

Rewriting the Gospel: The Synoptics among Pluriform Literary Traditions

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of Doctor  
of Philosophy in the Graduate Program in  
Religion in the Graduate School  
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2021

ABSTRACT

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation situates the synoptic gospels in the context of first and second century pluriform literary traditions. The treatment of *Mark* by the authors of *Matthew* and *Luke* is far from typical of contemporary historical writings. The conservatism of the latter evangelists with the wording and scope of their literary sources resembles, rather, a compositional procedure associated with technical literature. Independent religious experts appropriated this convention of re-writing from rival teachers as an appropriate method for demonstrating their mastery of received knowledge while, simultaneously, revising that disciplinary tradition. The synoptic gospels were, therefore, understood as discrete books by identifiable authors composed on the same substrate of content, called a *hypothesis*. Two second century Christian teachers illustrate the origin of synoptic-type gospels in the educational marketplace of Greek-speaking cities. Both Marcion and Tatian were independent Christian teachers in major urban areas. Both composed new gospels according to the conservative conventions evinced in the synoptic gospels.

To Winona Olive

## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>xi</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
0.1 Project Overview .....	3
0.2 A Note on “Authorship” Language.....	5
0.3 A Note on Oral Tradition .....	6
<b>Chapter 1 The Gospel <i>Hypothesis</i>: Pluriform Literary Traditions and the Gospels</b> .....	<b>9</b>
1.1 Introduction.....	9
1.2 The Literary use of <i>Hypothesis</i> .....	9
1.2.1 Sextus Empiricus.....	12
1.2.2 Dramatic Scholia.....	13
1.2.3 Other Narrative <i>Hypotheses</i> .....	14
1.2.4 Rhetorical Criticism .....	17
1.2.5 Non-Narrative <i>Hypotheses</i> .....	19
1.3 The <i>Hypothesis</i> of the Gospels.....	23
1.3.1 Cosmas Indicopleustes.....	23
1.3.2 Clement of Alexandria .....	24
1.3.3 Eusebius of Caesarea .....	25
1.3.4 Epiphanius of Salamis.....	27
1.4 ‘The Gospel’ as <i>Hypothesis</i> .....	29
1.4.1 Clement of Alexandria .....	35
1.4.2 Justin Martyr .....	36
1.4.3 Irenaeus of Lyon .....	38
1.5 Conclusion .....	46
<b>Chapter 2 Another Synoptic Problem: The Distinctive Conservatism of the Synoptic Gospels</b> .....	<b>47</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	47
2.2 Another Synoptic Problem.....	48
2.3 Compositional Methods for Hellenistic and Roman Historical Writing.....	54
2.3.1 Livy .....	55
2.3.2 Plutarch .....	57

2.3.4 Appian of Alexandria.....	60
2.3.5 Josephus.....	62
2.4 An Unsolved Problem?.....	65
2.4.1 William Sanday.....	66
2.4.2 B.H. Streeter.....	67
2.4.3 Francis Gerald Downing.....	71
2.4.4 R.A. Derrenbacker Jr. ....	73
2.4.5 John S. Kloppenborg.....	76
2.4.6 F.G. Downing (again).....	80
2.4.7 J. Andrew Doole.....	81
2.4.8 Alan Kirk.....	83
2.4.9 Eric Eve.....	87
2.5 Plagiarism.....	88
2.5.1 Literary Property.....	90
2.5.2 Gospel Writing as Plagiarism?.....	97
2.6 Gospel as <i>hypomnēmata</i> ?.....	100
2.6.1 Defining <i>Hypomnēmata</i> .....	102
2.6.2 Publishing <i>Hypomnēmata</i> as Plagiarism.....	105
2.6.3 Testimonia to Gospels as <i>Hypomnēmata</i> .....	106
2.7 Conclusion.....	110
<b>Chapter 3 The Divine Art: Technical Literature, Independent Religious Experts, and the Synoptics.....</b>	<b>111</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	111
3.2 What is Technical Literature?.....	114
3.2.1 Defining Technical Literature.....	114
3.2.2 A Note on Terminology.....	119
3.3 Compositional Conservatism in Technical Literature.....	121
3.3.1 Galen of Pergamum.....	122
3.3.2 Hero of Alexandria.....	124
3.3.3 Vitruvius.....	128
3.3.4 Pliny the Elder.....	130
3.3.5 Aelian and Arrian's <i>Tactica</i> .....	132
3.4 The Lukan Prolog.....	137
3.4.1 Loveday Alexander.....	137
3.4.2 The Reception of Alexander.....	140

3.5 Gospels, Technical Literature, and Independent Religious Experts .....	149
3.5.1 Medicine and the Gods .....	149
3.5.2 Technical Disciplines, Religion, and Philosophy .....	153
3.5.3 Independent Religious Experts and their Books .....	156
3.5.4 Christianity as a Technical Expertise .....	162
3.6 Conclusion .....	167
<b>Chapter 4 What is an Evangelist?: Form, Redaction, Genre, and Textual Criticism.....</b>	<b>170</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	170
4.2 Evangelist as Collector: The Form Critics .....	171
4.3 Evangelist as Author: Redaction and Genre Criticism .....	177
4.3.1 William Wrede.....	178
4.3.2 Matthew’s Redaction Profile .....	180
4.3.3 Luke’s Redaction Profile .....	187
4.3.4 Genre Criticism.....	192
4.4 Evangelist as Copyist: New Philology.....	198
4.4.1 David Parker .....	202
4.4.2 Matthew Larsen.....	204
4.4.3 Form Criticism <i>Redivivus?</i> .....	207
4.5 Ancient Publication and Open Texts .....	208
4.6 The Earliest Reception of the Gospels.....	211
4.6.1 The Synoptics.....	212
4.6.2 John and the Johannine Epilogue.....	212
4.6.3 Papias .....	214
4.6.4 The Epistle of the Apostles .....	215
4.6.5 Justin Martyr .....	216
4.6.6 Other Authors.....	218
4.7 The Viscosity of the Synoptic Text Traditions .....	220
4.8 The Formal Anonymity of the Gospels.....	229
4.9 Conclusion .....	232
<b>Chapter 5 The Gospel according to Marcion (Part 1): Textual Transmission and Gospel Rewriting .....</b>	<b>234</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	234
5.2 Who was Marcion? .....	234
5.3 Reconstructing Marcion’s <i>Gospel</i> .....	237
5.4 Marcion’s <i>Gospel</i> and the Lukan Text Tradition.....	242

5.4.1 A Quantitative Distinction .....	243
5.4.2 A Qualitative Distinction .....	246
5.5 Was Marcion responsible? .....	248
5.5.1 Basilides of Alexandria .....	250
5.5.2 Epistle of the Apostles .....	253
5.5.3 Theodotus the Valentinian .....	254
5.5.4 Justin Martyr .....	258
5.5.5 Other Witnesses in the Mid-Second Century .....	262
5.6 Conclusion .....	265
<b>Chapter 6 The Gospel according to Marcion (Part 2): Ancient Textual Criticism and Gospel Rewriting.....</b>	<b>267</b>
6.1 Introduction.....	267
6.2 Marcion as Textual Critic?.....	267
6.3 Hellenistic Textual Criticism .....	271
6.3.1 Zenodotus.....	272
6.3.2 Aristophanes of Byzantium.....	273
6.3.3 Aristarchus .....	275
6.3.4 Comparison with Marcion .....	276
6.4 Roman Textual Criticism .....	277
6.4.1 The Beginnings .....	278
6.4.2 First and Second Century Scholarship .....	280
6.4.3 Medical Literature.....	282
6.4.4 Philosophical Literature .....	286
6.5 Jewish and Christian Textual Scholarship .....	287
6.5.1 Philo's Alexandrian Opponents .....	288
6.5.2 Pseudo-Clementine <i>Homilies</i> .....	289
6.5.3 Origen .....	291
6.6 Marcion's Gospel and Ancient Text Critical Editions .....	292
6.6.1 A Qualitative Distinction .....	293
6.6.2 A Quantitative Distinction .....	294
6.7 The Gospel Rewritten .....	295
6.7.1 The Problem with Our Sources .....	296
6.7.2 Jesus and the God of Jewish Scripture.....	299
6.7.3 Other Evidence of Creativity .....	302
6.8 Marcion as the Corruptor of a Text Tradition? .....	305

6.8.1 The Origins of Textual Variation.....	306
6.8.2 Tertullian’s Caricature of Marcion.....	309
6.8.3 Epiphanius and The Gospel according to the Hebrews.....	310
6.9 Marcion as Evangelist.....	310
6.10 Conclusion .....	312
<b>Chapter 7 The Gospel according to Tatian: A Teacher, His Rivals, and Gospel Rewriting</b> .....	<b>314</b>
7.1 Introduction.....	314
7.2 Tatian the Religious Expert .....	314
7.3 Tatian the Heretic?.....	319
7.4 Reconstructing the <i>Diatessaron</i> .....	326
7.5 The Language of Tatian’s Gospel.....	335
7.6 Tatian the Harmonist?.....	341
7.7 Tatian the Evangelist.....	346
7.7 Conclusion .....	352
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>354</b>
<b>Appendix A Theoretical Postscript: On Authorship .....</b>	<b>358</b>
A.1 Defining ‘authorship’ .....	360
A.2 ‘Authorship’ as Vicious Anachronism?.....	366
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>372</b>

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## Introduction

Why did people keep writing gospels? The author of *Matthew* was a reader of *Mark*. As a literate person, he (or she) could have simply copied and distributed *Mark* as he received it. If the author of *Matthew* had something to say, he might have composed a commentary, added an appendix, or written a sequel. In such a work, this reader of *Mark* might have advanced competing interpretations of Jesus' teaching, rejected certain sayings as spurious, proposed alternative versions, or even supplemented the gospel with additional material. But, instead, our evangelist re-wrote *Mark* into a new gospel.

The author of *Luke-Acts* faced a similar situation. He (or she) was a reader of *Mark* and, like the author of *Matthew*, produced a new gospel. Writing a sequel to *Mark* — the book we know as *The Acts of the Apostles* — did not require re-writing *Mark*. Xenophon wrote his *Hellenica* without rewriting Thucydides' *History*, and Quintus Smyrnaeus wrote his *Posthomerica* without rewriting the *Iliad*. Before penning his sequel, however, the author of *Luke-Acts* re-wrote *Mark* into a new gospel.

There is, furthermore, nothing obvious about the way these authors proceeded to write their gospels. They might have written fresh narratives of Jesus' life — as did the author of *John*. They might have recorded a story of Jesus' infancy by writing a stand-alone prequel — like the *Protoevangelion of James*. They might have added resurrection appearances by appending them to manuscripts of *Mark* — as did the author of *Mark's* "Longer Ending." What the authors of *Matthew* and *Luke* did, in fact, is re-write *Mark*. They produced works that are ideologically and thematically distinct from *Mark* while also reproducing *Mark's* wording and scope.

There is a wealth of scholarship on the place of gospels in the literary world of Greek and Roman antiquity. Scholars have observed meaningful similarities between the gospels and various literary corpora — especially ancient biography, novels, and Jewish scripture. These generic analogies provide valuable insights into the ideological and literary milieu in which the gospels were written. The proposed analogies do not, however, adequately explain the kind of re-writing undertaken by the authors of *Matthew* and *Luke*. Research into the generic identity of gospel literature has neglected the conservatism of their composition. Moreover, scholars have failed to situate this compositional procedure in contemporary book culture.

The manner in which the latter evangelists re-wrote *Mark*, I propose, is best explained as the appropriation of literary conventions from technical literature by independent religious experts. The creation of *Matthew* and *Luke* from *Mark* can be understood in the competitive marketplace of would-be-teachers in the first and second centuries. Such teachers revised and repackaged bodies of received knowledge to appeal to prospective students. The curious combination of conservatism and creativity evinced in the synoptic gospels finds its closest analogs in the books promulgated by these freelance experts.

People kept writing synoptic gospels because Christian teachers — imitating the technical disciplines — promoted their own study circles by reworking received knowledge into new books. This practice continued well into the second century until the attribution of the now-canonical gospels to figures of mythic significance became widespread and these synoptics started being treated as uniquely authoritative. While the earliest evangelists are lost to history, a few second century authors of synoptic-type gospels can be identified. These latter-day evangelists corroborate the above analysis of conservative re-writing and provide invaluable insights into the sociological contexts of gospel production.

## 0.1 Project Overview

Chapter one identifies “native” (i.e. first and second century Greek) terminology for books written on the same subject. Hellenistic and Roman readers had technical language to describe the relationship between different books that describe the same events or otherwise share substantial content. Such books were said to be written on the same *hypothesis*. This terminology is applied to the gospels already in the second century. The first and second century synoptic evangelists, thus, had literary categories available to them for understanding the synoptics as distinct but closely related books.

Chapter two argues that scholarship on the synoptic gospels has failed to situate the compositional method evinced by *Matthew* and *Luke* in its historical context. The latter synoptic evangelists (and two second century authors of synoptic-type gospels) reproduce the very wording of their primary source as well as its narrative scope. This is not how ancient historians or biographers treated their sources. Authors writing on an established *hypothesis* do not reproduce the language of their predecessors in a manner resembling the synoptic gospels. Plagiarism, moreover, was an operative category in first and second century literary discourse. It is unlikely, however, that a series of synoptic evangelists spanning a century all behaved in a way that was socially unacceptable. More likely, I contend, these authors were acting according to a different set of literary conventions.

Chapter three argues that the conservative compositional procedure evinced in the synoptic gospels finds its closest contemporary analog in technical literature. The extensive reproduction of wording in the creation of new books was explicitly associated with technical writing in contemporary discussions of literary composition. Surviving examples of technical literature confirm this association. Gospels, of course, are not themselves instances of technical

writing. Rather, self-authenticating religious experts appropriated the literary practices of rival teachers in the technical disciplines. The synoptic-type gospels are the products of early Christian teachers re-writing the literature of their intellectual tradition in the same fashion as their competitors.

Chapter four argues that the synoptic gospels should be understood as distinct works of creative authorship. There is a history of scholarship contending that gospels are something other than works of theoretically identifiable —if, in fact, forgotten— individuals. The form critics claimed that the synoptics were artless collections of oral tradition shaped and reshaped by faceless collectives. More recently, scholars have proposed that the synoptics are open and living texts, shaped and reshaped by innumerable scribes. These similar accounts of gospel origins rest on different evidentiary grounds and emerge from different scholarly projects. Nevertheless, certain insights of redaction and genre criticism weigh against all such collective and gradualistic accounts of gospel origins. Moreover, the early reception and text tradition(s) of the synoptics suggest that these gospels have always been recognized as distinct works.

Chapter five argues that, contrary to certain revisionist accounts, Marcion of Sinope should be credited with composing the gospel used by his followers. Marcion's gospel cannot be the product of the variation that characterizes the rest of the synoptic text tradition. The external evidence, moreover, indicates that *Luke* existed in its non-Marcionite form before Marcion and Marcion was himself responsible for re-writing *Luke* to create a new work.

Chapter six argues that Marcion's treatment of *Luke* should be understood as the creation of a new synoptic-type gospel. Scholars who accept Marcion's responsibility for the shape of his gospel have explained his compositional behavior as a kind of ancient textual criticism.

Marcion's treatment of *Luke*, however, does not resemble the conventions of ancient textual

scholarship. Rather, Marcion's procedure resembles the author of *Matthew's* treatment of *Mark*. The testimonia to the career of Marcion, therefore, offer some insight into the historical setting of a synoptic-type gospel.

My sixth chapter considers a second identifiable author of a synoptic-type gospel: Tatian the Assyrian. Tatian's creative refashioning of source material into the so-called *Diatessaron* reveal his work to be a composition in the tradition of the synoptics. As such the surviving work of Tatian and the testimonia to his life furnish valuable insight into the circumstances of synoptic gospel writing. These reveal Tatian to be an independent teacher in competition with various technical experts.

