Jesus-traditions getting scribalized in different contexts. In his present contribution, he observes that the Synoptic problem is not only an exegetical, but also a methodological and hermeneutical task. In our attempts to resolve the Synoptic problem we are dealing only with probabilities rather than proofs. Meta-level reflections not only highlight the possibilities and limits of proposed solutions to the Synoptic problem, but also illuminate implicit agendas and interests. Schröter emphasizes that in principle the adoption of Q is useful in discussions of the Synoptic problem, but he also underlines the necessity of being aware that Q remains a scholarly hypothesis. Within Synoptic research as within the quest for the historical Jesus, the Q traditions therefore should have a similar status as the assumed pre-Markan traditions or other pre-Synoptic traditions. His idea is to suggest a moderate, thus ‘soft’ version of the Q hypothesis as a perhaps more appropriate approach to Q and the Synoptic problem. This might also be a viable option to reach out to Q sceptics. Supporting a more moderate version of the Q hypothesis thus might strengthen it in the discussion about the Synoptic problem and the quest for early Jesus tradition.

### 2.2. Looking back in History: The 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century

The birth of the Two Document Hypothesis (henceforth: 2DH) and thus also of Q-studies did not happen in a vacuum but was connected with political and sociological developments that deeply affected the countries and churches in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, it seems necessary to highlight the diverging contexts of confessions and nationalities in which the 2DH could emerge.

*Lukas Bormann, Das Interesse an Markuspriorität, Logienquelle und Zweiquellentheorie im deutschen Protestantismus des 19. Jahrhunderts*

Lukas Bormann takes a glimpse at the beginnings of the 2DH and reads these against the backdrop of Protestant Germany in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He points out that the presupposed ‘objectivity’ of scholarly research on the 2DH served the

desire to demonstrate the ‘authenticity’ of the Protestant doctrine. After Karl Lachmann it was no longer sustainable that the Gospels of Matthew and John were written by eyewitnesses. Because of the Markan priority new ways of proving the ‘authenticity’ of Protestant teachings had to be found. When Christian Hermann Weiße (1801–1866), Christian Gottlob Wilke (1788–1854), and Heinrich Julius Holtzmann (1832–1910) developed the 2DH, Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930) took recourse to the Sayings Source, which he deemed to be “more precious” than the Gospel of Mark in maintaining “original” Jesus traditions. Today we know that this is exaggerated, but these developments have helped us to understand the Gospels as historical texts being subjugated to an historical process of transmission.

*Christopher Tuckett, The Reception of Q Studies in the UK: No room at the inn?*

At the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, British scholarship enthusiastically adopted the 2DH. But this changed with the work of W. R. Farmer and his revival of the Griesbach Hypothesis. Later on there was a strong advocacy for the Farrer Hypothesis (FH), indebted to the work of Austin Farrer and Michael Goulder. According to Tuckett, some key elements keep recurring in many of the arguments by British scholars. One is a strong aversion to sources that are ‘hypothetical’, another is that postulating Q is ‘unnecessary’, and a third is an appeal to what is ‘simple’ and/or straightforward as the most likely explanation of the source question. Some of the arguments offered by British Q-sceptics correlate with trends within British philosophy. Thus, the claim that Q is ‘hypothetical’ correlates in one way with philosophical movements such as empiricism and perhaps logical positivism, both of which have been very influential within British philosophy (cf. figures such as Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Russell, Ayer). So too the argument appealing to ‘simplicity’ echoes (sometimes explicit in the modern arguments about Q) the work of William of Ockham and the principle of ‘Occam’s razor’. While one cannot claim that the arguments developed by British scholars against Q are the sole preserve of the British, there are some aspects of these arguments which might correlate with other features of British society, British life, and British ways of thinking which make a position of Q-scepticism at the very least congenial within a British context.

*Paul Foster, The Rise and Development of the Farrer Hypothesis*

After the general overview of Christopher Tuckett to the situation in the UK, Paul Foster now zooms in for a closer look at the Farrer Hypothesis (FH). The FH has to be considered the major rival competitor to the 2DH in the Synoptic Problem and thus deserves a special chapter in this book. During the period from the 1960s until the 1990s it is fair to say that the major rival alternative to the widely accepted 2DH was the Griesbach hypothesis, or perhaps more correctly the neo-Griesbach hypothesis. Farrer’s work attracted some limited support in the period from the 1950s to the 1980s. However, growth in support became

more widespread from the 1990s onwards, to the extent that it might now be correctly seen as the major rival proposal to the 2DH. British scholars who followed the Farrer hypothesis and added support to it in published works discussing the synoptic problem include Michael Goulder, John Drury, Eric Franklin, Barbara Shellard, and Mark Goodacre, who has become the standard-bearer for the Farrer hypothesis, or, as he would prefer it to be known, the Mark without Q (MwQ) hypothesis. After Goodacre, Francis Watson provided one of the more recent attempts to resolve the synoptic problem along the lines of the Farrer or MwQ hypothesis in his 2013 monograph. He deviates from Goodacre in two major ways. First, he gives a larger function to the role of a sayings collection in his solution to the synoptic problem. Second, he rejects the idea that this sayings collection reached the evangelists in oral form. Support for the Farrer hypothesis has always been strongest in Britain, having primarily been disseminated by scholars teaching, studying, or presenting lecture series at the University of Oxford.

*Markus Tiwald, The Investment of Roman Catholics in the 2DH and Q*

Catholicism in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century built up a fundamental opposition towards the challenges of modern exegesis. Especially the 2DH was seen as a major threat, because it denied that the author of the Gospel of Matthew was an eyewitness. The peak of these tendencies was reached in the oath against ‘modernism’, decreed by Pope Pius X in 1910 and remaining in force until 1967. The real breakthrough came only with the Second Vatican Council, which lasted from 1962–1965. The council’s declaration *Dei Verbum* dates from 1965 and states that inerrancy only refers to truths concerning our salvation and not scientific claims (e.g., the creation of the world in seven days). In the time after Vatican II, Catholic scholars had a big backlog demand in the area of biblical exegesis. Especially the former forbidden ‘Sayings Source’ served as a means of projections here. Ideas of ‘itinerant charismatics’ (brought up by Gerd Theißen and Paul Hoffmann in 1972) were eagerly accepted to advocate for a charismatic and poor church with fraternal structures. The quest for the ‘historical Jesus’ and the search for Jesus’ ‘original’ intention finally had reached Catholicism – with a delay of 200 years, since in Protestantism these matters had already been brought up by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781).