The present study, thus, situates the pluriformity of the gospel tradition in a plausible first and second century context. The texts, text traditions, and reception histories of the canonical synoptics suggest that these were composed as novel and distinct works according to the conventions of technical literature. Two extra-canonical gospels confirm the social location of synoptic-type gospel writing in the literary sub-culture of the Greek arts. Marcion and Tatian demonstrate that independent teachers in the urban landscape of ancient Rome continued to practice the kind of re-writing evinced in the synoptics.

## **0.2 A Note on "Authorship" Language**

This study is concerned with the actions of certain humans in the first and second centuries. Those actions are the compositional behaviors evinced in the synoptic gospels. Although it is often innocent metonymy, the elision of an author's name with their work has produced a great deal of conceptual confusion. To avoid this, I never refer to the synoptic

evangelists by their traditional names. Rather, I invariably italicize *Luke* to mark it as the title of a work and refer to its unknown author as either “the third evangelist” or “the author of *Luke*.”

My use of “authorship” language throughout this study will disturb some readers. That the synoptic gospels are the products of authors (used both as an analytic and actor’s category) is a conclusion of this study — not one of its presuppositions. To abstain from this common and useful terminology until after I have articulated my conception of gospel literature would be needlessly cumbersome. I, therefore, refer to these first and second century persons as “authors” even as I am defending the applicability of this term.

Most readers will have little trouble following my claims about the authorship of books in antiquity. In his *Lives*, Diogenes Laertius lists the titles of works which he attributes to each philosopher. By “authorship” I refer to the kind of responsibility with respect to a work that led Diogenes to attribute a specific book to a specific figure. If a still disoriented reader requires further explanation of the ordinary uses of these terms, they may find the theoretical postscript in my appendix helpful.

### **0.3 A Note on Oral Tradition**

It is conventional for studies of gospel literature to give some justification for their use of Greek book culture to interpret Greek books about Jesus. Since scholars are already persuaded that early Christians developed the story of Jesus as a series of oral traditions, why should we attend to first and second century writings in our efforts to understand other first and second century writings? The answer, of course, is that historians must treat gospels as the products of human actors embedded in social, technological, and other cultural matrices. And the one thing

we know for sure about these writings is that they were, in fact, written. Analogous writings will, therefore, prove valuable in the abductive and inferential behavior we call historical inquiry.

The first century Mediterranean was, of course, “a mixed media environment.”<sup>1</sup> Oral and written communication are inextricably linked.<sup>2</sup> Composition, revision, and publication in the Hellenistic and Roman world(s) involved oral communication. But “orality” is just people talking to each other. Referring to “oral tradition” runs the risk of reifying our abstractions of certain communicative behaviors. The history of Biblical scholarship is replete with claims about what did and did not belong to the oral tradition. But there are no parameters for what people might say to each other. There is no transcendental, mind-independent store of oral tradition; there are only a series of speakers making their own decisions about what to say about Jesus and how to say it.

The surviving evidence for the gospel tradition is written and material. In an influential essay, James Dunn argued that scholars must take as their “default position” that every Jesus tradition originated as oral tradition.<sup>3</sup> But Dunn’s injunction is backwards. What we actually know about gospels is the opposite: traditions about Jesus, preserved for us in manuscripts, were written. Whether any particular story originated as an oral tradition (i.e. a story communicated by word of mouth) needs to be demonstrated. But, as Dunn shows at length in his essay, New

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<sup>1</sup> Kirk, *Q in Matthew*, 2. For a comprehensive and up-to-date review of scholarship on orality see, Eric Eve, *Behind the Gospels: Understanding the Oral Tradition*, Reprint edition (Fortress Press, 2014), 108–34; Alan Kirk, *Q in Matthew: Ancient Media, Memory, and Early Scribal Transmission of the Jesus Tradition*, UK ed. edition (London ; New York: T&T Clark, 2016), 1–28.

<sup>2</sup> Against a simplistic oral/literary binary, see Mark Goodacre, *Thomas and the Gospels: The Case for Thomas’s Familiarity with the Synoptics* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 128–42; Kirk, *Q in Matthew*, 18–20.

<sup>3</sup> James D. G. Dunn, “Altering the Default Setting: Re-Envisaging the Early Transmission of the Jesus Tradition,” *New Testament Studies* 49, no. 02 (April 2003).

Testament scholarship has failed to identify any distinctive or heuristically useful features of oral—as opposed to written—tradition.<sup>4</sup> I do not doubt that certain aspects of gospel literature originated in sermons, lectures, and conversations. As such, a study of narrative techniques in third century homiletics might prove instructive for understanding the creation of third century gospel literature. “Orality” in the abstract, however, is seldom useful as an analytic tool.

Whatever else they might have been, these stories about Jesus were first and second century books. The gospels were produced, copied, and read in a Greco-Roman book culture. They may, therefore, be studied with benefit by students of this literature.

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<sup>4</sup> James D. G. Dunn, “Altering the Default Setting: Re-Envisaging the Early Transmission of the Jesus Tradition,” *New Testament Studies* 49, no. 02 (April 2003): 150, 156–57. Kirk says the “most emblematic property” of oral tradition is “*variation*, or more technically, *multiformity*.” Kirk, *Q in Matthew*, 5. This, of course, will not distinguish oral tradition from any other kind of tradition.

## Chapter 1

### The Gospel *Hypothesis*: Pluriform Literary Traditions and the Gospels

#### 1.1 Introduction

The synoptic gospels are strikingly similar. The three works known as *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke* are lives of Jesus, written in Greek, sometime at the end of the first century or beginning of the second. Each bore the title ‘gospel.’<sup>1</sup> These three synoptic gospels tell most of the same stories, and they tell those stories with much of the same wording.

Gospels are not the only books in antiquity to share titles, subject matter, and even wording. Hellenistic and Roman book culture had its own language for describing such pluriform literary traditions. Ancient readers applied this language to gospel literature; and this way of understanding the relationship between similar books shaped the production and reception of the gospels.

#### 1.2 The Literary use of *Hypothesis*

One morning in the late first century, Dio Chrysostom woke in ill-health. Perhaps to put his misery into perspective, Dio took up reading Greek tragedies. He selected three works with the same title: *Philoctetes* by Aeschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles. All three dramas depict the

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<sup>1</sup> The manuscripts attest various forms of the traditional titles. Silke Petersen argues that the *Ausgangstext* is the formula “EYΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΚΑΤΑ name.” The use of the preposition κατά, however, suggests that this *Ausgangstext* is itself a secondary development. Silke Petersen, “Die Evangelienüberschriften und die Entstehung des neutestamentlichen Kanons,” *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und Kunde der Älteren Kirche* 97, no. 3–4 (2006). Matthew Larsen argues that the formatting of the title in the earliest manuscripts —specifically an unnecessary line break after ‘gospel’ and the placement of the κατά formula after ‘gospel’— indicates that scribes in the second through fourth centuries recognized EYΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ as the title of the work. Matthew D C Larsen, “Correcting the Gospel: Putting the Titles of the Gospels in Historical Context,” in *Rethinking “Authority” in Late Antiquity: Authorship, Law, and Transmission in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 78–104. The conclusion of Petersen and Larsen is corroborated by Marcion’s and Tatian’s use of “Gospel” *simpliciter* as a title in the second century.

theft of Heracles' enchanted bow from Philoctetes whom the Greeks had abandoned on Lemnos. In his 52<sup>nd</sup> *Oration*, Dio provides a detailed comparison of these three narratives, cataloging their differences and defending the creative choices of each playwright. There are striking similarities between the three *Philoctetes*: The same things happen to the same people in the same places. In fact, all three playwrights alter the received story in the same way, by giving to Odysseus the role traditionally associated with Diomedes.<sup>2</sup> The few surviving fragments of Aeschylus' and Euripides' plays suggest that each poet was literarily dependent on his predecessor.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, the plays are three distinct works: Sophocles alone features Neoptolemus; Euripides alone re-introduces Diomedes. These three playwrights retold the same set of traditional scenes while exercising significant creativity.

What is the relationship between three such written works? Colloquially, we might describe the Athenian plays as three adaptations of the same story. Narrative critics distinguish between the *fabula*, the *syuzhet*, and the text.<sup>4</sup> The first refers to the elements of a narrative, including their logical sequence. The second is the author's arrangement of those elements in a particular work. The third is the verbal expression itself. On this schema, all three *Philoctetes* share the same *fabula* but have very different texts. Whether or not they share a *syuzhet* is a matter of degree.

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<sup>2</sup> Diomedes, according to Proclus, was responsible for stealing the bow of Philoctetes in the *Little Iliad* (*Chrestomathia* 2). William Calder says Aeschylus was responsible for reassigning this role to Odysseus. William M. Calder III, "Aeschylus' 'Philoctetes,'" *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 11, no. 3 (Fall 1970): 177–78.

<sup>3</sup> S. Douglas Olson notes the "virtually word-for-word" dependence of Euripides on Aeschylus for a line preserved in the fragments. S. Douglas Olson, "Politics and the Lost Euripidean Philoctetes," *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 60, no. 2 (1991): 272. Likewise, Sophocles at *Philoctetes* 797–98 adapts a famous line preserved in a fragment of Aeschylus' *Philoctetes* (fr. 255). Hans Joachim Mette, *Die Fragmente der Tragödien des Aischylos*. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1959), 148–49. Calder III, "Aeschylus' 'Philoctetes,'" 177.

<sup>4</sup> Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (University of Toronto Press, 2009), 6–7.

But those are our categories. Readers in antiquity had their own vocabulary for such closely related works. Dio Chrysostom describes the three *Philoctetes* as follows:

They were the works of nearly the best of men: Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides — all of them concerning the same *hypothesis*. For it was the theft —or should it be called a ‘robbery’?— of the bow of Philoctetes.<sup>5</sup>

Dio Chrysostom recognized the three *Philoctetes* as discrete works by different authors. What these three plays have in common —the story of how Philoctetes lost his bow— Dio calls a *hypothesis* (ὑπόθεσις).

Despite the many similarities between the three *Philoctetes*, this first century reader understood them to be three separate works by three different authors.<sup>6</sup> Despite their great differences, this first century reader understood the three *Philoctetes* to be articulations of the same fundamental narrative. Readers in the first and second century used the language of *hypothesis* to describe this relationship of multiple works within a literary tradition constituted by similarity of content.

The term *hypothesis*, we will see, had a variety of uses. Dio used the term to speak of something like a narrative substrate. While translating the word as ‘substrate’ would avoid the misleading similarity to the English ‘hypothesis,’ I transliterate the Greek *hypothesis* in keeping with the conventions of relevant scholarship.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Oration 52.3*. σχεδὸν δὲ ἦσαν ἄκρων ἀνδρῶν, Αἰσχύλου καὶ Σοφοκλέους καὶ Εὐριπίδου, πάντων περὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ὑπόθεσιν. ἦν γὰρ ἢ τῶν Φιλοκτήτου τόξων εἴτε κλοπὴ εἴτε ἀρπαγὴν δεῖ λέγειν.

<sup>6</sup> On the charge of anachronism that often attends the use of “authorship” language, see the “Theoretical Postscript” in my appendix.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, George Alexander Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Atlanta: Leiden, 2003), xiv.

### 1.2.1 Sextus Empiricus

A passage from Sextus Empiricus casts light on Dio Chrysostom's use of *hypothesis*. In the third book of *Against the Scholars*, Sextus criticizes arguments based on undemonstrated axioms in geometry.<sup>8</sup> He calls such axioms "*hypotheses*." Sextus begins this discussion, however, by disambiguating his logico-mathematical use of '*hypothesis*' from other uses of the same term.

And for the sake of good order, it should be noted preliminarily that *hypothesis* means many and various things. It is sufficient now to name three: according to one custom, it is the dramatic plot (περιπέτεια). Accordingly, we say that there is a tragic or comic *hypothesis*, and *hypotheses* of the myths of Euripides and Sophocles by a certain Dicaearchus, not referring to anything other by *hypothesis* than the plot of the drama.<sup>9</sup>

Sextus says that *hypothesis* can refer to the plot (περιπέτεια) of a drama.<sup>10</sup> As an illustration, he refers to a famous collection of plot summaries.<sup>11</sup> Dicaearchus' treatises on the plots of Athenian drama are lost to us, but he inspired a genre of summary and other introductory materials called *Hypotheses* or *Argumenta*.<sup>12</sup> This title for Dicaearchus' work is clearly derived from the

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<sup>8</sup> See R. J. Hankinson, *The Sceptics* (London; New York: Psychology Press, 1998), 70–71.

<sup>9</sup> R. G. Bury, *Sextus Empiricus: Against the Professors*, Loeb 382 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1949), 244. τάξεως δὲ ἕνεκα προληπτέον ὅτι πολλαχῶς μὲν καὶ ἄλλως ὑπόθεσις προσαγορεύεται, τὰ νῦν δὲ ἀπαρκέσει τριχῶς λέγεσθαι, καθ' ἓνα μὲν τρόπον ἢ δραματικῆ περιπέτεια, καθὸ καὶ τραγικὴν καὶ κωμικὴν ὑπόθεσιν εἶναι λέγομεν καὶ Δικαιάρχου τινὰς ὑποθέσεις τῶν Εὐριπίδου καὶ Σοφοκλέους μύθων, οὐκ ἄλλο τι καλοῦντες ὑπόθεσιν ἢ τὴν τοῦ δράματος περιπέτειαν.

<sup>10</sup> In a subsequent passage, Sextus refers to this literary use as περὶ τῆς δραματικῆς διατάξεως (3.6). Loeb 382 246. This importantly clarifies that Sextus uses περιπέτεια to mean "plot" in general and not Aristotle's technical sense. See Gertjan Verhasselt, "The Hypotheses of Euripides and Sophocles by Dicaearchus," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 55 (2015): 615. See also the discussion in R Kassel, "Hypothesis," in *ΣΧΟΛΙΑ: Studia Ad Criticam Interpretationemque Textuum Graecorum et Ad Historiam Iuris Graeco-Romani Pertinentia Viro Doctissimo D. Holwerda Oblata*, by W. J. Aerts et al (Groningen: E. Forsten, 1985), 53–59.

<sup>11</sup> Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1968), 193; Verhasselt, "The Hypotheses of Euripides and Sophocles by Dicaearchus."

<sup>12</sup> This use of the term *hypothesis* is a natural extension of the literary use outlined here, but it is not identical. These summaries prefixed to all variety of poetic and prosaic works (including the gospels) as well as in independent collections typically include authorial biographies and highlight the distinctive features of the work. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age*, 193–96; Bruce M. (Bruce Manning) Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament : Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 25–26; Eleanor Dickey, *Ancient Greek Scholarship: A Guide to Finding, Reading, and Understanding Scholia, Commentaries, Lexica, and Grammatical*

narratological use of *hypothesis* surveyed above. Sextus' second and third definitions for *hypothesis* concern an intimately related use of the term in discussions of oratory (discussed below) and the logico-mathematical use with which Sextus is himself concerned. To the point at hand, Sextus' first definition corresponds neatly with Dio Chrysostom's use outlined above.

### 1.2.2 Dramatic Scholia

A scholion to Sophocles' *Ajax* further explicates this literary use of *hypothesis*.<sup>13</sup> Commenting on the *Ajax*'s prolog, a scholiast says that Sophocles "shows the essential parts of the *hypothesis* in the prelude: Whom the story is about and where is the scene and what Odysseus does (Sch. *Ajax* 1a 13,3-7)."<sup>14</sup> A *hypothesis*, this commentator explains, is made up of certain characters, settings, and events. Another scholion describes the character Orestes as part of the "essence" (συνεκτικά) of the *hypothesis* and, therefore, "indispensable" (ἀναγκαῖον) to the story told in Sophocles' *Electra* (Sch. *Electra* 1 97.13-6).<sup>15</sup> Elsewhere in the scholia, commentators debate whether specific narrative details would be "according to" (κατὰ τὴν ὑ.) or "against the *hypothesis* (πρὸς τὴν ὑ.)."<sup>16</sup> Certain creative choices might even be said to "destroy the *hypothesis*" (λύειν τὴν ὑ.).<sup>17</sup> For instance, Aphrodite must rescue Paris lest "the matters of the hypothesis be destroyed by his death."<sup>18</sup> In these cases, commentators invoke a *hypothesis* to

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*Treatises, from Their Beginnings to the Byzantine Period*, Annotated Edition (New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 26, 42.

<sup>13</sup> The old scholia to Sophocles are derived from Roman-era scholars from before the third century CE as well as the commentary of Didymus (1<sup>st</sup> cent BCE - 1<sup>st</sup> cent CE) itself containing commentary from the Alexandrian librarians. Dickey, *Ancient Greek Scholarship*, 34.

<sup>14</sup> πάντα δὲ τὰ τῆς ὑποθέσεως συνεκτικὰ ἐδηλώσεν ἐν τῷ προοιμίῳ. πρὸς τίνα ὁ λόγος καὶ ποῦ ἡ σκηνὴ καὶ τί πράττει Ὀδυσσεύς. Roos Meijering, *Literary and Rhetorical Theories in Greek Scholia* (Groningen: E. Forsten, 1987), 116. See also D Holwerda, "Zur szenisch-technischen Bedeutung des Wortes 'υποθεσις,'" in *Miscellanea Tragica in Honorem J.C. Kamerbeek* (Amstelodami: Hakkert, 1976), 173–98.

<sup>15</sup> Meijering, *Literary and Rhetorical Theories in Greek Scholia*, 116.

<sup>16</sup> Holwerda, "Bedeutung des Wortes ΥΠΟΘΕΣΙΣ," 181–84.

<sup>17</sup> Holwerda, 181–84.

<sup>18</sup> ἐλέλυτο γὰρ τὰ τῆς ὑποθέσεως τῷ ἐκείνου θανάτῳ (D sch.on Γ 363, I 160, 32-3 Dind.) Meijering, *Literary and Rhetorical Theories in Greek Scholia*, 119.

compare a specific text with something more abstract — namely, the commentator’s understanding of the fundamental narrative.

### 1.2.3 Other Narrative *Hypotheses*

This use of *hypothesis* was not unique to dramatic criticism. First and second century authors speak of the *hypothesis* of poems, histories, orations, dialogues, and a variety of technical treatises. In all these contexts, the *hypothesis* refers to certain details of subject-matter shared across multiple works. As in the dramatic examples above, the term *hypothesis* picks out something more specific than ‘topic’ or ‘theme’ but more abstract than any particular expression. Colloquially, we might say that the *hypothesis* is “what the books are about” — although entailing matters of content with more specificity than a simple description of theme or topic. In the language of narrative criticism, *hypothesis* is closer to *fabula* than either *syuzhet* or *text*.<sup>19</sup> Surveying a few more representative examples will clarify this use of *hypothesis* outside of dramatic criticism and demonstrate its prevalence around the turn of the millennium.

Philodemus (c. 110-30 BCE) cites the opinion of an otherwise unknown Pausimachus that poets should not be praised for either a story (*μῦθος*) or a *hypothesis*, but only for their own composition (1.42).<sup>20</sup> Here, the story and *hypothesis* are contrasted with the poet’s creative expression. Homer, on this view, cannot be credited with the myth of Troy or the specific characters and events of his narrative (i.e. the *hypothesis*), but only the language with which he tells his story. Pausimachus assumes that the story (*μῦθος*) and *hypothesis* of a poem are

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<sup>19</sup> It is not, of course, identical with either. There is, further, inevitable variation in the way different authors employ the term. See René Nünlist, *The Ancient Critic at Work: Terms and Concepts of Literary Criticism in Greek Scholia* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 66–67.

<sup>20</sup> I follow here the reconstruction of Janko on the basis of a parallel at 1.67. Richard Janko, *Philodemus: On Poems, Book I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 230–31.

traditional while the expression of a particular work is authorial. While this would not apply to all kinds of literature, Pausimachus' opinion nicely illustrates the level of abstraction entailed by *hypothesis* language. The *hypothesis*, according to this reader, is more specific than story (μῦθος) but independent of any specific lexis.

This literary use of *hypothesis* also figures prominently in ancient reflections on historiography.<sup>21</sup> Dionysius of Halicarnassus' (1<sup>st</sup> cent. BCE) says that the first and most important task of a historian is the selection of a “noble *hypothesis*” (ὑπόθεσιν [...] καλήν) (*Letter to Gnaeus Pompeius* 3.1).<sup>22</sup> Thucydides, according to Dionysius, chose the Peloponnesian war; while Herodotus wrote of the “deeds of the Greeks and Barbarians.”<sup>23</sup> Dionysius subsequently clarifies this characterization of Herodotus' work, stating that Thucydides' history concerned a single *hypothesis* while Herodotus selected “many, dissimilar *hypotheses*” to combine into one work (3.14).<sup>24</sup> This gives some sense of the narrative scope entailed by *hypothesis* language: Thucydides' history of the Peloponnesian War was a single *hypothesis* while Herodotus' wide-ranging *Histories* treated many subjects that could each be characterized as its own *hypothesis*. As with the critics of drama and poetry, therefore, Dionysius uses *hypothesis* language to describe the narrative content of historical works at a certain level of abstraction.

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<sup>21</sup> Thank you to Jimmy Meyers for drawing my attention to the use of *hypothesis* in Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

<sup>22</sup> πρῶτόν τε καὶ σχεδὸν ἀναγκαιότατον ἔργον ἀπάντων ἐστὶ τοῖς γράφοισιν πᾶσιν ἱστορίας ὑπόθεσιν ἐκλέξασθαι καλήν καὶ κεχαρισμένην τοῖς ἀναγνωσομένοις. Stephen Usher, *Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Critical Essays, Volume II. On Literary Composition. Dinararchus. Letters to Ammaeus and Pompeius* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1985), 372.

<sup>23</sup> ἐκεῖνος μὲν γὰρ κοινήν Ἑλληνικῶν τε καὶ βαρβαρικῶν πράξεων ἐξενήνοχεν ἱστορίαν. Usher, 372.

<sup>24</sup> ἀλλὰ συμβέβηκε τῷ μὲν μίαν ὑπόθεσιν λαβόντι πολλὰ ποιῆσαι μέρη τὸ ἐν σῶμα, τῷ δὲ τὰς πολλὰς καὶ οὐδὲν εὐκυίας ὑποθέσεις προελομένῳ σύμφωνον ἐν σῶμα πεποιημένα. Usher, *Dionysius of Halicarnassus*, 380. In his essay, *On Thucydides*, Dionysius again draws attention to Thucydides' selection of a single *hypothesis* for his history in contrast to earlier historians (7).

Like the dramatic and poetic commentators, Dionysius also employed *hypothesis* language to refer to the subject-matter common to multiple works of history. Herodotus, according to Dionysius, wrote on “the same *hypothesis*” (τὴν αὐτὴν ὑπόθεσιν) as his predecessors, Hellanicus and Charon (3.7).<sup>25</sup> Thucydides, in contrast, chose a different *hypothesis* from Herodotus because “he did not want to write [about] the same things as others” (3.6).<sup>26</sup> In historiography as elsewhere, *hypothesis* language proved especially useful for discussing pluriform literary traditions — that is, multiple books on the same subject matter(s).

Dionysius’ characterization of history writing clarifies what was and was not entailed by a *hypothesis*. As noted above, the first step of history writing, according to Dionysius, is the selection of a *hypothesis* (3.1). Second, the author decides where to begin and end the narrative (3.8). Third, the author decides which events to include in the narrative and what to omit (3.11). Fourth, the author determines the arrangement of events in their presentation (3.13). Finally, Dionysius says, the historian must determine their “disposition” (διάθεσις) toward the events (3.15). It follows from this that two works may share a *hypothesis* while also differing in all the other respects listed by Dionysius. Narratives may begin and end in different places, include different events, and recount events in different orders while still sharing the same *hypothesis*.

In Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophists* (c. 200 CE), the character Plutarch quotes Xenophon’s *Symposium* on the topic of drinking wine. Xenophon’s dialog, Plutarch says, prompted Plato to write his own *Symposium*.

If one considers these words of the noble Xenophon, they will be able to recognize the jealousy which the most brilliant Plato had toward him. Or, possibly, these men were

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<sup>25</sup> Usher, 374.

<sup>26</sup> οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ τοῦτο ἔνεστιν εἰπεῖν, ὅτι δι’ ἀνάγκην (Thucydides) ἤλθεν ἐπὶ ταύτην τὴν γραφήν, ἐπιστάμενος <μὲν ὡς> ἐκεῖνα καλλίω, βουλόμενος δὲ μὴ ταῦτα ἑτέροις γράφειν. Usher, 374.

contentious from the beginning since they perceived each other's unique virtue and, probably, they competed to be first in rank as we can perceive not only from what they said about Cyrus but also from [what they said] on the same *hypothesis*. For, indeed, both men wrote *Symposia*. And in them, [Plato] expels the flute girls, while [Xenophon] brings them in. And [Xenophon], as mentioned above, refuses to drink with big cups, while [Plato] depicts Socrates drinking with the wine-cooler until dawn.<sup>27</sup>

Out of jealousy or competitiveness, according to Athenaeus, Plato wrote books on the same *hypotheses* as Xenophon.<sup>28</sup> Athenaeus cites the two *Symposia*, with their contrasting depictions of Socrates, as an example. Here two authors, one dependent on the other, wrote distinct books with the same title, featuring the same characters, setting, and basic events. The *Deipnosophists*, therefore, nicely illustrates that writing on the same *hypothesis* does not preclude meaningful differences in the events narrated. Indeed, according to both Athenaeus and Diogenes Laertius (3.34, discussed below), Plato prepared a new work on the same *hypothesis* precisely in order to contradict Xenophon's depiction of Socrates.

#### 1.2.4 Rhetorical Criticism

The term *hypothesis* had a specialized use in discussions of oratory.<sup>29</sup> As we saw above, Sextus Empiricus distinguished this rhetorical sense from the meaning of *hypothesis* in dramatic criticism. This specialized use, however, draws upon the same semantic conventions as the other

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<sup>27</sup> εἰς ταῦτά τις ἀποβλέπων τὰ τοῦ καλοῦ Ξενοφῶντος ἐπιγινώσκειν δυνήσεται ἦν εἶχε πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ λαμπρότατος Πλάτων ζηλοτυπίαν, ἢ τάχα φιλονίκως εἶχον ἀρχῆθεν πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς οἱ ἄνδρες οὗτοι, αἰσθόμενοι τῆς ἰδίας ἐκάτερος ἀρετῆς, καὶ ἴσως καὶ περὶ πρωτείων διεφέροντο, οὐ μόνον ἐξ ὧν περὶ Κύρου εἰρήκασι τεκμαιρομένοις ἡμῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ὑποθέσεων. συμπόσια μὲν γὰρ γεγραφασιν ἀμφοτέρω, καὶ ἐν αὐτοῖς ὁ μὲν τὰς ἀυλητρίδας ἐκβάλλει, ὁ δὲ εἰσάγει: καὶ ὁ μὲν, ὡς πρόκειται, παραιτεῖται πίνειν μεγάλοις ποτηρίοις, ὁ δὲ τὸν Σωκράτην παράγει τῷ ψυκτῆρι πίνοντα μέχρι τῆς ἕως. S. Douglas Olson, *Athenaeus. The Learned Banqueters, Volume V: Books 10.420e-11*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 466–69.

<sup>28</sup> The plural *hypotheses* suggests that the two ancient Athenians wrote works on several of the same *hypotheses*. Athenaeus provides the *Symposia* as one example and, no doubt, has in mind the twin *Apologies* of Xenophon and Plato, as Diogenes Laertius makes explicit (3.34).

<sup>29</sup> There are, in fact, multiple uses of *hypothesis* that appear in the context of oratory. The present use (most similar to Dio Chrysostom's) should not be confused with what Miejriling calls the "rhetorical" use. Meijering, *Literary and Rhetorical Theories in Greek Scholia*, 107–11. As noted above, Sextus distinguishes this oratorical use of *hypothesis* from the dramatic use. There is, however, a nexus of connotations underlying both uses.

narratological uses reviewed above and below. That is, the use of *hypothesis* in discussions of oratory fits into a wider pattern of how *hypothesis* language was used across literary genres to refer to subject-matter at a particular level of abstraction.

Aelius Theon (1<sup>st</sup> cent. CE) and Quintilian (c. 35-100 CE) divide speeches into two categories: those answering indefinite questions (e.g. “Should a man marry?”) and those answering definite questions (e.g. “Should Cato marry?”). The former class of speeches have a *thesis*; and the latter a *hypothesis* (Theon, *Progymnasmata* 1; Quintilian, *Institutes* 3.5.5-7).<sup>30</sup> Notably, Quintilian transliterates these Greek terms, rather than attempting translation into Latin. This is technical language, without an obvious Latin equivalent. A *hypothesis*, Theon and Quintilian explain, entails specific “facts, persons, time, etc...” (*Institutes* 3.5.7; cf. Aelius Theon, *Progymnasmata* 1).<sup>31</sup> Lucian (125-180 CE) can, for example, accuse an orator of pretending to speak extemporaneously on the well-known *hypothesis* of Pythagoras’ exclusion from the Eleusinian mysteries (*Mistaken Critic* 5). Similarly, Plutarch (46-119 CE) refers to innumerable speeches given on the same *hypothesis* (*Timoleon* 10.4).

The term *hypothesis* may have been a technical term in rhetorical criticism but, as in the dramatic scholia and historians above, these authors use the term to pick out narrative content more specific than a topic or theme but less specific than a particular expression. Likewise, *hypothesis* language is frequently employed in descriptions of subject-matter common to

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<sup>30</sup> Although this distinction is common in rhetorical literature, it is not maintained with perfect consistency (e.g. Theon, *Progymnasmata* 2 at Leonhard von Spengel, *Rhetores graeci*, vol. 2 (Lipsiae: sumptibus et typis B.G. Teubneri, 1854), 70.).

<sup>31</sup> *Finitae autem sunt ex complexu rerum personarum temporum ceterorumque: hae hypotheseis a Graecis dicuntur, causae a nostris.* Donald A. Russell, *Quintilian, The Orator’s Education, Volume I: Books 1-2*, Loeb Classical Library 124 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 40–41.

multiple works. The specialized use of *hypothesis* in rhetorical criticism appears, therefore, to be only an extension of the other narratological uses outlined above.

### 1.2.5 Non-Narrative *Hypotheses*

All the examples considered above concern works with narrative subject matter. The same use of *hypothesis*, however, appears in discussions of non-narrative works. In such cases, *hypothesis* refers to topics, methods, and, even, specific lines of argument rather than characters, events, and settings. The same Dio Chrysostom, for instance, says that Zeno, his student Persaeus, and others wrote treatises on Homer “according to the same *hypothesis*” (*Oration* 53.4).<sup>32</sup> This *hypothesis* apparently consisted of specifying which elements in the Homeric epics were true (κατὰ ἀλήθειαν) and which were imagined (κατὰ δόξαν).<sup>33</sup> Just as in narrative contexts, therefore, the language of *hypothesis* picks out subject-matter more specific than theme or topic but more abstract than an author’s expression.

We turn last to technical literature (with which subsequent chapters will be especially concerned). Throughout his works, Galen (129-216 CE) applies *hypothesis* language to technical books.<sup>34</sup>

[Hippocrates] entitled a medical book, “Concerning Surgery.” It would have been better, however, to entitle it “About the Things Concerning Surgery,” as some entitle the books of Diocles, Philotimus, and Mantius. For although these men wrote on the same *hypothesis* in each book, the title in many copies is lacking the preposition and article – they are entitled simply “Concerning Surgery.” But in a few... (*Hipp, Off. Med.* 1.1)<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> ἔτι δὲ καὶ Περσαῖος ὁ τοῦ Ζήνωνος κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ὑπόθεσιν γέγραφε καὶ ἄλλοι πλείους. H. Lamar Crosby, *Dio Chrysostom. Discourses 37-60.*, Loeb Classical Library 376 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1946), 360.

<sup>33</sup> Longinus describes his treatise *On the Sublime* and a work with the same title by Caecilius of Calacte as written on the same *hypothesis* (1.1).