*Joseph Verheyden, Introducing “Q” in French Catholic Scholarship at the Turn of the 19th and 20th Century: Alfred Loisy’s “Évangiles synoptiques”*

It took a certain heroism in Catholic quarters in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to speak up for Q, or for any other theory related to historical-critical scholarship and considered ‘innovative’ by the magisterium. *Les Évangiles synoptiques*, Loisy’s opus magnum, was published in two volumes in 1907–1908. The goal was nothing less than to contribute to the restauration of biblical studies among the French clergy. According to Loisy, the best way forward was

not to get stuck in hopeless debates but to try to reconcile tradition and “sound criticism”, “joindre en toutes choses la docilité prudente du théologien à la sincérité du savant, sans sacrifier l’une à l’autre”, as Loisy said. For him Mark is the source of Matthew and Luke; any material the latter two have in common stems from Papias’ Hebrew gospel that would have been “principalement didactique” compared to Mark’s narrative gospel. All remaining material, the *Sondergut*, comes from indistinctive sources – written or oral. “Q” for him takes only a minimal place and is a mere detail in the study of the gospels that does not really need any particular attention from the critical scholar. Verheyden coins the category of “diplomatic language” to qualify Loisy’s discourse with the Catholic ministry. All controversies and all initiatives for self-defence notwithstanding, scholars like Loisy above all wanted to continue their biblical research in an atmosphere as serene as possible while keeping true to the standards of critical biblical scholarship.

### 2.3. *Q and Social Sciences*

After the historical retrospective, the focus now is directed at the present time. The contributions of Gerd Theißen and Marco Frenschkowski both deal with sociological concepts as a means of interpretation of Q. Nevertheless, both reach different results in judging the itinerancy in Jesus’ ministry.

#### *Gerd Theißen, Itinerant Radicalism: The Origin of an Exegetical Theory*

It is the big merit of Gerd Theißen of having integrated sociological aspects in his studies of early Christianity. Already in his inaugural lecture as “Privatdozent” in November 1972, he advocated the thesis that homeless wandering charismatics had transmitted the words of Jesus by living up to their master’s homeless, itinerant, and peaceful ethos. Theißen detected their homelessness as symptomatic of a crisis within Jewish society, and Jesus’ response as a creative form of peaceful revolution under the auspices of the coming reign of God. This assumption has triggered many reactions, from fervent acceptance to total rejection. Gerd Theißen was accused of having projected the spirit of the 1968-movement onto the biblical narratives. In his present paper, he does not defend his theories but contributes some further details to the sociological context in which the thesis of itinerant radicalism was born. He mentions his personal *biographical* context, the *political* circumstances, the *development of social sciences*, and the *state of exegesis and theology* as normative factors for his thesis. He demonstrates that scholarly research always is influenced by external factors like biographical events, politics, and sociological conceptions.

*Marco Frenschkowski, Itinerant Charismatics and Travelling Artisans – Was Jesus' Travelling Lifestyle Induced by His Artisan Background?*

The contribution of Marco Frenschkowski continues the sociological perspective of Gerd Theißen, but other than Theißen he does not see an emblematic lifestyle from the beginning behind Jesus' itinerancy. He rather locates Jesus' lifestyle in his background as wandering artisan. The juxtaposition of his paper with that of Theißen may demonstrate how much our exegetical results are also due to our sociological frame of reference. First, Frenschkowski illustrates what being a τέκτων (Jesus' profession according to Mk 6:3) might have meant in those times. As we have learned, a τέκτων is somebody working with stone and wood, not exactly just a carpenter, but someone who builds larger objects such as houses, especially doors, yokes for oxen, ships and perhaps also barns and roads. Nevertheless, the word has rather general meanings, can be applied to different crafts, and can even take on a more general meaning: "master, in any art". Without discussing all vicissitudes of the question what exactly a τέκτων might have done in first century Galilee – probably he did what was needed in house and ship building and perhaps other fields. The embarrassment of Church fathers about Jesus being a τέκτων demonstrates the low social status of this profession. Frenschkowski mentions that itinerancy of artisans was common in those times and underlines this with a plethora of examples. His suggestion is that Jesus started his preaching and healing career as a traveller in wood and perhaps stone work because this was what he was doing anyway. This would mean that Jesus never chose the itinerant lifestyle. Rather, it was his way of living since his early youth. Frenschkowski also shows with many examples preaching and travelling crafts could combine quite well.

*Editor's (M. Tiwald's) remark on the papers of G. Theißen and M. Frenschkowski*

In my view, the diverging positions of Theißen (emblematic itinerancy) and Frenschkowski (travelling lifestyle induced by Jesus' background as wandering artisan) can be reconciled. Frenschkowski's depiction of Jesus as a travelling craftsman seems quite convincing to me. Most probably, his itinerant lifestyle during the time of his public mission can also be traced back to his past as a wandering artisan. Nevertheless, this does not exclude an emblematic reinterpretation of his past in the light of the emerging kingdom of God. Jesus' former life now takes on a new meaning: like his poverty, his itinerancy is also reinterpreted as an emblematic virtue instead of a necessity for mere survival. For Jesus, the kingdom of God changes the perspective of everything: what previously was considered a deficiency (lack of money, lack of stable working conditions) now becomes a virtue (cf. the beatitudes for the poor, the hungry and the weeping, Q 6:20). Jesuanic creativity opens up new possibilities: the needs and pressures of a poor life are now transformed into signs of emblematic election in the light of God's upcoming kingdom.