<sup>34</sup> On the date of Galen’s death, see Vivian Nutton, *Galen: A Thinking Doctor in Imperial Rome*, 1st edition (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2020), 1 fn. 6, 39.

<sup>35</sup> Ἰατρικὸν ἐπέγραψεν αὐτὸ κατ’ ἰητρῆιον. ἄμεινον δὲ ἦν περὶ τῶν κατ’ ἰητρῆιον ἐπιγεγράφθαι, καθάπερ ἔνιοι τὸ Διοκλέους ἐπιγράφουσι καὶ Φιλοτίμου καὶ Μαντίου. γεγραφοῦτων γὰρ καὶ τούτων τῶν ἀνδρῶν εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν

Three earlier authors, Galen reports, wrote books entitled “(About the Things) Concerning Surgery.” All three, according to Galen, were written on the same *hypothesis*. Galen here uses ‘*hypothesis*’ to refer to the substrate of shared content across several non-narrative works, written by different authors, with the same (or nearly the same) title.

In another work, *On Hippocrates’ Regimen in Acute Diseases*, Galen describes the composition of a new book on an established *hypothesis*.

A second book written in the place of an older book is said to be ‘re-prepared’ (ἐπιδιεσκευάσθαι) when they have the same *hypothesis* and most of the words — some of these [words] removed from the former composition, some added, and some subtly changed. But, for the sake of clarity, if you want an example of this, you have the second *Autolycus* of Eupolis composed (δισεκασμένον) from the first. And so also the doctors from Cnidos published (ἐξέδοσαν) the second *Cnidian Opinions* in the place of the former — some things being entirely the same, some things added, some things removed, even as also things were changed. This, therefore, is the second book, which Hippocrates, having compared, says is more medical than the former” (*HVA* 1.4).<sup>36</sup>

The Hippocratic *Regimen in Acute Diseases* opens with a criticism of “the authors” (οἱ συγγράψαντες) of the *Cnidian Opinions* for offering insufficient and ineffective remedies for various diseases (1.1).<sup>37</sup> In the lemma under discussion, Hippocrates qualifies this criticism, noting that “subsequent re-preparers” (οἱ [...] ὕστερον ἐπιδιεσκευάσαντες) of the work behaved more scientifically than its first author(s). Galen begins his commentary by explaining the

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ὑπόθεσιν, ἐν ἐκάστῳ βιβλίῳ, ἐν μὲν τοῖς πλείστοις ἢ ἐπιγραφὴ χωρὶς τῆς προθέσεώς ἐστι καὶ τοῦ ἄρθρου κατ’ ἰητρεῖον ἀπλῶς ἐπιγεγραμμένων αὐτῶν, ἐν ὀλίγοις δὲ σὺν τε τῇ προθέσει καὶ τῷ ἄρθρῳ περὶ τῶν κατ’ ἰητρεῖον. ἐν ὀλίγοις δὲ σὺν τε τῇ προθέσει καὶ τῷ ἄρθρῳ περὶ τῶν κατ’ ἰητρεῖον (Kühn 18b 629-30).

<sup>36</sup> Ἐπιδιεσκευάσθαι λέγεται βιβλίον ἐπὶ τῷ προτέρῳ γεγραμμένῳ τὸ δεύτερον γραφέν, ὅταν τὴν ὑπόθεσιν ἔχον τὴν αὐτὴν καὶ τὰς πλείστας τῶν ῥήσεων τὰς αὐτὰς τινὰ μὲν ἀφηρημένα τῶν ἐκ τοῦ προτέρου συγγράμματος ἔχη, τινὰ δὲ προσκείμενα, τινὰ δ’ ὑπερλαβμένα· παράδειγμα δ’ εἰ βούλει τοῦτου σαφηνείας ἔνεκα, τὸν δεύτερον Αὐτόλυκον Εὐπόλιδος ἔχεις ἐκ τοῦ προτέρου διεσκευασμένον. οὕτω δὲ καὶ τὰς Κνιδίας γνώμας ἐπὶ ταῖς προτέραις δευτέρας ἐξέδοσαν οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Κνίδου ἰατροί, τινὰ μὲν ἐχούσας τὰ αὐτὰ πάντα, τινὰ δὲ προσκείμενα, τινὰ δὲ ἀφηρημένα, καθάπερ γε καὶ ὑπερλαβμένα· τοῦτ’ οὖν τὸ δεύτερον βιβλίον ὁ Ἱπποκράτης ἰατρικώτερον συγκεῖσθαι φησι τοῦ προτέρου. Text from Antoine Pietrobelli, ed., *Galien, Oeuvres: Tome IX, Ire Partie: Commentaire Au Regime Des Maladies Aigues d’Hippocrate: Livre I*, 1st edition (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019), 8.

<sup>37</sup> Hippocrates and Héraclite d’Éphèse, *Hippocrates*, Loeb Classical Library 148 (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1923), 62–63.

compound verb in the substantive participle “re-preparers” (ἐπιδιασκευάσαντες). The verb “ἐπιδιασκευάσαι,” says Galen, describes the composition of a work on an established *hypothesis* while also preserving much of the verbal expression of an earlier work. Such an author is expected to add to, delete from, and alter the source material. At the same time, much of the source’s language is preserved. As argued in chapter three, Galen here describes a compositional praxis widely attested for technical literature.

To illustrate the sense of this verb, Galen selects a fortunate analogy: Eupolis, an Athenian playwright. Galen, thus, explicitly links his use of *hypothesis* to describe pluriform technical treatises with the dramatic use of the term attested by Dio Chrysostom, defined by Sextus Empiricus, and explicated by the scholiasts. The first and second century authors surveyed in this chapter appear to be drawing on a common set of conventions for this literary use of *hypothesis*.

At the same time, Eupolis is an unusual case. The playwright is said to have staged his own play twice.<sup>38</sup> As we have seen, *hypothesis* language is not typically used in the context of an author revising their own work. Indeed, Galen’s Hippocratic text pointedly distinguishes between the authors of the *Cnidian Opinions* and those “re-preparing” the work. Those later “re-preparers,” Hippocrates specifies, adopted a more scientific approach to medicine. And, at least in ancient literary imagination, these Cnidian doctors were not a faceless collective, contributing to an evolving corpus of medical knowledge. Rather, the composition of the *Cnidian Opinions*

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<sup>38</sup> Julius Pollux cites the first *Autolycus* of Eupolidos in his *Onomasticon* (7.202). Likewise, scholia on Aristophanes’ *Thesmophoriazusas* attribute certain readings to “each *Autolycus*” (ἐν Αὐτολύκῳ θατέρῳ) by Eupolidos (941, 942b). This should not be confused with the two plays titled *Autolycus* by Euripides.

was attributed to a specific author, Euryphon.<sup>39</sup> This passage will be discussed further in the next chapter. For the present purposes, it is sufficient to note that Galen uses *hypothesis* language to describe multiple works on the same subject attributed to different authors.

Galen was not unique in using *hypothesis* language to characterize a compositional procedure that involved extensive literary borrowing from another author. In his *Lives of the Sophists*, Philostratus (170-250 CE) reports that Isocrates was charged with plagiarism for “composing” (συντεθεῖν) a new oration from the works of Gorgias on “the same *hypothesis*” (1.17).<sup>40</sup> Like Galen, Philostratus employs the language of *hypothesis* to refer to certain features held in common by distinct works with extensive verbatim agreements. In the case of Philostratus’ orations—but not Galen’s practical treatises—such borrowing occasioned the charge of misconduct. These differing conventions are treated in the next two chapters.

In sum, Greek and Roman readers in the first and second centuries had vocabulary to describe the complicated interrelations of pluriform literary traditions. In particular, the term *hypothesis* refers to a substrate of content (e.g. setting, characters, and events for narrative works) held in common across multiple, related works. This is more specific than the story, myth, or topic but more abstract than the actual verbal expression of individual authors. The language allows for certain differences in detail (e.g. the role of Diomedes in the *Philoctetes*) but not others (e.g. Aphrodite must rescue Paris). And while this term is not reserved for books with

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<sup>39</sup> Johannes Ilberg, “Die Arzteschule von Knidos,” *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig. Philologisch-Historische Klasse*. 76 (1924): 3–4.

<sup>40</sup> οὗτος μὲν οὖν εἰ καὶ κάλλιστος λόγων, αἰτίαν ὁμῶς παρέδωκεν, ὡς ἐκ τῶν Γοργία σπουδασθέντων ἐς τὴν αὐτὴν ὑπόθεσιν συντεθεῖν. Wilmer Cave France Wright, *Philostratus and Eunapius: The Lives of the Sophists* (New York; London: Putnam; Heinemann, 1922), 52–55.

considerable verbal agreement, it is not surprising to discover *hypothesis* language applied by Galen and Philostratus to such cases of literary borrowing.

### 1.3 The *Hypothesis* of the Gospels

We do not have to guess whether early Christians would have considered *hypothesis* language appropriate to characterize the relationship of the gospels to one another. Several early commentators use the term in their discussions of gospel literature. This application of *hypothesis* language reflects the participation of early Christians in Hellenistic and Roman literary culture. These Christian readers inherited a conceptual apparatus from Hellenistic literary criticism for understanding the pluriform gospel tradition.

#### 1.3.1 Cosmas Indicopleustes

Although hardly the earliest author to apply *hypothesis* language to gospel literature, Cosmas Indicopleustes' (fl. c. 550) description of the gospel *hypothesis* illuminates earlier instances. In the fifth book of his *Topography*, Cosmas demonstrates the harmony of the prophets, gospels, and apostolic writings. Halfway through this argument, he provides a synopsis of each of the four gospels, including the occasion of their composition, opening lines, and an outline of their narratives (190-205). Cosmas, therefore, understood the gospels to be discrete works with distinct and identifiable authors.

In the next section, Cosmas compares the apostle Peter to the evangelists. Peter, says Cosmas, shared “the same goal” (τὸν αὐτὸν [...] σκοπὸν) as the evangelists (5.206). Then, after quoting several descriptions of Jesus' life from Peter's speeches in *Acts* (2:22-24, 32-36, 3:19-21, 10:38-43), Cosmas makes the following observation:

Consider here how the whole *hypothesis* of the gospels is circumscribed into a few lines, saying concerning [Jesus] that he was raised in Nazareth, and that he was a man from

God (like a second Adam) and that through him God worked wonders and that, by divine allowance, he was killed by the lawless, and that God raised him up immortal and unchangeable (for it says: “destroying the pains of death”) and that, by divine power, being exalted he went up into heaven and sent down from there the Holy Spirit (5.207).<sup>41</sup>

In this passage, Cosmas speaks of a single *hypothesis* held in common by the gospels and pithily articulated in Peter’s speeches. The content of that *hypothesis* is specified: Jesus’ provenance, character, miracles, death, and resurrection. The *hypothesis* of gospel literature, according to Cosmas, is the characters, settings, and events of Jesus’ life.<sup>42</sup> Cosmas’ account reflects the same literary use of *hypothesis* attested by Dio Chrysostom, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and others.

### 1.3.2 Clement of Alexandria

A parallel use of *hypothesis* language appears in the second century author, Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215 CE). In *Who is the Rich Man that is Saved?*, Clement claims that his reader has misunderstood certain passages about wealth in the gospels (4.3). Quoting the pericope of the Rich Young Ruler (10:17-31) according to *Mark*, Clement says that all the gospels have this story with “the same meaning (γνώμη)” (5.1).<sup>43</sup> Here, as evident from his

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<sup>41</sup> Σκοπητέον ἐνταῦθα, πῶς πᾶσαν τὴν ὑπόθεσιν τῶν εὐαγγελιστῶν εἰς ὀλίγους πάνυ στίχους περιέγραψεν, εἰπὼν περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν θρεψαμένην ὡς ἀπὸ Ναζαρέτ, καὶ ὅτι ἀπὸ Θεοῦ ἀνὴρ τυγχάνει, ὡς δεύτερος Ἀδάμ, καὶ ὅτι δι’ αὐτοῦ τὰ θαύματα εἰργάζετο ὁ Θεός, καὶ ὅτι συγχωρήσει θεία ἀπεκτάνθη ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνόμων, καὶ ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς αὐτὸν ἀνέστησεν ἀθάνατον καὶ ἄτρεπτον —τοῦτο γὰρ ἔφη «λύσας τὰς ὠδῖνας τοῦ θανάτου»—, καὶ ὅτι τῇ θεῖα δυνάμει ὑπερυψωθείς εἰς οὐρανὸν ἀνελήλυθε κακεῖθεν κατέπεμψε τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον. Wanda Wolska-Conus, *Cosma Indicopleusta Topographie Chretienne.*, vol. 2, Sources Chrétiennes 159 (Paris: Les éditions du cerf, 1970), 309.

<sup>42</sup> Cosmas understands the fourth gospel as a different kind of book from the synoptics. The fourth evangelist, according to Cosmas, gathered up his synoptic predecessors and supplied what he thought was missing from them. Cosmas believed that John (unlike the synoptics) was intended to be read alongside earlier gospels. John shares the same *hypothesis* —according to Cosmas’ characterization— when it is read with the others.

<sup>43</sup> Ταῦτα μὲν ἐν τῷ κατὰ Μάρκον εὐαγγελίῳ γέγραπται· καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις δὲ πᾶσιν τοῖς ἀνωμολογημένοις, ὀλίγον μὲν ἴσως ἐκασταχοῦ τῶν ῥημάτων ἐναλλάσσει, πάντα δὲ τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς γνώμης συμφωνίαν ἐπιδείκνυται. O Stählin et al., *Clément d’Alexandrie Quel riche sera sauvé?*, Sources Chrétiennes 537 (Paris: Les éditions du cerf, 2011), 119.

comments elsewhere, Clement understands the gospels as discrete works with identifiable authors.<sup>44</sup>

Clement proceeds to interpret the story. He first notes that the rich man's question, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" is an appropriate question for Jesus. Then, Clement makes the following remark:

[Jesus] was asked about those things for the sake of which he descended —the things he was instructing, the things he was teaching, the things he was causing to happen— in order to display the *hypothesis* of the gospel, because it is the gift of eternal life (6.2).<sup>45</sup>

Clement interprets the rich man's question as a general inquiry into why Jesus became incarnate. The answer to this question, according to Clement, is the *hypothesis* of the gospel. Clement glosses this *hypothesis* as Jesus' teachings and actions. Clement, therefore, uses the language of *hypothesis* to characterize the basic story held in common by the gospels.

### 1.3.3 Eusebius of Caesarea

Eusebius of Caesarea also uses *hypothesis* language for the subject matter of the gospels. In his *Demonstration of the Gospel*, Eusebius sets out to prove that Jesus' incarnation, life, and death were prophesied in Jewish scripture. The first two books establish the respectability of Jewish scripture and defend its appropriation by Christians. The third book begins to survey prophecies about Jesus, but Eusebius quickly becomes preoccupied with the trustworthiness of the gospels and Jesus' character. The fourth book opens with an outline of the nature of salvation and then, near its center, Eusebius shifts to the *Demonstration's* promised subject matter. For the

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<sup>44</sup> *Stromata* 3.13.92. See also Luke J. Stevens, "The Evangelists in Clement's Hypotyposes," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 26, no. 3 (2018): 353–79.

<sup>45</sup> ἡρώτηται περὶ τούτων ὑπὲρ ὧν καὶ κατελήλυθεν, ἃ παιδεύει, ἃ διδάσκει, ἃ παρέχει, ἵνα δείξῃ τὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ὑπόθεσιν, ὅτι δόσις ἐστὶν αἰωνίου ζωῆς. Stählin et al., *Clément d'Alexandrie Quel riche sera sauvé ?*, 116–18.

rest of the work, Eusebius will show how the details of Jesus' life were prophesied in Jewish scripture.