## 2.4. *Gender Studies and Q*

When we are talking about sociological contexts that form our theological perceptions, then it is not only fair but mandatory to include gender aspects here. The gender gap is especially high in Q-scholarship – maybe even higher than in the rest of NT studies. Certainly, Paul and his female co-workers might be more attractive as the seemingly ‘conservative’ Sayings Source. Nevertheless, the dearth of women in Q studies is striking – and should be given a closer look.

*Sarah E. Rollens, Where Are All the Women in Q Studies?: Gender Demographics and the Study of Q*

Female authors often write about topics being considered ‘female’, but Sarah Rollens clearly opts against the view that identities and experiences can be understood only by people who inhabit them – such concepts again will create a gender bias. ‘Women writing about women’ has often been perceived as a ‘soft’ topic, a safe space, in comparison to more rigorous scholarship that men have tended to carry out. Furthermore, biblical studies still routinely sees edited volumes, journal issues, and conference panels made up entirely of men. On social media, the constancy of such products are now the target of both critique and mocking, with female scholars and their allies regularly contacting the producers of such collections and panels to ask them to account for their lack of representation. Nevertheless, including a token woman in a conference accomplishes very little in the overall scheme of things. Rather, our aim should be to change our system from within. Our universities sometimes function as backward looking, conservative bastions. They reward scholarly activity that fits into predetermined measures of excellence and follows traditional methods for producing such scholars. It is thus challenging to propose new structural arrangements to achieve a more gender-balanced representation. Even if we cannot change the terrain of academia and expose everyone’s unconscious biases overnight, the first step is certainly to acknowledge the problem and to realize the extent of our unintentional complicity. The essay contains an appendix that lists all the women scholars who could be considered “Q scholars” or who have worked on Q in some substantive sense.

## 2.5. *The Sayings Souce in Academic Teaching and Systematic Theology*

Last but not least there should be a special chapter on how our concepts of Q studies ‘condense’ in our academic teaching and in Systematic Theology.



*Hildegard Scherer, Learning Lessons on Q: The 2DH and Q in Academic Teaching*

Hildegard Scherer poses the question: "What types of social interaction have been used when teaching the Two-Document-Hypothesis (2DH)?" She refers to introductory books to the New Testament from the German-speaking area spanning from the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century and then to the period from post-WWII until today. Scherer singles out two factors for her research: One is 'expert power', i.e. how we exercise power to convince others. The other factor is 'time' that is severely limited: in introductory books, the 2DH problem is only discussed on a limited span of pages and therefore necessarily schematic. The turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a heyday of New Testament introduction text books. For both Catholic and Protestant scholars, the period was marked by intensive debate. The Catholics felt the restrictions of 'anti-modernism', which had manifested itself in the magisterial rescripts of the Pontifical Biblical Commission since 1905. These rescripts prohibited to argue in favour of the 2DH. However, also the Protestants were torn between Orthodoxy and Liberalism, and labelled by their opponents as either unscientific or destructive. Skipping the years of the two world wars, Scherer then examines the introductory books since the 1940s. Here the 2DH is presented as the most important theory underlining a presumed consensus among scholars. Finally, Scherer puts these introductory books to the test by comparing them with the requirements of the EU's Bologna Criteria of good teaching practice. One of the Bologna keywords is the "orientation towards competences": pupils shall not only accumulate knowledge but be enabled to use their skills in a solution-oriented way. Scherer concludes how important it is to practise fair teaching, leaving aside the tricky pitfalls of polemics, one-sidedness, incompleteness, majority moves or even identity creation. According to her, the main challenge consists of developing teaching settings that pay respect to the complexity of the topics but still work within the curricular limits of time.

*Ralf Miggelbrink, The Quest for the Historical Jesus and Q in the View of Systematic Theology*

Ralf Miggelbrink classically structures his paper in *Thesis - Antithesis - Synthesis*. In his *Thesis*, he points out that for the Catholic magisterium of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a historical-critical look at Jesus was not considered appropriate for the 'Son of God'. Besides, what could a historical-critical access contribute when the necessary doctrine about Jesus Christ had already been established by the Church? Jesus should not be interpreted according to historical plausibilities but according to trans-temporal salvific necessity. The *Antithesis* to such concepts was formed in the *devotio moderna* within the context of Reformation and Counter-Reformation. Especially the Jesuit movement stimulated the religious interest in Jesus as a human person suffering for us. The Christian discussion on the suffering of Jesus lasted up to the 6<sup>th</sup> century. The climax of this conflict is reached with Maximus Confessor, who was killed because he insisted on the idea

that Christ actually suffered and felt human feelings. But how can we reconcile the ideas of Divine knowledge directly stemming from God with a real human life of learning, discussing and teaching? St. Thomas Aquinas solves this problem in a consequently Aristotelian way: the knowledge infused by God into Jesus (*scientia infusa*) is not defined knowledge, but the intellectual enabling to generate knowledge in a human way. The *scientia infusa* enables Jesus to achieve knowledge as *scientia acquisita* in a human way. St. Thomas leads to a solution that has been explained by Karl Rahner, as Miggelbrink explains in his *Synthesis*: incarnated divine omniscience does not mean knowing all, but being able to understand everything in the right way. Jesus perceives, thinks and decides in a human way that is inspired by God. In this situation, the critical and historical quest for Jesus, which asks for his probable intentions, intuitions and ideas is a way to clean our minds from our own ideas about Jesus, in order to come closer to this figure in which Divine Wisdom explains itself historically as a model for all those who strive to be disciples of Jesus in our days.

# Key Issues Concerning the Q Hypothesis: Synoptic Problem, Verbal Reconstruction, and the Message of Jesus

*Jens Schröter*

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this volume and the conference on which it is based is not to prove or disprove the Q hypothesis. Instead, the focus is on implicit presuppositions of the Q hypothesis in different scholarly discourses and cultural settings. Such an approach is appropriate for two reasons. First, there is no straightforward solution to the Synoptic problem which would solve the textual and historical problems. The Synoptic problem is therefore not only an exegetical, but also a methodological and hermeneutical task. In other words, because in our attempts to “resolve the Synoptic problem ... we are dealing only in the realm of probabilities rather than ‘proofs’”<sup>1</sup>, meta-level reflections not only highlight the possibilities and limits of proposed solutions to Synoptic problem, but also illuminate implicit agendas and interests.

Second, a particular characteristic of the Q hypothesis is that it is not based on a text, attested by manuscript evidence or citations from ancient Christian authors, but on a scholarly theory, developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> Although there are good reasons to presuppose common traditions behind Matthew and Luke (see below), the missing of any external evidence is a striking difference to other Gospels or Gospel-like texts from which we have only limited knowledge, such as the Egerton Gospel, the Gospel of the Hebrews or the Gospel of Peter. Unlike “Q”, these and many other early Christian Gospel texts are attested either by (even in some cases only scanty) manuscript evidence or by citations from ancient Christian authors. The Q hypothesis, by contrast, is dependent on a specific solution of the Synoptic problem and supposes a text which does not exist, and without the discovery of a manuscript it cannot be proven that it ever existed. These circumstances determine the place of the Q hypothesis in the

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<sup>1</sup> See Kloppenborg, *Theological Stakes*, 11.

<sup>2</sup> A helpful overview on the Q hypothesis among other solutions of the Synoptic problem and the history of Q is provided by Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating*, esp. chapters 1 “Q and the Synoptic Problem” (11–54) and 6 “The Jesus of History and the History of Dogma. Theological Currents in the Synoptic Problem” (271–328).

discussion of the Synoptic problem, the development of the early Jesus tradition and the quest for the historical Jesus.

In this keynote I want to raise some issues which result from the presuppositions of the Q hypothesis. I will not put forward new arguments for or against the Q hypothesis. Instead I will reflect about the possibilities and limits of a solution of the Synoptic problem with the Q hypothesis as a formative component. Because in my remarks I will ask some critical questions concerning the Q hypothesis in recent scholarship, I want to emphasize that in principle I regard the adoption of Q as useful in discussions of the Synoptic problem. The key question, however, concerns the opportunities and limits of the Q hypothesis.<sup>3</sup> In other words: Any Synoptic theory which includes the Q hypothesis should be aware of the specific character of this hypothesis which distinguishes a Synoptic model with Q from any other Synoptic theory.<sup>4</sup>

In the last decades the Q hypothesis was developed in a certain direction by the "International Q Project" (IQP) and scholars who accept the general assumptions of this line of Q research. The IQP has claimed that Q was a document with a distinct provenance, literary genre and setting within the early Jesus movement and even aimed at reconstructing a text of Q.<sup>5</sup> The problem with this approach is that it gives the impression that "Q" could be regarded in the same way as texts which, unlike Q, are attested by manuscripts or at least by explicit quotations.

From the specific character of Q as a scholarly hypothesis, however, it follows that the uncertainties and open questions of this assumed source regarding its extent, literary character and theological profile must be taken into account when interpreting these texts.<sup>6</sup> In the following remarks I will therefore first ask how the Q hypothesis can be located in the discussion of the Synoptic problem in a way that takes the specific character of Q into consideration. Next, I will look at the possibilities and limits of a verbal reconstruction of Q. Finally, I will take a quick look at the possible contribution

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<sup>3</sup> See Wolter, *Reconstructing Q*.

<sup>4</sup> This does of course not mean that a Synoptic theory without Q would be "simpler" or less hypothetical than a model with Q. However, a Synoptic model with Q has to consider the peculiarities which emerge from a supposed document or assumed common traditions behind Matthew and Luke.

<sup>5</sup> The result of this enterprise was published as: Robinson et al., *Critical Edition*. A shorter German edition of a Q text of the IQP was published as: Hoffmann and Heil, *Spruchquelle*.

<sup>6</sup> Even if it is true that the character of a hypothesis is to provide a plausible explanation for the available data and it is likewise true that all Synoptic theories are based on some sort of hypothesis (see Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating*, 11–12), it should not be overlooked that a second-stage-hypothesis (i.e. a hypothesis that is based on another hypothesis, namely on Markan priority) and which supposes a text without any external evidence has its limits with regard to the existence, provenance, and shape of such a document. The question of how this specific presupposition has to be considered in any interpretation of Q still remains to be discussed.

of Q to the quest of the historical Jesus. By way of summary I will turn to the question of implicit premises involved in the Q hypothesis. In particular I will ask why, despite several ambiguities and uncertainties, a strong version of the Q hypothesis has been developed and defended in recent research. Against this view I will suggest a moderate, “soft” version of the Q hypothesis as a perhaps more appropriate approach to Q and the Synoptic problem.

## 2. Q and the Synoptic Problem

As is well known, the Q hypothesis was the “byproduct” of a specific solution of the Synoptic problem. The two basic assumptions are Markan priority and the independence of Matthew and Luke. However, it should not be overlooked that unresolved issues of this model were recognized from the very beginning. As a consequence, additional hypotheses were introduced and other solutions of the Synoptic problem were suggested. In recent discussion, Mark Goodacre and Francis Watson, building on previous approaches of Austin Farrer and Michael Goulder,<sup>7</sup> have argued that Luke not only knows Mark but also Matthew.<sup>8</sup> Unlike Goodacre, Watson assumes the existence of an early sayings collection, although he does not regard this as a common sayings source adopted independently by Matthew and Luke.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, even if Markan priority is accepted and the existence of an early sayings collection is taken for granted, Q is not necessarily a formative component of a solution to the Synoptic problem. Any discussion of the 2DH has therefore to consider that it is only *one* model within a broader debate about the Synoptic problem in which various theories and sub-theories were developed.<sup>10</sup>

Even if the 2DH – i.e.: Markan priority, the existence of some sort of “Q”, the independence of Matthew and Luke as well as independence of Mark and Q as its basic components – is accepted, it has to be taken into account that it is an abstract model which does not reflect the actual relationships between the Synoptic Gospels, their traditions and sources. Instead, it is a heuristic tool for the explanation of a much more complex situation concerning the Synoptic Gospels and their traditions. This basic insight is not always kept in mind, however, when it comes to the interpretation of particular texts and, even more importantly, to the treatment of the common non-Markan traditions of Matthew and Luke (i.e., of “Q”). By contrast, Q is often treated as if it were a

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<sup>7</sup> Goodacre, Case; Id., Goulder; Watson, Gospel Writing.