Eusebius marks this transition from his account of salvation to his planned demonstration (recommenced from its faltering start in book three) with the following sentence:

Therefore, to speak briefly, the *hypothesis* concerning the savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, having an exceptional arrangement, will be supported from the prophetic oracles of the Hebrews, as just a little later their testimony will show: the old proving the new scriptures, and the things of the gospels sealing the testimony of the prophets.<sup>46</sup>

Eusebius refers to the events of Jesus' life as "the *hypothesis* concerning the savior." This *hypothesis* is immediately glossed with "new scriptures" (τῶν νέων γραμμάτων) and, most strikingly, "the things of the gospels" (τῶν εὐαγγελικῶν). Reading on, Eusebius explains that this *hypothesis* or "the things of the gospels" which Eusebius argues were predicted by the prophets include Jesus' name, provenance, incarnation, ethical teaching, conflict with Jewish leaders, apocalyptic prophecies, passion, resurrection, and ascension. Although Eusebius will cite specific passages from individual gospels throughout, he uses the word *hypothesis* at the outset of his argument to refer to the content of the gospels at a level of abstraction more general than any one of the gospels.

Eusebius uses the term *hypothesis* in other senses as well. As Sextus Empiricus noted, "*hypothesis* means many and various things."<sup>47</sup> In the *Demonstration* alone, the term *hypothesis*

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<sup>46</sup> οὕτω δῆτα, ὡς ἐν βραχεῖ φάναι, ἢ κατὰ τὸν σωτῆρα καὶ κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν τὸν Χριστὸν ὑπόθεσις, διάφορον ἔχουσα τὴν οἰκονομίαν, ἐκ τῶν παρ' Ἑβραίοις παραστήσεται προφητικῶν λόγων, ὡς περ οὖν μικρὸν ὕστερον αἱ ἐξ αὐτῶν δείξουσι μαρτυρίαι, πιστουμένων τὰ παλαιὰ τῶν νέων γραμμάτων, καὶ τῶν εὐαγγελικῶν τὰς τῶν προφητικῶν μαρτυρίας ἐπισφραγίζομένων (*Demonstration* 4.15.1-2). Ivar A Heikel, *Die Demonstratio Evangelica, Die Demonstratio Evangelica, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte* 23 (De Gruyter, 1913), 173.

<sup>47</sup> τάζεως δὲ ἔνεκα προληπτέον ὅτι πολλαχῶς μὲν καὶ ἄλλως ὑπόθεσις προσαγορεύεται (*Against the Scholars* 3.4) Bury, *Sextus Empiricus*, 244.

describes the subject of Eusebius' own work (e.g. 3.3.4; 4.15.65), means—in the set phrase *ὡς ἐν ὑποθέσει*—“hypothetically” (e.g. 3.5.73; 4.6.4), and, most often, refers to a theory, belief, or supposition (e.g. 3.4.38). At the same time, Eusebius applies *hypothesis* in the literary sense outlined above to works other than gospels (e.g. 2.3.29).<sup>48</sup> The purpose of the present survey is not to catalog the many uses of the term *hypothesis*, however, but to demonstrate that early Christians used this language from contemporary literary culture to characterize the pluriform tradition of the gospels.<sup>49</sup>

#### 1.3.4 Epiphanius of Salamis

Epiphanius of Salamis (4<sup>th</sup> cent.) reflects the same use of *hypothesis* surveyed above. One instance, in a context other than gospel literature, illustrates the utility of this vocabulary for Epiphanius. In his critique of Manichean anthropology, Epiphanius claims that Mani contradicts himself. Mani narrates the history of human souls in one way and then, according to Epiphanius, “narrates the *hypothesis* concerning the same thing in a different way” (66.44.2).<sup>50</sup> Epiphanius wants to claim that Mani's two stories contradict. But for this to be true, the stories must be about the same people, places, and events—the same *hypothesis*. To refer to the underlying unity of contradictory stories, Epiphanius employs *hypothesis* language.

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<sup>48</sup> Eusebius also applies the term *hypothesis* to gospels elsewhere (e.g. *Demonstration* 3.1). Τὸν μὲν οὖν Χριστὸν ἐν πρώτοις ἀθέτην καὶ ἀρχηγὸν ἔσεσθαι τῆς εὐαγγελικῆς πραγματείας ἢ παρατεθεῖσα προφητεία παρίστησιν, μετὰ δὲ αὐτὸν τῆς αὐτῆς ὑποθέσεως ὑπὲρ τὰς ἑσσεσθαι τοὺς αὐτοῦ μαθητὰς θεσπίζει ὁ αὐτὸς λέγων προφήτης:

<sup>49</sup> It should be noted—and will be discussed further below—that Eusebius can also describe the common subject matter of the gospels with language other than *hypothesis*. In the opening of his *Demonstration*, for instance, Eusebius describes τὸ εὐαγγελικὸν [...] κήρυγμα as containing the events of the gospels (1.1). This is self-evidently uniquely Christian vocabulary.

<sup>50</sup> ποτὲ δὲ τὴν αὐτὴν αἰχμάλωτον ληφθεῖσαν οὐκέτι συναδόντως λέγει, ἀλλ' ἕτερον τρόπον τὴν κατ' αὐτὴν ὑπόθεσιν διηγεῖται, φάσκων ὡς [...] Karl Holl, *Epiphanius III Panarion Haer. 65-80 De Fide* (Akademie-Verlag, 1985), 81.

Epiphanius also uses the term *hypothesis* to describe gospel literature. The so-called *Alogi* raise for Epiphanius the problem of gospel contradictions (*Pan.* 51.4.5). These critics of the fourth gospel are specifically concerned with chronological inconsistencies between *John* and the synoptics (51.4-10). Epiphanius, however, expands upon their criticisms, providing his own list of omissions, additions, and contradictions among the synoptics (51.5.9-10; 6.3-5). Despite these apparent contradictions, Epiphanius insists that the gospels are harmonious. These are not really contradictions, says Epiphanius, but creative choices with stylistic or theological justifications (51.4.11; 6.2).

After explaining why each evangelist chose to begin their gospel in a different fashion, Epiphanius states: “For the entire *hypothesis* of the gospels is like this.”<sup>51</sup> Here Epiphanius refers to the singular *hypothesis* of several gospels. His claim, signaled by the illative γάρ, concerns the behavior of the gospel authors. Indeed, from this point on, Epiphanius describes how each compositional situation of each gospel accounts for certain differences. The phrase “entire *hypothesis* of the gospels” seems, therefore, to refer metonymically to the authors working upon this shared *hypothesis*. B.A. Williams proposes the paraphrase: “the whole treatment of the Gospel” — but this translation conceals the term *hypothesis* and the plural εὐαγγελίων.<sup>52</sup> In any case, Epiphanius here employs *hypothesis* language to refer to that which unites gospel literature.

From Clement to Cosmas, early Christians used the term *hypothesis* to refer to the shared substrate of gospel literature. The characters, settings, and events of Jesus’ life constitute the

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<sup>51</sup> Ἡ γὰρ πᾶσα τῶν εὐαγγελίων ὑπόθεσις τοιοῦτον εἶχε τὸν τρόπον. Karl Holl and Jurgen Dummer, *Epiphanius II Panarion haer. 34-64*, vol. 2, *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1980), 255.

<sup>52</sup> B.A. Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis: De Fide. Books II and III* (Brill, 2013), 31.

gospel *hypothesis*. At the same time, writing on an established *hypothesis* allows for variety in expression as dictated by stylistic and theological concerns. Accordingly, the gospels were understood by these early Christian readers as discrete works on a shared *hypothesis*. This use of the term *hypothesis* reflects Christian participation in Roman book culture and, consequently, their assumption of a working vocabulary to describe pluriform literary traditions.

#### 1.4 ‘The Gospel’ as *Hypothesis*

Like Dio Chrysostom on the *Philoctetes* or Galen on the *Cnidian Sentences*, Christian readers understood the gospels as discrete works on a common *hypothesis*. This way of talking about gospel literature, however, is not restricted to appearances of the term *hypothesis*. In lieu of this terminology, some Christians referred to the *hypothesis* of the gospels as simply “the gospel.” Since this use of the term ‘gospel’ as an equivalent for the gospel *hypothesis* can be found across more than a millennium of Christian literature, I will focus on examples from the second century.

The use of a shared title or brief description of a *hypothesis* instead of the term ‘*hypothesis*’ itself is unremarkable. The reader will recall that Athenaeus described Xenophon’s and Plato’s rival *Symposia* as written on the same *hypothesis*.<sup>53</sup> A parallel statement in Diogenes Laertius (c. 180-240 C.E.) illustrates the substitution of a titular shorthand for explicit *hypothesis* language. Following a quote on Plato’s sojourn in Sicily and Xenophon’s final destination in Corinth, Diogenes states:

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<sup>53</sup> Olson, *The Learned Banqueters, Volume V*, 466–69.

And it seems Xenophon was not well-disposed toward [Plato]. In any case, they have written similar books in rivalry: a *Symposium*, a Socratic *Apology*, and ethical *Memorabilia* — as well the *Republic* and the *Education of Cyrus* (3.34).<sup>54</sup>

Whereas Athenaeus speaks of *Symposia* (plural) written on the same “*hypothesis*,” Diogenes speaks of two authors, each writing a *Symposium* and an *Apology*.<sup>55</sup> The singular noun, here, does the same work as Athenaeus’ *hypothesis* language. Diogenes, thus, uses a shorthand description to refer to the *hypothesis* of these works by different authors. This is what I will call a ‘hypothetic’ use of the respective titles.

In early Christian literature, the term ‘gospel’ often refers to the *hypothesis* of the gospels. Not unlike Diogenes’ “symposium,” however, the word “gospel” has a variety of common uses other than this hypothetic use. Namely, both terms have non-literary uses, function as titles for specific books, and then, by extension, refer to a *hypothesis* shared by multiple books. It will be helpful to outline these other senses of ‘gospel’ before identifying instances of its hypothetic use in second century authors.

‘Gospel’ (εὐαγγέλιον), of course, means “good news.” Its appearance in imperial propaganda and, denominalized, in the eschatological promises of Greek *Isaiah* (e.g. 40:9) are often cited as background for Christian uses of the term.<sup>56</sup> Throughout his letters, Paul uses

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<sup>54</sup> ὥσπερ γοῦν διαφιλονεικοῦντες τὰ ὅμοια γεγράφασι, Συμπόσιον, Σωκράτους ἀπολογίαν, τὰ ἠθικὰ ἀπομνημονεύματα (εἶθ’ ὁ μὲν Πολιτείαν, ὁ δὲ Κύρου παιδείαν [...]). Tiziano Dorandi, ed., *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 262.

<sup>55</sup> Diogenes’ reference to the ethical *Memorabilia* of Plato is probably illuminated by Thrasyllus’ claim — preserved by Diogenes himself— that the first four Platonic dialogues share a “common *hypothesis*” (κοινήν υποθέσιν) concerning the life and death of Socrates (3.57). See Jaap Mansfield, *Prolegomena: Questions to Be Settled before the Study of an Author, or a Text*, *Philosophia Antiqua* 61 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 67–70. Although the direction of dependence is debated, many modern scholars agree that either Xenophon or Plato wrote in response to the other. Holger Thesleff, “The Interrelation and Date of the ‘Symposia’ of Plato and Xenophon,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, no. 25 (1978): 157–70; Gabriel Danzig, “Intra-Socratic Polemics: The Symposia of Plato and Xenophon,” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 45 (2005): 331–57.

<sup>56</sup> *Oriens Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae* 458/Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum 4.490

‘gospel’ to refer to the message about Jesus Christ and its proclamation. This kerygmatic use of ‘gospel’ appears throughout *Matthew*, *Mark*, and other early Christian literature.

At the same time, *Mark* planted the seeds for a new bibliographic use of the word. This earliest extant life of Jesus opens with “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” Since books in antiquity—including Jewish and Christian texts—were sometimes titled after their opening lines, this may have been the *Mark*’s original title.<sup>57</sup> We cannot infer with any measure of confidence that the author intended this opening line to be read this way, but, as Chris Keith recently argued, some of *Mark*’s earliest readers interpreted it this way.<sup>58</sup> Whatever the evangelist’s intention, *Mark*’s incipit probably inspired the reuse of the kerygmatic ‘gospel’ as a title for books about Jesus.

The earliest extant instance of ‘gospel’ used in a bibliographic sense remains a matter of controversy.<sup>59</sup> The *Didache* (8, 15), *Epistle of Barnabas* (5.9), and *Second Clement* (8.5) all cite the words of Jesus as “in the gospel” (ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ).<sup>60</sup> The preposition ἐν appears alongside the kerygmatic ‘gospel’ in the New Testament, but never in a locative sense to indicate the

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<sup>57</sup> See, for instance, the discussion in Johannes Munck, “Evangelium Veritatis and Greek Usages as to Book Titles,” *Studia Theologica* 17, no. 2 (1963): 133–38. This is not, however, a universal practice in Roman times. Aulus Gellius, as noted by Geoffrey Smith, considers titles to be authorial paratexts (*Attic Knights* Pref. 3-10). Geoffrey S. Smith, *Guilt by Association* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 57 n. 17. See also Tim Whitmarsh, “The Greek Novel: Titles and Genre,” *American Journal of Philology* 126, no. 4 (2005): 587–611.

<sup>58</sup> Chris Keith, *The Gospel as Manuscript: An Early History of the Jesus Tradition as Material Artifact* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020), 111–21. Here Keith follows Graham Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 56–58; Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, First Thus edition (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1991), 130.

<sup>59</sup> Important discussions include Robert H. Gundry, “Εὐαγγέλιον: How Soon a Book?,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115, no. 2 (1996): 321–25; Annette Y. Reed, “EUANGELION: Orality, Textuality, and the Christian Truth in Irenaeus’ Adversus Haereses,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 56, no. 1 (2002): 11–46; Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel*, 49–59; James A. Kelhoffer, “How Soon a Book Revisited: EUANGELION as a Reference to Gospel Materials in the First Half of the Second Century,” *ZNW* 95, no. 1–2 (2006): 1–34. Although Origen defends the application of the term to other books, his argument presumes that the conventional bibliographic use of “gospel” refers particularly to books about the life of Jesus (*Commentary on John* 1.4-15).

<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, as Kelhoffer observes, *Second Clement* cites Mk 2:17/Mt 9:13 as scripture. See also *Didache* 11.3. Kelhoffer, “How Soon a Book Revisited,” 6.

source of information. In *Mark*, Jesus proclaims, “repent and believe in the gospel” (1:15). The preposition here marks the kerygmatic gospel as the object of belief. Paul speaks of serving God “in the gospel” parallel with “in the spirit” (Rom 1:9), his “rights in the gospel” (1 Cor 9:18), the fame of a brother “in the [preaching of the] gospel” (2 Cor 8:18), his being first to come “in/with the [preaching of the] gospel” (2 Cor 10:14), struggling “in the [preaching of the] gospel” (Phil 4:3), and Timothy as a coworker “in the [preaching of the] gospel” (1 Thess 3:2). In all these instances, the preposition ἐν connotes instrument, manner, or accompaniment while ‘gospel’ is often shorthand for the act of preaching.<sup>61</sup> Similar uses carry over into the second century (e.g. Ignatius, *Phil.* 5.2, 8).

Justin and Irenaeus, in contrast, consistently employ the construction ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ to introduce Jesus’ teaching, the events of his life, and quotations from the Johannine prologue. In these cases, like the parallel passages in *The Didache*, *The Epistle of Barnabas*, and *2 Clement*—but unlike *New Testament* parallels—the preposition ἐν is locative. Justin introduces Jesus’ words as found at *Matthew* 11:27/*Luke* 10:22 with “it is written in the gospel” (*Dial.* 100.1).<sup>62</sup> Likewise, Irenaeus uses the prepositional phrase to introduce the teachings of Jesus as found in the synoptic gospels (1.20.2; 2.26.2; 3.23.3; 4.12.3; 5.22.1), narrative details from the gospels (1.7.4, 8.4, 2.20.4), and the Johannine prolog (3.11.1; 3.16.8; 5.18.2).<sup>63</sup> In these passages from

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<sup>61</sup> On interpretive options for this particular phrase, see Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 2013), 698. On Paul’s uses of ‘gospel’ generally, see Margaret M. Mitchell, “Rhetorical Shorthand in Pauline Argumentation: The Functions of ‘the Gospel’ in the Corinthian Correspondence,” in *Gospel in Paul, FS R. N. Longenecker*, by LA Jervis and P Richardson (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 63–88.