<sup>8</sup> For a critical assessment of this model see Kloppenborg, New Paradigm; Id., On Dispensing.

<sup>9</sup> See Watson, Gospel Writing.

<sup>10</sup> See Vassiliadis, Q-Document.

proven text which could be interpreted with regard to its formation,<sup>11</sup> its literary genre,<sup>12</sup> social and political profile,<sup>13</sup> and its theology.<sup>14</sup>

A complex relationship of the Synoptic Gospels which is explained by the 2DH only in a superficial way becomes evident by some obvious observations. Already from the outset, it seems unlikely that Matthew and Luke independently of each other have integrated the same sources (Mark and Q) into their Jesus stories, added infancy narratives at the beginning and appearance stories at the end and supplemented their accounts by several other traditions. In addition, it is by no means evident that *all* of the non-Markan traditions common to Matthew and Luke (and *only* these traditions) originated from one and the same source. Moreover, the so-called “minor agreements” of Matthew and Luke<sup>15</sup> as well as the Mark/Q-overlaps<sup>16</sup> point to more complex relationships between the Synoptic Gospels. Thus, it is no accident that the 2DH was supplemented by additional theories, such as different versions of Q used by Matthew and Luke, the assumption of an “Ur-Mark” which may explain the differences between Mark on the one hand and Matthew and Luke on the other,<sup>17</sup> or a “Deutero-

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<sup>11</sup> An influential stratigraphic model was developed by Kloppenborg, *Formation*. See also Id., *Literary Convention*; Id., *Sayings Gospel*. Kloppenborg builds on previous redaction-critical studies of Q such as those of Dieter Lührmann, Athanasios Polag and Arland Jacobson, and develops them further with special regard to the question of literary genre and social history of the Q people. The result of his analysis is that Q consisted of a formative stratum of wisdom speeches which was subsequently expanded by a redactional stratum with the announcement of judgement and the temptation story as a late addition. This stratigraphy would reflect the history of the Q people who with their message of Jesus faced rejection and hostility in Israel. Moreover, he places Q within the instructional genre of ancient wisdom collections and distinguishes it from the quest of the historical Jesus. Kloppenborg's theory became very influential in certain circles of Q studies, especially in North American scholarship, where it was regarded as the basis for the study of the origin and development of Q. However, the question was also raised from early on whether it would be possible to explore the formation of a hypothetical document by identifying successive layers of its composition.

<sup>12</sup> In recent research the narrative character of Q was emphasized, e.g. by Labahn, *Der Gekommene*; Id., *Sinn in Sinnlosen*; Witetschek, *Was erzählen*.

<sup>13</sup> See Bazzana, *Village Scribes*.

<sup>14</sup> See Tiwald, *Logienquelle*.

<sup>15</sup> For a more recent approach to the minor agreements see Baum, *Faktor*.

<sup>16</sup> See the study by Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*. See also Laufen, *Doppelüberlieferungen*; Schüling, *Studien*.

<sup>17</sup> This theory was popular already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Scholars such as Christian Gottlob Wilke, Christian Hermann Weisse and Gustav Volkmar recognized that the assumption of Markan priority needs to be supplemented by a differentiation between the version of Mark used by Matthew and Luke on the one hand and canonical Mark on the other. According to Weisse, this version of Mark may even have consisted of the non-Markan traditions of Matthew and Luke which could hardly have been part of a collection of sayings of Jesus, such as John's announcement of judgment, the temptation story, Jesus' inaugural speech, the story about the centurion from Capernaum and the complex about

Mark" may even have consisted of parts of the Q-material before it was taken over by Matthew and Luke,<sup>18</sup> different versions of Mark and Q used by Matthew and Luke, some sort of relationship between Mark and Q,<sup>19</sup> and smooth transitions between the Q texts and the Matthean and Lukan *Sondergut*. This supports a flexible form of the 2DH and a more moderate approach to Q.

For more detailed explanation, the possibilities and limits for determining the relationships of the Synoptic Gospels to each other should be considered. As is well known, the main reason for adopting Markan priority in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the argument from order, not a comparison of individual passages. A detailed analysis of parallel episodes in Mark and Matthew or Mark and Luke, by contrast, would hardly lead to the conclusion that Mark has always preserved more primitive versions of individual traditions. For example, the healing of the lame in Mark 2:1–12 is a longer and more elaborated account than the parallel in Mt 9:1–8, whereas Luke provides a third version which has some minor agreements with Matthew (Luke 5:17–26). Likewise, the Markan parable of the vineyards (Mark 12:1–12) can be regarded as an expanded form of a parable of which Luke and the Gospel of Thomas (henceforth: GTh) have preserved earlier versions which lack the elements from Isa 5 present in Mark 12:1.<sup>20</sup> To regard the other versions as later redactions of Mark hardly follows from a comparison of the individual versions, but is only plausible if Markan priority is already presupposed. The basic argument for Markan priority formulated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Karl Lachmann was therefore that Matthew and Luke would follow the same narrative order only insofar as they follow Mark.<sup>21</sup> Wherever they differ from Mark, they go their separate ways.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, any theory about the relationship of the Synoptic Gospels to each other relies on observations about their overall narrative structure, whereas the use of individual traditions in the Synoptic Gospels has to be analyzed in a case-by-case study. Since a narrative framework of a second source besides Mark can only be determined within

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John and Jesus. See Weisse, *Evangelienfrage*. The Urmark-hypothesis was also part of Heinrich Julius Holtzmann's influential study "Die synoptischen Evangelien. Ihr Ursprung und geschichtlicher Charakter."

<sup>18</sup> The theory of a Deutero-Mark was vehemently defended by Fuchs, *Spuren*.

<sup>19</sup> The relationship of Mark and Q is a necessary component of the 2DH since there are obvious overlaps between them. In a strict version of the 2DH Mark and Q are regarded as independent, but there are also advocates of a dependence of Mark on Q. See e.g. Fleddermann, Q.

<sup>20</sup> See the detailed analysis by Kloppenborg, *Tenants*.

<sup>21</sup> Lachmann, *De ordine*.

<sup>22</sup> It should be acknowledged, however, that Lachmann did not conclude from this observation that Matthew and Luke used Mark directly, but that Mark was the first to bring the early Jesus traditions, consisting of five older collections, into a coherent narrative. According to Lachmann, Matthew and Luke would have used this common tradition independently of Mark and complemented it with other traditions (the so-called *Sondergut*).

certain limits,<sup>23</sup> Matthew's and Luke's treatment of such a source remains largely hypothetical. The assumption, widely shared today, that Luke would have followed the order of Q more accurately than Matthew,<sup>24</sup> is therefore debatable, and other solutions are also possible.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the argument from order as it is derived from Mark cannot be applied to Q, because we do not know the criteria according to which Matthew and Luke included the Q material into their narratives.

According to the basic definition of the 2DH hypothesis, "Q" is the non-Markan material common to Matthew and Luke. Papias' remark about the "Logia" compiled by Matthew in Hebrew language, which was taken as an external testimony for a second source besides Mark by many scholars in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is hardly considered a proof for the existence of Q today.<sup>26</sup> The determination of the extent, literary genre and wording of Q is thus entirely dependent on observations on the non-Markan material of Matthew and Luke itself.

Sometimes the scope of a "minimal Q" is extended by texts which may have been omitted by one evangelist. For example, the last of the three dialogues about following Jesus in Luke 9:61–62, the parable of the lost coin in Luke 15:8–10<sup>27</sup> or the woes against the rich in Luke 6:24–26 which may have been omitted by Matthew. The crucial question of the Q hypothesis, however, is how the "negative theory" of Q – non-Markan material of Matthew and Luke; no relationship between Matthew and Luke<sup>28</sup> – can be transformed into a positive description of Q as an early Gospel or Gospel-like text with a distinct literary character

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<sup>23</sup> There are some narrative elements in Q, such as the reference to certain places, such as Jerusalem, the desert, Capernaum, Chorazin and Bethsaïda, the characterization of groups like the Pharisees and the scribes or individual figures such as John and Jesus. However, an overall narrative context is hardly discernible. This may be due to the fact that there were no or only rudimentary narrative connections between the individual units or that more developed narrative elements are not discernible anymore because they were reworked by Matthew and Luke.

<sup>24</sup> According to this assumption, the Q texts are today often numbered according to Luke's Gospel. This may evoke the impression that the order of Q texts could be reconstructed from Matthew and Luke. However, such an assumption is not without problems because it is hardly possible to reconstruct the order of the Q texts which are integrated in distinctive ways in the narrative concepts of Matthew and Luke.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. e.g. Harnack, *Sprüche und Reden*. Harnack concludes that Matthew has preserved the order of Q more accurately than Luke.

<sup>26</sup> An exception is Frenschkowski, *Matthäus*. However, it is doubtful whether Papias' statement should be regarded as a reference to Q.

<sup>27</sup> See the discussion by Fleddermann, *Lost Coin*.

<sup>28</sup> Tuckett, *Existence*, rightly observes: "At one level, the Q hypothesis is simply a negative theory, denying the possibility that one evangelist [i.e. either Matthew or Luke, J. S.] made direct use of the work of the other" (53). The "negative determination" of Q can be extended to the other part of the Q hypothesis, namely that Q consists more or less of the common non-Markan material of Matthew and Luke, as well.



and content, which would represent a distinct trajectory in the early Jesus tradition and even lead back to the historical Jesus.

Already from the outset it is evident that the Q traditions consist of a broad spectrum in genre and provenance. This is not a problem for the Q hypothesis as such, although it has often been argued that a sayings collection could hardly consist of narrative texts such as the preaching of John the Baptist, the temptation story or the healing of the centurion's son. However, this is incorrect as many examples of such collections demonstrate. Moreover, such an argument is in danger of becoming circular since the character of Q as a sayings collection is already presupposed and then confirmed by the exclusion of such texts which would allegedly not fit to such a collection. That texts of different genres – sayings collections, healing stories, *chreiai* etc. – can be part of one and the same writing is proven by the Synoptic Gospels themselves which contain even a much broader spectrum of literary genres than the Q texts.

However, the assumption that all of the non-Markan texts shared by Matthew and Luke were derived from the same source is by no means evident or even likely. Moreover, it is impossible to know which texts of such a source were only preserved by Matthew or Luke – i.e., which of the so-called *Sondergut* texts may have belonged to Q. It can also not be excluded that Q texts were omitted by Matthew and Luke and are therefore lost or perhaps preserved in non-canonical gospels such as the Gospel of Thomas or the Gospel of the Hebrews. The extent and literary genre of Q therefore remain ambiguous.

The treatment of Mark by Matthew and Luke, which is often referred to, is a rather dubious analogy. The observation that Mark's gospel is almost completely preserved in Matthew and Luke is tempered by a remarkable difference between these two gospels. As is well-known, Luke has left out a considerable part of Mark (Mark 6:45–8:26, the so-called "Lukan omission") that without manuscript evidence would consequently appear as Matthean *Sondergut*. Q may have been treated differently by Luke, but this would be difficult, if not impossible, to prove. Moreover, Jesus' speech in parables according to Mark 4 was treated remarkably different by Matthew and Luke. Whereas Luke has reduced it to one parable (the sower) which is subsequently interpreted as hearing God's word in the right way, Matthew has expanded it by other parables to one of Jesus' fundamental speeches which foreshadows the division between acceptance and rejection of Jesus in Israel. These examples demonstrate that neither the extent nor the order of Mark could be reconstructed from Matthew and Luke and that a considerable part of Mark would appear as Matthean *Sondergut*. It can at least not be excluded that this, by analogy, is the case with Q as well.