<sup>62</sup> καὶ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ δὲ γέγραπται εἰπόν [...] More typically, Justin refers to gospels as “memoirs of the apostles” — see the discussion in chapters two and four. Passages from the synoptics are frequently introduced as “(written) in the memoirs” (*Dial.* 100.4, 101.3, 102.5, 103.6, 8, 104.1, 105.6, 106.1, 3, 4, 107.1).

<sup>63</sup> My classification of these references differs from Reed’s in two ways. First, Reed does not classify “love the Lord your God” (4.12.3) as a teaching of Jesus but as “a doctrine.” Irenaeus’s claim, here, is that the gospel and

Justin and Irenaeus, therefore, εὐαγγελίον in the phrase “in the gospel” unambiguously refers to a written book.<sup>64</sup> Justin and Irenaeus are at least as close in time to *Didache*, *Barnabas*, and *2 Clement* as is Paul — probably much closer. The closest analogs to these early second century writings, therefore, support interpreting the phrase “in the gospel” as bibliographic. The earliest usage of ‘gospel’ to refer to a book belongs to one of them.

There is, furthermore, no reason to doubt that these authors used written gospels: Most scholars agree that the synoptics were written before the second decade of the second century. The authors of *The Didache*, *Barnabas*, and *2 Clement* were self-evidently literate. Most importantly, two of these three texts explicitly refer to the words of Jesus as written. The *Epistle of Barnabas* introduces *Matthew* 22:14 with “as it is written” (4.14), and *2 Clement* introduces synoptic triple tradition (*Matthew* 9:13//*Mark* 2:17//*Luke* 5:32) with “another scripture says” (2.4).<sup>65</sup>

Lastly, although *The Didache*, *Barnabas*, and *2 Clement* are most frequently discussed, they are not alone in attesting the bibliographic use of “gospel” decades before Irenaeus.<sup>66</sup>

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the law agree and share a divine “author” (*conditor*). Second, Reed excludes *in ea quae est secundum Euangelium doctrina* (3.11.1). Reed, ““EUAGGELION,”” 31–32.

<sup>64</sup> Reed argues against identifying Irenaeus’ use of ‘gospel’ in the prepositional phrase as bibliographic, with the exception of the references to the Johannine prologue. Reed’s argument is that Irenaeus’ various uses of the prepositional phrase have parallels in Ignatius, *2 Clement*, and *Barnabas*. If we do not share Reed’s assumption that the sub-apostolic authors cannot be using the terms with reference to books, however, Reed’s line of reasoning demonstrates the opposite conclusion. Reed, 31–32.

<sup>65</sup> καὶ ἑτέρα δὲ γραφή λέγει, ὅτι οὐκ ἦλθον καλέσαι δικαίους, ἀλλὰ ἁμαρτωλοὺς. Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, Apostolic Fathers (Early Christian Collection). English & Greek. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2007), 140. ὡς γέγραπται, πολλοὶ κλητοί, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοί Holmes, 390.

<sup>66</sup> The relative uniformity of the titles in the earliest papyri (P66, P75, and P4) and versional evidence suggest that copyists at a fairly early date found the word ‘gospel’ as a title in the manuscripts of individual gospels. See the related arguments in Martin Hengel, *The Four Gospels and the One Gospel of Jesus Christ* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 48–56; Simon J. Gathercole, “The Titles of the Gospels in the Earliest New Testament Manuscripts,” *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 104, no. 1 (January 2013): 33–76. The dates of the papyri and the origins of the versions are, however, matters of contention.

Ignatius repeatedly lists “the gospel” alongside “the law of Moses,” “the prophets,” and “the apostles” as sources of authority (*Phil.* 5.1-2, 9.1-2; *Smyr.* 5.1; 7.2; see also *Phil.* 8.2).<sup>67</sup> The appearance of “the gospel” in lists of textual corpora strongly suggest that Ignatius understood ‘the gospel’ as likewise textual.<sup>68</sup> The Greek of Aristides’ *Apology* (15) and the *Epistula Apostolorum* (1) describe “the gospel” as something that is written, while the Syriac of Aristides (2) and the *Treatise on the Resurrection* (NHC 1.48) refer to “the gospel” as something that is read.<sup>69</sup> The longstanding skepticism toward identifying any of these early instances of ‘gospel’ as bibliographic is grounded in a romanticization of Christian origins and orality — as forcefully outlined in Robyn Walsh’s *The Origins of Early Christian Literature*.<sup>70</sup> Contrary to some old claims still repeated, the bibliographic use of “gospel” was a well-established convention before Irenaeus, before Justin (see below), and, probably, before Marcion.<sup>71</sup>

The third, hypothetic use of the term ‘gospel’ is derived from the bibliographic use. Indeed, some of these bibliographic uses may have been hypothetic — especially, Ignatius’ references. We simply do not have enough information about the gospels available to Ignatius to confidently exclude a simple bibliographic use. I restrict myself, rather, to more certain instances. As soon as multiple gospels stood side-by-side, readers would have compared them to

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<sup>67</sup> The *Epistle of Diognetus* gives the same list, but with the plural “gospels” (11). It cannot, however, be dated before Irenaeus with any reasonable measure of confidence.

<sup>68</sup> C. E. Hill, *Who Chose the Gospels?: Probing the Great Gospel Conspiracy*, Reprint edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 198–99.

<sup>69</sup> The similarities between Aristides’ καλουμένης εὐαγγελικῆς and Justin’s reluctant use of “gospel” suggest that the Greek of Aristides reflects second century usage.

<sup>70</sup> See especially Robyn Faith Walsh, *The Origins of Early Christian Literature: Contextualizing the New Testament within Greco-Roman Literary Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 50–104. See also Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven, Conn., and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 1–40; Larry W. Hurtado, “Oral Fixation and New Testament Studies? ‘Orality’, ‘Performance’ and Reading Texts in Early Christianity,” *New Testament Studies* 60, no. 03 (July 2014): 321–40.

<sup>71</sup> This element of Matthew Larsen’s thesis is treated at length in my fourth chapter. Matthew Larsen, *Gospels before the Book* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018), 82–83.

one another.<sup>72</sup> Some of these readers, surveyed above, employ *hypothesis* language to understand the relationship of these books. But, just as often, second century Christians simply used the singular ‘gospel’ to refer to the *hypothesis* of the gospels.

#### 1.4.1 Clement of Alexandria

Clement, who elsewhere refers to the life and teaching of Jesus as the gospel *hypothesis* (*Who is the Rich Man* 6.2, see above), furnishes several clear examples of this hypothetic use of the term ‘gospel.’ In the opening of his *Paedagogus*, Clement argues that “the prophetic spirit” refers to Christians as “children” by appealing to several verses drawn from *Matthew* and *John* (1.5.12.5).<sup>73</sup> He refers to these sayings of Jesus as “scripture” (ἡ γραφή). Then, transitioning to a discussion of the same theme in the Jewish scriptures, Clement says “not only the gospel holds this opinion, but prophecy agrees.”<sup>74</sup> Clearly, Clement has books in mind: He quotes specific passages from *Matthew* and *John*, refers to them as “scripture,” and compares them to Jewish writings. This instance of ‘gospel’ is not, therefore, easily interpreted in the kerygmatic sense. On the other hand, Clement is picking out quotations from at least two different gospels. His use of ‘gospel’ in the singular is not, therefore, easily interpreted in the bibliographic sense. Rather, Clement is claiming that Jesus refers to Christians as “children” in the *hypothesis* of the gospels — that is, this manner of speaking is, according to Clement, part of the fundamental story of Jesus.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> We cannot say where or when this first happened, but the Lukan prologue acknowledges the use of multiple sources — a point of agreement between the Two Source and Farrer Hypotheses.

<sup>73</sup> Τοὺς παῖδας ἡμᾶς καὶ τὸ προφητικὸν ἐκδέχεται πνεῦμα [...] M. Marcovich, ed., *Clementis Alexandrini Paedagogus* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2002), 9.

<sup>74</sup> Καὶ οὐτί γε μόνον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ταύτη φρονεῖ, ὁμοδοξεῖ δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ ἡ προφητεία. Marcovich, 10.

<sup>75</sup> In the same passage, Clement attributes several gospel quotations to “the Lord in the gospel” (ὁ κύριος ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ). This might be either an unspecified bibliographic use or additional hypothetic uses of the term.

Throughout his corpus, Clement makes a variety of claims about the common testimony of the law, the prophets, the gospel, and the apostles (*Stromata* 4.13, 5.5, 6.11, 7.16; cf. 3.10, 11).<sup>76</sup> Clement explicitly treats these authorities as textual corpora. The kerygmatic use of ‘gospel’ is, consequently, unlikely. At the same time, Clement’s use of the singular ‘gospel’ between the plural ‘prophets’ and plural ‘apostles’ weighs against a simple bibliographic interpretation. Clement is perfectly able to use “gospels” in the plural (e.g. *Stromata* 1.21, 3.13), just as he uses “prophets” and “apostles” in the plural. Moreover, Clement is not singling out one particular gospel in his list of textual authorities. Rather, Clement’s *Stromata* is drawing from an assortment of gospels — including that *of the Egyptians* (*Strom.* 3.6.45, 9.63-64, 66, 13.92; see also *Excerpts from Theodotus* 67) and *of the Hebrews* (*Strom.* 2.9, 5.14). Nevertheless, Clement invariably uses the singular “gospel” when comparing Jesus’ actions and teachings to the message of the prophets and apostles. It seems, therefore, that the hypothetical use of ‘gospel’ suggested itself to Clement as a natural way of expressing the theological harmony of gospel literature with other scriptural corpora.

#### 1.4.2 Justin Martyr

Justin Martyr, likewise, knows all three uses of ‘gospel’ outlined above. Twice in Justin’s *Dialogue with Trypho*, the denominalized εὐαγγελίζομαι refers to the message about Jesus and the spread of Christianity (e.g. 12.2, 136.3). This clearly reflects the kerygmatic use of the root noun. Likewise, Justin refers to books called “gospels” in the plural (*1 Apology* 66) and cites

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<sup>76</sup> Consider, for instance, the following passage: ἔχομεν γὰρ τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς διδασκαλίας, τὸν κύριον διὰ τε τῶν προφητῶν διὰ τε τοῦ εὐαγγελίου καὶ διὰ τῶν μακαρίων ἀποστόλων [...]. “For we have the Lord as the source of our teaching through the prophets, through the gospel, and through the blessed apostles [...]” (*Strom.* 7.16.95.3). Alain le Boulluec, *Clement of Alexandria. Les Stromates. Stromate VII* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1997), 288.

*Matthew* 11:27 as “written in the gospel” (*Dial.* 100.1).<sup>77</sup> Although “apostolic memoirs” is his preferred appellation for gospel literature, Justin acknowledges the already wide-spread bibliographic use of “gospel” to refer to several different books.

In the opening chapters of the *Dialog with Trypho*, Justin uses ‘gospel’ in a hypothetical sense to refer to the sources of Christian ethical teaching. Justin depicts Trypho praising Christian ethical behavior.

I know also that your precepts in the so-called gospel are so wonderful and great that I suppose no one is able to keep them, for I took care to read them (10.2).<sup>78</sup>

The singular ‘gospel’ here is the textual source of Jesus’ teaching, excluding the simple kerygmatic sense. At the same time, it is unlikely that Justin’s Trypho is pointing to a single book. Justin, as we have seen, knows multiple books called “gospels” and typically treats them collectively as “memoirs” (see the further discussion in chapter four). Rather, as the *First Apology* spells out in detail, Justin considers multiple gospels to be the font of Christian ethical teaching.<sup>79</sup> The simple bibliographic use seems, consequently, unlikely. Rather, Justin’s Trypho refers to that body of dominical teachings which, in Justin’s literary imagination, underlies gospel literature as “the so-called gospel.” This is nothing other than the hypothetical use of ‘gospel.’

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<sup>77</sup> [...] καὶ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ δὲ γέγραπται εἰπών· [...] Philippe Bobichon, *Justin Martyr, Dialogue Avec Tryphon: Édition Critique: Introduction, Texte Grec, Traduction*, Paradosis: Études de Littérature et de Théologie Anciennes (Fribourg: Academic Press Fribourg, 2003), 452–54.

<sup>78</sup> ὅμων δὲ καὶ τὰ ἐν τῷ λεγομένῳ εὐαγγελίῳ παραγγέλματα θαυμαστὰ οὕτως καὶ μεγάλα ἐπίσταμαι εἶναι, ὡς ὑπολαμβάνειν μηδένα δύνασθαι φυλάξαι αὐτά· ἐμοὶ γὰρ ἐμέλησεν ἐντυχεῖν αὐτοῖς. Bobichon, 208.

<sup>79</sup> Indeed, Justin cites non-canonical sayings of Jesus at *Dial.* 35.3b, 47.5 and *Apol.* 61.4. See the treatment in Arthur J. Bellinzoni Jr., “The Source of the Agraphon in Justin Martyr’s Dialogue with Trypho 47:5” *Vigiliae Christianae* 17 (1963) 65-70). Justin also agrees with the *Protoevangelium of James* against Luke at *Dialogue* 78. Justin’s collection of gospels probably was not identical to Irenaeus’ *tetraevangelion*.

### 1.4.3 Irenaeus of Lyon

Irenaeus of Lyon uses ‘gospel’ with the same hypothetic sense. Although he can speak of the plural ‘gospels’ (2.22.3, 3.11.7-9), Irenaeus sometimes selects the singular ‘gospel’ to refer to the common substrate of the written gospels. At the same time, Irenaeus redefines gospel literature as part of his polemical project. Exactly four, all four, and only four gospels, according to Irenaeus, constitute ‘the gospel.’ This, with self-conscious anachronism, can be characterized as a ‘canonical’ use of the term gospel. Although Irenaeus’ canonical conception of gospel literature stands in tension with the hypothetic use of the term, both models ultimately stand side-by-side in *Against Heresies*.

Before considering the various senses with which Irenaeus uses ‘gospel,’ however, it is worth noting that Irenaeus also employs *hypothesis* language in his discussion of gospel literature. Robert Grant, in fact, noted Irenaeus’ appropriation of rhetorical terminology decades ago. In his monograph *Irenaeus of Lyons*, Grant argues that the heresiologist borrowed the technical terms *hypothesis*, *oikonomia*, and *anakephalaiōsis* from contemporary rhetorical theory.<sup>80</sup> Although he misunderstands the sense of *hypothesis*, Grant rightly identifies this as a technical term borrowed from contemporary literary culture to characterize the gospels.<sup>81</sup>

Irenaeus employs the term *hypothesis* in a critique of Valentinian interpretation of the Johannine prologue (1.9.4). Valentinian exegesis, says Irenaeus, treats the gospels the same way that a Homeric cento treats *The Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The ‘cento’ is a kind of poem composed by

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<sup>80</sup> Robert M. Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1997), 46–51.

<sup>81</sup> Grant defines *hypothesis* as “a presentation (sometimes) in summary of a plot or structure intended by an author.” Grant, 47. Grant understands Irenaeus’ use of *hypothesis* as a reference to the genre of prefatory material (discussed above, §1.2.1) instead of the literary term.

rearranging lines from one work (or, sometimes, literary corpus) in order to tell some different story. Poets who compose a cento, according to Irenaeus, re-arrange Homer’s lines into a different “*hypothesis*.”<sup>82</sup> As an example, Irenaeus quotes a cento that narrates a labor of Hercules with lines drawn from throughout *The Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Thus, Homeric lines composed on one narrative *hypothesis* are cleverly rearranged to describe another *hypothesis*.

Irenaeus accuses Valentinian interpreters of treating the gospels in the same way. Notably, Irenaeus is not criticizing the Valentinians for creating a new gospel but, rather, for their interpretation of the gospels. Specifically, he is criticizing Valentinians for ignoring the gospel narrative—that is, the *hypothesis* of Jesus’ life—in order to tell their own story about the creation of the cosmos. Like the authors of a cento, says Irenaeus, Valentinian interpreters draw phrases and names from the gospels to form new *hypotheses* about the procession of Aeons and the creation of the cosmos.