Another problem in determining the Q material is the relationship between the so-called minor and major agreements between Matthew and Luke. As is well known, both categories overlap and cannot clearly be distinguished from one another. Clear cases of Q texts, i.e. texts known to Matthew and Luke, but not to Mark, are e.g. the structured speeches composed from individual sayings or

smaller sayings clusters, such as the compositions about loving one's enemies (Matt 5:39–48/Luke 6:27–36), not worrying about food and clothes (Matt 6:25–33/Luke 12:22–31) and the encouragement to confession without fear (10:26–33/Lk 12:2–12).<sup>29</sup> Although there are differences between Matthew and Luke, it is obvious that they rely on common written sources besides Mark. Some of these texts contain ethical teachings of Jesus to his followers. This is also the case with shorter speeches about the conditions of discipleship such as Matt 8:19–22/Luke 9:57–62 and Matt 10:37–38/Luke 14:26–27. Because these texts share a common structure and content and show a high degree of verbal correspondence, it is quite likely that they originated from the same strand of the early Jesus tradition and belonged to the same written document.

In other cases, such as the parables of the Great Banquet (Matt 22:1–10.11–14/Luke 14:16–24) or the proverb about insipid salt (Matt 5:13/Luke 14:34–35) it is less clear whether they should be ascribed to the same source. It is at least not more likely than in the case of the parable of the virgins in Matt 25:1–12 or a saying like Matt 7:6 which may have been left out by Luke.

Another case are the so-called Mark/Q-overlaps. It is sometimes difficult to decide which level of agreement against Mark leads to the assumption of a second version of the same episode accessible to Matthew and Luke, and whether this version is just a variant of the Markan episode or an independent version, and whether this independent version should be ascribed to Q. Thus, the distinction between the Mark/Q-overlaps and the triple tradition, i.e., texts which were taken over directly from Mark, is sometimes fuzzy.

To take an example: The Beelzebul pericope, which is part of the triple tradition, consists of several agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark.<sup>30</sup> Some of them, especially the exorcism at the beginning of the episode (Matt 12:22/Luke 11:14) and the sayings about Jesus' exorcisms as the dawning of God's kingdom in contrast to those of other Jewish exorcists (Matt 12:27–28/Luke 11:19–20), may be regarded as major agreements, whereas the lack of the characterization of the opponents as coming from Jerusalem (Mark 3:22), the missing of the accusation "he has Beelzebul" (Mark 3:22), the characterization of Jesus' speech as "in parables" (ἐν παραβολαῖς, Mk 3:23) and the absent rhetorical question πῶς δύναται σατανᾶς σατανᾶν ἐκβάλλειν (Mk 3:23) as well as some minor variations shared by Matthew and Luke may be counted as minor agreements. Moreover, in Q the Beelzebul pericopae may have been connected to the sayings about the returning of the evil Spirit (Matt 12:43–45/Luke 11:24–26) and the demand for a sign (Matt 12:43–45/Luke 11:16.29–32). These observations make it likely that Matthew and Luke had access to a non-Markan variant

<sup>29</sup> One could add Mt 7:1–5/Lk 6:37–42; Mt 7:7–11/Lk 11:9–13; Mt 7:16–20/Lk 6:43–45. See Piper, *Wisdom*.

<sup>30</sup> I have analyzed the Synoptic versions of this text, including GTh 35, elsewhere in detail: Schröter, *Erinnerung*, 240–299.

of the Beelzebul controversy, which consequently belongs to the texts shared by Matthew and Luke with a parallel in Mark. These texts also include the mission speech, the sayings about taking one's cross and following Jesus, and some more traditions. Mark and Q may therefore have been closer to each other than it sometimes appears.

A more difficult case is the appearance of John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus. The agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark in these episodes may again partly be classified as minor agreements – as e.g. the phrase *πάσα ἡ περίχωρος τοῦ Ἰορδάνου* (Matt 3:5/Lk 3:3), the passive infinitive *βαπτισθῆναι* (Matt 3:13/Luke 3:21), the participle *βαπτισθεῖς* or *βαπτισθέντος* (Mat 3:16/Luke 3:21) over against Mark's *ἐβαπτίσθη* and the use of *ἀνοίγω* instead of *σχίζω* (Matt 3:16/Lk 3:21; cf. Mark 1:10), partly as major agreements such as the preaching of judgement by John the Baptist (Matt 3:7–10; Luke 3:7–9) and the announcement of the coming One by John in Matt 3:12/Lk 3:17. These agreements again point to a different version of the beginning of the Jesus story by the depiction of John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus, accessible to Matthew and Luke. Whether this version was part of manuscripts of Mark's Gospel used by Matthew and Luke, whether it belonged to another version of the Jesus story and how this would be related to "Q" is difficult to determine.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps it was part of a Jesus story besides Mark which also started with the characterization of John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus. This assumption could be supported by the observation that the opening section of Mark with the conflation of two quotations from scripture introduced with "as it is written in the prophet Isaiah", the abbreviated characterization of John's preaching of repentance and the condensed account of Jesus' temptation may represent a shortened version of a more extensive narrative.

Another case are *chreiai* with a parallel in Mark which share some characteristics peculiar to Matthew and Luke. An example is the controversy about healing on a Sabbath in Mark 3:1–6. This episode is taken over in Matthew 12:9–14 and Luke 6:6–11. However, Matthew has expanded Jesus' response by a justification that is absent from Mark and Luke in Matt 12:11:

τίς ἔσται ἐξ ὑμῶν ἄνθρωπος ὃς ἔξει πρόβατον ἐν καὶ ἐὰν ἐμπέσῃ τοῦτο τοῖς σάββασιν εἰς βόθυνον, οὐχὶ κρατήσῃ αὐτὸ καὶ ἐγερεῖ;

A similar saying occurs in the last Sabbath controversy in Luke's Gospel in Luke 14:5:

<sup>31</sup> The question is important because it makes a difference whether "Q" consisted of a version of the baptism of Jesus or not. If this is assumed, the narrative character of Q would be strengthened.