*Iliad & Odyssey* → Hercules Cento  
Gospels → Valentinian Cosmogony

Irenaeus calls the Valentinian cosmogenic *hypotheses* “fiction” (πλάσμα) and “myth” (μύθος), suggesting that, like the Hercules cento, Irenaeus is thinking about Valentinian cosmogony in narrative terms. The fourth evangelist, Irenaeus insists, is telling a story about Jesus not the origin of the cosmos (1.9.2). The Valentinians, according to Irenaeus, preserve the wording of

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<sup>82</sup> ὅμοια ποιῶντες τοῖς ὑποθέσεις τὰς τυχοῦσας αὐτοῖς προβαλλομένοις, ἔπειτα πειρωμένοις ἐκ τῶν Ὀμήρου ποιημάτων μελετᾶν αὐτάς, ὥστε τοὺς ἀπειροτέρους δοκεῖν ἐπ’ ἐκείνης τῆς ἐξ ὑπογίου μεμελετημένης ὑποθέσεως Ὀμηρον τὰ ἔπη πεποιηκέναι, καὶ πολλοὺς συναρπάζεσθαι διὰ τῆς τῶν ἐπῶν συνθέτου ἀκολουθίας, μὴ ἄρα ταῦθ’ οὕτως Ὀμηρος εἶη πεποιηκώς. [...] Τίς οὐκ ἂν τῶν ἀπανούργων συναρπαγεῖ ὑπὸ τῶν ἐπῶν τούτων, καὶ νομίσειεν οὕτως αὐτὰ Ὀμηρον ἐπὶ ταύτης τῆς ὑποθέσεως πεποιηκέναι; Adelin Rousseau, Louis Doutreleau, and Charles Mercier, *Irenée de Lyon. Contre les hérésies. Livre I.*, vol. 2, Sources chrétiennes 264 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1979), 146–51.

the gospels but change the *hypothesis*. Irenaeus, thus, uses *hypothesis* language to refer to the narrative substrate of the Homeric epics, mythic centos, gospel literature, and Valentinian cosmogeny.

Throughout *Against Heresies*, however, Irenaeus more often refers to the *hypothesis* of gospel literature as simply ‘the gospel.’ For instance, Irenaeus says that Marcion “circumcised” (*circumcidens*) the *Gospel according to Luke*, excising the teachings of Jesus that contradicted his own doctrine. He then claims:

[Marcion] persuaded his disciples that he himself was more truthful than those apostles who delivered the gospel — delivering [to his disciples] not a gospel but a fragment of the gospel (*AH* 1.27.2).<sup>83</sup>

The ‘gospel,’ here, is explicitly textual: Marcion’s altered gospel is compared with the gospel delivered by the apostles. At the same time, this singular ‘gospel’ as it first appears in the quote above was delivered by multiple apostles. But we know that Irenaeus attributed each of the canonical gospels to a different apostle or sub-apostolic figure. Irenaeus’ singular ‘gospel’ delivered by multiple apostles cannot, therefore, refer to any one of the four gospels. Rather, “the gospel” here is the *hypothesis* expressed in *Luke* which Marcion, according to Irenaeus, mutilated. Irenaeus denies that Marcion really has ‘the gospel’ just as scholiasts argue that an authorial choice would “destroy the *hypothesis*.”

I want to caution against a misinterpretation of Irenaeus’ argument that may be suggested by Irenaeus’ subsequent defense of a four-gospel canon: The critique of Marcion in Irenaeus’ first book does not mention his rejection of other gospels. It is not Marcion’s rejection of

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<sup>83</sup> *semetipsum veraciorem esse quam sunt hi qui Evangelium tradiderunt apostoli suasit discipulis suis, non Euangelium, sed particulam Euangelii tradens eis [...].* Rousseau, Doutreleau, and Mercier, 2:350.

*Matthew* that inspires this particular charge. Rather, in context, it is Marcion's mutilation of *Luke* that leads Irenaeus to deny that the heretic has more than a fragment of the gospel. It must be remembered that in a subsequent discussion of gospel writing Irenaeus will insist that each of the apostle-evangelists "equally and individually has the Gospel of God" (3.1.1).<sup>84</sup> According to Irenaeus, therefore, the changes that Marcion makes to the story of Jesus in *Luke* render the book no longer an authentic expression of the gospel *hypothesis*.

Irenaeus again uses 'gospel' in a hypothetical sense in the second book of his *Against Heresies* (2.22.3). He accuses Valentinian interpreters of failing to "examine in the gospels" (*non scrutati sunt in euangeliis*) how often Jesus traveled to Jerusalem. Then Irenaeus gives a synthetic outline of Jesus' life. The Valentinians, Irenaeus concludes, must reject either their interpretation of the passages in question or 'the gospel' (*euanglium*). Irenaeus is not accusing the Valentinians of rejecting particular gospels or, in this instance, adding new gospels. Rather the singular 'gospel' apparently refers to the events of Jesus' life which the Valentinians ought to have discovered in their examination of the gospels. This is the hypothetical use of the singular 'gospel.' Irenaeus thus insists that the Valentinians must choose between their interpretation of the gospels and the gospel *hypothesis* itself.

In the third book of *Against Heresies*, there is an evolution in Irenaeus' rhetoric from a hypothetical use of 'gospel' to a canonical use. Whereas the gospel *hypothesis* is the narrative substrate shared across (or abstracted from) multiple works, Irenaeus uses 'gospel' in book three to refer to the collection of four specific books. There is a meaningful difference between a

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<sup>84</sup> *Contra* Reed, "EUAGGELION," 45. [...] *qui quidem et omnes partier et singuli eorum habentes Euangelium Dei*. Adelin Rousseau, Louis Doutreleau, and Charles Mercier, *Irénée de Lyon. Contre les hérésies. Livre 3.*, vol. 2, Sources chrétiennes 211 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1974), 22.

narrative with several, distinct instantiations (i.e. the hypothetic use) and a narrative composed of four parts (i.e. the canonical use). Irenaeus' earlier polemic against Valentinian interpretation and Marcion's tampering assumed a hypothetic model of gospel literature, but Irenaeus' polemic in book three required (or, perhaps, inspired) a canonical way of thinking about 'the gospel.'<sup>85</sup>

In a thorough analysis of Irenaeus' 'gospel' language, Annette Yoshiko-Reed argues for interpreting most instances of the singular 'gospel' as a "hybridization" of the kerygmatic and bibliographic senses.<sup>86</sup> Irenaeus conflates these inherited uses of the term in order to speak of his singular "rule of truth" —a collection of doctrines, not texts— as "the gospel." This hybrid 'gospel' may at times refer to the written gospel tradition or a message shared across this tradition but Reed resists identifying a "canonical" use of the term 'gospel' in Irenaeus.<sup>87</sup>

Irenaeus's hybrid 'gospel,' according to Reed, is the rule of faith, not a specific collection of texts.

Irenaeus begins his third book with the clearest articulation of Reed's hybrid use:

We have not learned the plan of salvation through anything else except through those through whom the gospel has reached us — [the gospel] which they at one time preached and later, truly by the will of God, handed down to us in writing to be the foundation and pillar of our faith (*AH* 3.1.1).<sup>88</sup>

Here Irenaeus identifies the preaching of the apostles with the written gospels. Irenaeus proceeds, then, to describe the origin of the four gospels as the inscription of apostolic preaching.

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<sup>85</sup> I am not suggesting a strong contrast between the first two books of *Against Heresies* and the third. Rather, Irenaeus switches between these different ways of conceptualizing gospel literature to suit his rhetorical purposes.

<sup>86</sup> Reed, "'EUAGGELION,'" 27.

<sup>87</sup> Reed, 27, 33, 40.

<sup>88</sup> *Non enim per alios dispositionem salutis nostrae cognovimus quam per eos per quos Euangelium pervenit ad nos: quod quidem tunc praeconaverunt, postea vero per Dei voluntatem in Scripturis nobis tradiderunt, fundamentum et columnam fidei nostrae futurum.* Rousseau, Doutreleau, and Mercier, *Irénée de Lyon. Contre les hérésies. Livre 3.*, 2:20.

Here and elsewhere, Reed is right to note that Irenaeus' primary concern is the claim that a single truth, preached by the apostles, has been preserved through written and oral channels.<sup>89</sup> But Irenaeus does not invent the use of 'gospel' to refer to a substrate of content — i.e. the gospel *hypothesis*. As argued above, this use of gospel appears already in his predecessors and contemporaries. Rather, the conflation of the kerygmatic and bibliographic uses of 'gospel' in Irenaeus' rhetoric advances a new, *canonical* sense of the term.<sup>90</sup> Reed's proposed third use of 'gospel,' I argue, needs to be divided into *hypothetic* uses and innovative *canonical* uses.

Halfway through the third volume of *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus gives a catalog of heretics who mistreat the gospels: Ebionites use only *Matthew*, Marcion mutilates *Luke*, docetic Christians prefer *Mark*, and Valentinians support their cosmogenic speculations with *John* (3.11.7). In response, Irenaeus declares that there are "neither more in number nor fewer" than four gospels (3.11.8).<sup>91</sup> After comparing the gospels to the four regions of the world and the four winds, Irenaeus says that the gospels are the "four pillars" (*quattuor [...] columnas*) of the church. Irenaeus, thus, introduces his argument about gospels as a matter of (what we might call) canon — that is, a list of authoritative texts.

"The Word," Irenaeus proceeds, "has given us the four-form gospel (τετράμορφον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον)."<sup>92</sup> Irenaeus explicates the adjective "four-form" by comparing the gospel to the four, four-faced creatures of *Ezekiel* and *Revelation* and the four covenantal dispensations given

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<sup>89</sup> Reed, "'EUAGGELION,'" 41.

<sup>90</sup> I use the term 'canon' here as a self-conscious anachronism to describe a strictly delimited collection of authoritative texts.

<sup>91</sup> *Neque autem plura numero quam haec sunt neque rursus pauciora capit esse Euangelia. // Τί δήποτε οὔτε πλείονα οὔτε ἐλάττονα τὸν ἀριθμὸν εἰσι τὰ εὐαγγέλια;* Rousseau, Doutreleau, and Mercier, *Irénée de Lyon. Contre les hérésies. Livre 3.*, 2:160.

<sup>92</sup> Rousseau, Doutreleau, and Mercier, 2:168.

to humanity. The former image supplies Irenaeus with a scriptural warrant for the number four, while the latter provides an illustration of divine action with four component parts.<sup>93</sup> The latter, God’s four dispensations, most clearly illustrate Irenaeus’ canonical claim about the gospels, since Irenaeus understands the four stages of history as indispensable to the plan of salvation.

This famous catena of images builds to the following conclusion:

These things being so, those who reject the form of the gospel (τὴν ιδέαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου) and propose either more or fewer faces of gospels than already mentioned are all vain and ignorant as well as bold (AH 3.11.9).<sup>94</sup>

Irenaeus’ conception of the gospel in this passage has a particular form (τὴν ιδέαν) with four faces. Marcion, Irenaeus proceeds, rejects the “whole gospel” (*totum Evangelium*) by rejecting three of the four individual gospels. The Valentinians, on the other hand, claim “to have more gospels than there really are” and, as a result, “have no gospel without blasphemy.”<sup>95</sup> As Reed notes, the singular ‘gospel’ in these passages cannot be identified with either the kerygmatic or bibliographic senses. Moreover, it is not the narrative substrate of the gospels (i.e. the gospel *hypothesis*) that these heretics reject by omitting or adding gospels. Rather, Irenaeus understands *Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John* to be a single work of divine authorship composed of four, indispensable parts (see also 3.11.8; 4.12.3). This unity he calls ‘the gospel.’ Even though Irenaeus himself never applies the language of “canon” to books, this is what we would call a canonical conception of ‘the gospel’.

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<sup>93</sup> See the forthcoming article by Jeremiah Coogan on the rhetorical function of Irenaeus’ comparison of the gospel to *Revelation*’s four-living creatures.

<sup>94</sup> Τούτων δὲ οὕτως ἐχόντων, μάταιοι πάντες καὶ ἀμαθεῖς προσέτι δὲ καὶ τολμηροὶ οἱ ἀθετοῦντες τὴν ιδέαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου καὶ εἴτε πλείονα εἴτε ἐλάττονα τῶν εἰρημένων παρεισφέροντες εὐαγγελίων πρόσωπα, οἱ μὲν ἵνα πλείονα δόξωσι τῆς ἀληθείας ἐξευρηκέναι, οἱ δὲ ἵνα τὰς οἰκονομίας Χριστοῦ ἀθετήσωσιν. Rousseau, Doutreleau, and Mercier, *Irénée de Lyon. Contre les hérésies. Livre 3.*, 2:170.

<sup>95</sup> [...] *ut nec Evangelium quidem sit apud eos sine blasphemia*. Rousseau, Doutreleau, and Mercier, 2:172–74.

Ultimately, the hypothetic and canonical uses of the singular ‘gospel’ stand side-by-side in *Against Heresies* because both models serve Irenaeus’ polemical purposes. In book one, Marcion mutilates the hypothetic gospel by rewriting *Luke*. In book three, Marcion sunders the canonical gospel by discarding *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *John*. So too the Valentinian interpreters neglect the gospel *hypothesis* in books one and two. In book three, however, they corrupt the canonical gospel by composing their *Gospel of Truth*. Thus, Irenaeus’ response to the proliferation of gospels gave rise to a new way of understanding gospel literature without entirely supplanting the old.<sup>96</sup>

Indeed, Irenaeus’ canonical model of gospel literature is an apparent innovation. Tatian, Irenaeus’ contemporary, would compose a new gospel (see chapter seven). Serapion of Antioch, writing decades later, does not cite the received “four-form gospel” as grounds for rejecting the *Gospel of Peter* (*EH*. 6.12) but approves of its reading until he learns of its use by theological opponents. Hegesippus (*apud EH* 4.22.7), *The Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs* (12), 2 Clement (5.2-4) and even, in qualified form, Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 2.9, 3.9, 5.14 *cf.* 3.13) attest to the *ad hoc* character of gospel collections among Irenaeus’ theological allies in the late second century. Whether or not Irenaeus himself invented the canonical use of ‘gospel,’ it was a novel notion in his day.

At the same time, Irenaeus adopted a hypothetic model for understanding pluriform literary traditions from contemporary literary culture. Indeed, he inherited a tradition of reading gospels through this lens. That is, Irenaeus, like Justin, understood gospels as discrete works

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<sup>96</sup> This is evident already in the survey of explicit *hypothesis* language above. Drawing from the third century, examples of the hypothetic use of the term ‘gospel’ could be multiplied.

composed on an established *hypothesis*. Indeed, the view of gospel literature as discrete authored books (as I argue in chapter four) is reflected in even earlier readers of the gospels and the synoptic text traditions.

In sum, the model for thinking about pluriform texts as individual works composed on an established *hypothesis* is well-attested among the earliest readers of gospel literature. This included but was not limited to interpreters who use the term ‘*hypothesis*.’ Rather, the hypothetical use of the singular ‘gospel’ was common in the second century.

## 1.5 Conclusion

Hellenistic and Roman book culture had vocabulary to describe the relationship between discrete works in pluriform literary traditions. Books were said to be written on the same *hypothesis* when they shared certain elements of content. Although this differed according to genre, a narrative *hypothesis* entailed certain characters, settings, and events. On the other hand, a *hypothesis* allowed for creative differences in scope, sequence, and verbal expression. This term was applied—but hardly limited to—books with extensive verbatim agreement.

Early Christians applied this same language to the gospels. In the second century, Irenaeus and Clement speak explicitly of gospel literature’s “*hypothesis*.” At the same time, Justin, Irenaeus, and Clement use the title “gospel” in a hypothetical sense. Although the canonical conception of gospel literature as a quadriform composition by a divine author would displace the hypothetical model in the third century, the examples of Eusebius, Epiphanius, and Cosmas reflect the staying power of this earlier, inherited conceptual apparatus.