τίνος ὑμῶν υἱὸς ἢ βοῦς εἰς φρέαρ πεσεῖται, καὶ οὐκ εὐθέως ἀνασπάσει αὐτὸν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ σαββάτου;<sup>32</sup>

Although both sayings hardly match in wording, they share the form of a rhetorical question addressed to Jesus' opponents, and the justification of Jesus' behavior on a Sabbath by pointing to Jewish Sabbath regulations. Because of these coincidences, Frans Neirynck has included these sayings in his edition of "Q-Parallels" which refrains from a reconstruction of the Q text and instead prints the Matthean and the Lukan text on opposite pages (although a later edition of the Q parallels is published together with the reconstructed Q text of the IQP).<sup>33</sup> The saying is also included in the reconstruction of Q by Harry Fleddermann who reconstructs a Q text mainly on the basis of Matthew.<sup>34</sup>

If one decides against an inclusion of Matt 12:11/Lk 14:5 in Q, as many reconstructions of Q do, the question remains how to explain the coincidence of an argument about Jesus' behavior on the Sabbath as part of a controversy story in Matthew and Luke over against Mark. A possible solution would be to regard these rhetorical questions as taken over by Matthew and Luke from oral tradition. However, this solution could also be applied to other isolated sayings or small clusters usually regarded as Q texts, such as Matt 5:13/Luke 14:34–35 (the insipid salt) or the saying "all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted" which occurs once in Matthew (23:12) and twice in Luke (14:11; 18:14) each time in an entirely different context. The saying has close relationships to Jewish tradition<sup>35</sup> as well as to other New Testament passages<sup>36</sup> and may have circulated in the early Jesus tradition before it was integrated in different ways in the Jesus narratives of Matthew and Luke.

These observations challenge a strong version of the Q hypothesis. A more modest approach to Q, which does not abandon the Q hypothesis in favor of a "Mark without Q" solution, but does not aim at recovering the extent and even the wording of Q either, would also be appropriate with regard to the genre of Q. The definition as a sayings collection (or Sayings Gospel) which was subsequently expanded by narrative traditions such as the healing of the centurion's servant and the temptation story are in danger of becoming circular, since they presuppose that the collection of sayings of Jesus was the formative element of Q, which is far from certain.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> A third, more removed version of this argumentative strategy occurs in Luke 13:15: ἕκαστος ὑμῶν τῷ σαββάτῳ οὐ λύει τὸν βόυν αὐτοῦ ἢ τὸν ὄνον ἀπὸ τῆς φάτνης καὶ ἀπαγαγὼν ποτίζει;

<sup>33</sup> Neirynck, Q Parallels.

<sup>34</sup> Fleddermann, Q, 707–713; 902–903.

<sup>35</sup> Ezek 21:31; 22:29; Job 5:11; Sir 10:14; Prov 3:34.

<sup>36</sup> Lk 1:52; Jas 4:5; 1Pet 5:5.

<sup>37</sup> It cannot be excluded that sayings and sayings clusters were connected to narrative traditions in the Jesus tradition from the very beginning of the transmission process. The Q texts may therefore reveal traces of early narratives about Jesus which later became

From early on scholars have also pointed to narrative elements in Q serving as introductions to the sayings or speeches. In more recent times it has even been suggested that Q may be regarded as a narrative presentation of Jesus as the Son of Man who was rejected in Israel but will return as Son of Man to the coming judgement.<sup>38</sup> The Gospel of Thomas, by contrast, despite often being referred to as an analogy to Q as an early sayings collection,<sup>39</sup> is an entirely different case. The speculation that the GTh is derived from a sayings gospel that “must have been a version of Q”<sup>40</sup> is hardly convincing. The GTh is of an entirely different character than the sayings clusters and structured speeches ascribed to Q. The GTh is even unique among ancient sayings collections in that it presents most of the sayings and parables as separate entities, introduced with “Jesus says” (or “Jesus said”). Moreover, as can be inferred from a comparison with the Synoptic Gospels and also with P.Oxy. 655,<sup>41</sup> the GTh was compiled from individual traditions taken over from different writings, and probably also from oral tradition. The GTh is therefore a composition which organizes Jesus traditions from various sources as teaching of the “living Jesus” in the form of ethical instruction to Jesus’ followers, called “the solitary ones” and “the elect”. The closest analogies to the GTh concerning its genre are writings such as the Sentences of Sextus, the Teachings of Silvanus, Epicurus’ Kyriai Doxai or the Jewish collection Pirke Aboth (“Sayings of the Fathers”).<sup>42</sup>

Q is an entirely different case. As far as it can be recognized from Matthew and Luke, the Q traditions were, at least in part, connected to each other to form a, perhaps rudimentary, Jesus story which was subsequently integrated in the more developed narratives of Matthew and Luke. The Q traditions may therefore be regarded as pre-Synoptic traditions, similar to the supposed pre-Markan

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part of the overall narratives of the Gospels. Such a vague and reticent interpretation of the common non-Markan traditions may be unsatisfactory at a first glance. It may, however, explain why the Q texts became part of Matthew and Luke and were not transmitted separately. Moreover, such a version of the Q hypothesis can avoid several of the problems which a “strong” hypothesis inevitably evokes.

<sup>38</sup> See above n. 12.

<sup>39</sup> This idea can be traced back to James M. Robinson and Helmut Koester who identified “trajectories” in early Christianity of which one would have been oriented towards the collection and transmission of sayings of Jesus. According to Robinson and Koester, Q and the GTh belonged to this strand of Christian origins. See Robinson, *Logoi Sophon*; Koester, *Gnomai Diaphoroi*; Id., *One Jesus*. This claim has often been repeated, although on closer inspection it isn’t very convincing.

<sup>40</sup> Robinson et al., *Critical Edition*, lxi.

<sup>41</sup> For more recent descriptions of the manuscripts of the GTh see Witetschek, *Thomas und Johannes*, 16–26; Gathercole, *Thomas*, 3–34. It should be acknowledged however, that the differences between P.Oxy. 655 and the Coptic manuscript from Nag Hammadi are considerably larger compared to the two other papyri.

<sup>42</sup> A more adequate way would therefore be to study the GTh in the context of ancient Greco-Roman, Jewish and Christian sayings collections, similar to the study on the Sentences of Sextus undertaken by Wilfried Eisele and others. See Eisele, *Sextussprüche*.