## Chapter 2

### Another Synoptic Problem: The Distinctive Conservatism of the Synoptic Gospels

#### 2.1 Introduction

‘The Synoptic Problem’ is scholarly nomenclature for a series of debates over competing explanations for the literary relationship between the *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*. Markan priority explains to the satisfaction of most scholars why *Matthew* and *Luke* share extensive verbatim agreements with *Mark*. Scholarly consensus on an explanation for the verbatim agreements between *Matthew* and *Luke* without parallels in *Mark* has proven more elusive. There is, I propose, a yet more fundamental ‘synoptic problem.’

The conservatism of the synoptic gospels is unparalleled in the historical literature of the Hellenistic and Roman world. This chapter reviews the evidence for the compositional procedures of authors writing on an established *hypothesis*. The treatment of literary sources evinced in the synoptic gospels does not reflect the conventions of ancient historiography. This, I argue, represents *another* synoptic problem.

New Testament scholars were slow to recognize this disanalogy with first and second century literary culture. Attempts to explain the conservatism of the synoptic gospels have been largely unsatisfactory. A survey of relevant scholarship reveals that this difference between the compositional method of the synoptics and other contemporary literature is a yet unsolved problem.

One reason scholarship has failed to reckon with this more basic synoptic problem is a long-standing myth about proprietary conceptions of literature in antiquity. According to this

myth, the conservative reproduction of wording in the synoptic gospels was acceptable literary praxis before the invention of the printing press. This is not, I argue below, an accurate characterization of ancient literary culture. On the contrary, plagiarism was an operative (and, indeed, normative) category in Greek and Latin literature of the first and second centuries CE. At the same time, I contend, it is unlikely that the synoptic evangelists were understood as plagiarists in their own literary sub-culture.

Finally, this chapter assesses a recent account of gospel origins that purports to explain the treatment of *Mark* evinced in *Matthew* and *Luke* as an instance of the re-use of sub-literary, unfinished, and unauthored notes. A review of the primary evidence reveals that this practice is only attested in polemical accounts of literary theft. It was not, therefore, a conventional mode of authorship in the first and second centuries. There is, furthermore, no evidence that any early Christians understood gospel literature in this way.

## 2.2 Another Synoptic Problem

The gospels known as *Matthew* and *Luke* are the products of a remarkably conservative compositional procedure. The author of *Matthew* reproduced *Mark* story-for-story and word-for-word. By Robert Morgenthaler's count, 77% of *Mark*'s wording was copied directly into *Matthew*.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, the author of *Luke* copied 61% of *Mark*'s wording and several thousand words of *Matthew*'s additions to *Mark*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> According to Morgenthaler, the author of *Matthew* reproduced 8,555 of *Mark*'s 11,078 words. Robert Morgenthaler, *Statistik des neutestamentlichen Wortschatzes* (Zürich: Gotthelf-Verlag, 1958), 232.

<sup>2</sup> According to Morgenthaler, the author of *Luke* reproduced 6,737 of *Mark*'s 11,078 words. Morgenthaler, 232. According to Carlston and Norlin, *Luke* shares 1,854 words with *Matthew* in Double Tradition out of a total of 2,657 words. Charles E. Carlston and Dennis Norlin, "Once More: Statistics and Q," *The Harvard Theological Review* 64, no. 1 (1971): 71. This leaves aside the major agreements (so-called Mark-Q overlaps) where the author of *Luke* is using *Matthew*'s version of a Markan story. These include John's preaching (Mt 3:5-12//Lk 3:7-17), Jesus' temptation (Mt 4:2-11//Luke 4:2-13), Mission Discourse (Mt 10:5-15//Lk 9:1-6//Lk 10:1-12), the Beelzebul

Consider the following Markan episode, retold in *Matthew* and *Luke*.

*Matthew 9*

<sup>10</sup>Καὶ ἐγένετο αὐτοῦ ἀνακειμένου ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ, καὶ ἰδοὺ πολλοὶ τελῶναι καὶ ἁμαρτωλοὶ ἐλθόντες συνανέκειντο τῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ.

<sup>11</sup>καὶ ἰδόντες οἱ Φαρισαῖοι

ἔλεγον τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ· Διὰ τί μετὰ τῶν τελωνῶν καὶ ἁμαρτωλῶν ἐσθίει ὁ διδάσκαλος ὑμῶν; <sup>12</sup>ὁ δὲ ἀκούσας εἶπεν·

Οὐ χρειαν ἔχουσιν οἱ ἰσχύοντες ἰατροῦ ἀλλὰ οἱ κακῶς ἔχοντες.

<sup>13</sup>πορευθέντες δὲ μάθετε τί ἐστίν· Ἔλεος θέλω καὶ οὐ θυσίαν· οὐ γὰρ ἦλθον καλέσαι δικαίους ἀλλὰ ἁμαρτωλοῦς.

<sup>10</sup>And when he was dining in the house, and lo when many tax-collectors and sinners came, they were dining with Jesus and his disciples.

<sup>11</sup>And the Pharisees seeing [this]

*Mark 2*

<sup>15</sup>Καὶ γίνεται κατακεῖσθαι αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ, καὶ πολλοὶ τελῶναι καὶ ἁμαρτωλοὶ συνανέκειντο τῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ, ἦσαν γὰρ πολλοὶ καὶ ἠκολούθουν αὐτῷ. <sup>16</sup>καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς τῶν Φαρισαίων ἰδόντες ὅτι ἐσθίει μετὰ τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν καὶ τελωνῶν ἔλεγον τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ· Ὅτι μετὰ τῶν τελωνῶν καὶ ἁμαρτωλῶν ἐσθίει;

<sup>17</sup>καὶ ἀκούσας ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει αὐτοῖς ὅτι Οὐ χρειαν ἔχουσιν οἱ ἰσχύοντες ἰατροῦ ἀλλ' οἱ κακῶς ἔχοντες·

οὐκ ἦλθον καλέσαι δικαίους ἀλλὰ ἁμαρτωλοῦς.

<sup>15</sup>And he was dining in his house, and many tax-collectors and sinners were dining with Jesus and his disciples, for also many were following him. <sup>16</sup>And the scribes of the Pharisees seeing that

*Luke 5*

<sup>29</sup>Καὶ ἐποίησεν δοχὴν μεγάλην Λευὶς αὐτῷ ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ· καὶ ἦν ὄχλος πολὺς τελωνῶν καὶ ἄλλων οἱ ἦσαν μετ' αὐτῶν κατακεείμενοι.

<sup>30</sup>καὶ ἐγόγγυζον οἱ Φαρισαῖοι καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς αὐτῶν πρὸς τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ λέγοντες·

Διὰ τί μετὰ τῶν τελωνῶν καὶ ἁμαρτωλῶν ἐσθίετε καὶ πίνετε; <sup>31</sup>καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς·

Οὐ χρειαν ἔχουσιν οἱ ὑγιαίνοντες ἰατροῦ ἀλλὰ οἱ κακῶς ἔχοντες·

<sup>32</sup>οὐκ ἐλήλυθα καλέσαι δικαίους ἀλλὰ ἁμαρτωλοῦς εἰς μετάνοιαν.

<sup>29</sup>And Levi made a huge feast for Jesus in his house. And there was a great crowd of tax-collectors and others who were dining with him.

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controversy (Mt 12:22-37//Lk 11:14-28), and the Mustard Seed (Mt 13:31-32//Lk 13:18-19). The lower number for *Luke* is not a significant disanalogy. The reproduction of over half of its primary source sets *Luke* apart from contemporary methods, reviewed below. The lower number is partially the result of the third evangelist's use of the Matthean version of several stories (see above). At the same time, the third evangelist is prone to paraphrase and abbreviate more than the author of *Matthew*.

**said to his disciples, “Why is your teacher eating with tax-collectors and sinners?”** <sup>12</sup>**And hearing [this] he said, “The strong do not have need of a doctor but the sick.** <sup>13</sup>**Go and learn what it is: I want mercy and not sacrifice. For I have not come to call righteous [people] but sinful.**

he was eating with tax-collectors and sinners said to his disciples, “Why is he eating with tax-collectors and sinners? <sup>17</sup>And hearing [this], Jesus said to them that the strong do not have need of a doctor but the sick.

I have not come to call righteous [people] but sinful.

And **the Pharisees and their scribes** were murmuring against **his disciples** **saying,** “Why is **he eating** and drinking **with tax-collectors?** And Jesus answering, **said** to them, The healthy **do not have need of a doctor but the sick.**

<sup>32</sup>**I have not come to call righteous [people] but sinful [people] to repentance.**

The story of Jesus eating with tax-collectors and sinners consists of 73 words in *Mark*. The author of *Matthew* reproduced 56 of these words in his retelling — 77% of his source’s wording. The author of *Luke* reproduced 41 of the 73 Markan words — 56% of his source’s wording. This is, therefore, roughly typical of the synoptic evangelists’ treatment of *Mark*. Here as elsewhere most of *Matthew* is drawn from *Mark* whereas the third evangelist adheres a little less closely to *Mark* and writes with slightly more parsimony. Both authors add material and both authors change material but, strikingly, both authors preserve much of *Mark*’s verbal expression.

The mode of re-writing evinced by the synoptic gospels is not only conservative, but comprehensive. The authors of *Matthew* and *Luke* reproduce the whole sweep of *Mark*, preserving almost every episode of their common source — with the notable exception of a Markan block (6:45-8:26) omitted from *Luke*.<sup>3</sup> Although both authors altered the sequence of

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<sup>3</sup> There are only a few exceptions. *Matthew* omits the Markan demoniac in the synagogue (1:23-28), departure from Capernaum (1:35-38), conflict with his family (3:20-21), parable of the seed growing secretly (4:26-

*Mark* for their own narrative purposes (see chapter four), they evidently worked through their common source episode-by-episode, copying both the substance and wording of each story into their gospels. The authors of *Matthew* and *Luke*, therefore, did not merely use *Mark* as a literary source but reproduced it in their own work.

This conservative method for re-writing the gospel (i.e. writing a new work on the gospel hypothesis) did not come to a halt when the third evangelist laid down his pen. There are several second century gospels that reflect a similarly conservative treatment of their source material. Many of these latter-day synoptic gospels survive only in fragments and testimonia.<sup>4</sup> Two gospels attributed to Marcion and Tatian can, however, be reconstructed from patristic commentary with enough confidence to study their author's compositional procedure. Marcion's gospel reproduces about three-quarters of *Luke*. Chapter five argues at length that this work cannot be explained as the result of the kind of textual variation evinced in the synoptic text tradition(s). Chapter six shows that Marcion did not behave as an ancient text critic. Marcion, rather, is best understood as another evangelist in the synoptic tradition. Likewise, Tatian reproduced his sources in a conservative and comprehensive fashion. Although his work has long been categorized as a "harmony," Chapter 7 argues that our term "harmony" does not correspond to any literary genre attested in antiquity. Rather, Tatian composed a new gospel according to the same strikingly conservative conventions reflected in the treatment of *Mark* by the authors of

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29), blind man at Bethsaida (8:22-26), the strange exorcist (9:38-31), conspiracy of the chief priests and scribes (11:18-19), and the widow's mite (12:41-44).

<sup>4</sup> The Dura Fragment, P.Oxy. inv. 16 2B.48/C(a), and the *Gospel of the Hebrews* are the remnants of a larger synoptic tradition.

*Matthew* and *Luke*. Several second century evangelists, therefore, continued to compose new gospels according to the distinctively conservative procedures evinced in the synoptics.

This is not an obvious way to rewrite a story. I will review non-Christian historical literature below, but other Christian authors felt no compunction to write gospels in this way. The authors of the gospels known as *John* and *Thomas*, for instance, drew upon the synoptic gospels to produce very different kinds of books about Jesus.<sup>5</sup> When a synoptic story is retold in *John*, the fourth evangelist almost never preserves the wording of his sources. As such, the author of *John* treated the synoptics in a manner typical of ancient historians (as outlined below). The author of *Thomas*, on the other hand, transformed the synoptic narratives into a *chreia* collection, a fitting genre for presenting the doctrines of an important teacher.<sup>6</sup> The conservatism evinced in the synoptics is not the only way to rewrite the life of Jesus.

In a 1995 article titled, “A Question Too Often Neglected,” Sharon Lea Mattila observed that Hellenistic and Roman authors did not reproduce the wording of their sources in a manner comparable to the synoptics.<sup>7</sup> To be sure, Hellenistic and Roman authors used written sources. Cassius Dio (c. 155-235 CE), for instance, claims to have read everything ever written on his subject and promises, mercifully, to pass along only what he deems worthy (*Roman History*

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<sup>5</sup> The strongest arguments in favor of dependence are found in Mark Goodacre, *Thomas and the Gospels: The Case for Thomas's Familiarity with the Synoptics* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012); James Barker, *John's Use of Matthew* (Fortress Press, 2015).

<sup>6</sup> On the fittingness of a philosophical genre to the Thomasine Jesus, see Goodacre, *Thomas and the Gospels: The Case for Thomas's Familiarity with the Synoptics*, 172–92; Simon James Gathercole, *The Gospel of Thomas: Introduction and Commentary*, 2014, 137–43.

<sup>7</sup> Sharon Lea Mattila, “A Question Too Often Neglected,” *New Testament Studies* 41, no. 02 (April 1995): 199. Mattila's own articulation of the problem is more opaque: “The pronounced unevenness in the distribution of verbatim agreement over the synoptic data is an important phenomenon that cannot be overlooked, for this phenomenon jars considerably with the patterns of verbatim agreement observed among other near contemporary authors and their sources. Mattila, 207.

1.1.2).<sup>8</sup> Where we can check such authors against their sources, however, there is scarce evidence for the extensive, verbatim borrowing that characterizes the synoptic gospels.<sup>9</sup> Mattila shows that Josephus and Arrian, two works frequently adduced as analogs for the synoptic gospels, borrow “events” but not wording from their sources.<sup>10</sup> Rather, ancient historians, according to Mattila, “*consistently* and thoroughly rewrote their sources.”<sup>11</sup> The “relatively high yet markedly inconsistent verbatim agreement” among the synoptic gospels make them “somewhat of an anomaly” in contemporary Greek literature.<sup>12</sup>

In a concluding proposal for future research, Mattila points to Loveday Alexander’s characterization of technical literature as exhibiting a “respect for tradition.”<sup>13</sup> This literary sub-culture, Mattila suggests, might furnish closer analogies for the conservatism of gospel literature. Neither Alexander nor Mattila, however, present any *comparanda* for the compositional procedure of the synoptics. And Mattila consults no scholarship on technical literature beyond Alexander’s important monograph. Nevertheless, Mattila diagnosed a real problem and proposed a promising solution. I take up her “preliminary suggestion” in the following chapter.<sup>14</sup>

The present chapter is concerned to demonstrate that Mattila’s “problem” is, indeed, a problem. The treatment of sources evinced in the synoptic gospels does not reflect contemporary conventions in writing history or biography. Mattila’s problem has not, however, been entirely

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<sup>8</sup> Ανέγγων μὲν πάντα ὡς εἶπεῖν τὰ περὶ αὐτῶν τισὶ γεγραμμένα, συνέγραψα δὲ οὐ πάντα ἀλλ’ ὅσα ἐξέκρινα. Jeffrey Henderson, *Roman History, Volume I*, Loeb Classical Library 32 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1914), 2.

<sup>9</sup> I survey the relevant scholarship below. This point, however, is common (e.g. D. A. Russell, “Plutarch’s Life of Coriolanus,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 53, no. 1–2 (November 1963): 22; T.J. Luce, *Livy: The Composition of His History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977), 212).

<sup>10</sup> Mattila, “A Question Too Often Neglected,” 210–13.

<sup>11</sup> Mattila, 207.

<sup>12</sup> Mattila, 209.

<sup>13</sup> Mattila, 216–17.

<sup>14</sup> Mattila, 216.

“neglected.” At least since B.H. Streeter, scholars have noticed the disanalogy between the synoptics and contemporary authorial practices. The typical response, unfortunately, has been to dismiss the problem with ill-considered *comparanda* or dubious claims about ancient literary conventions. The notable exceptions —John Kloppenborg, the later work of F. Gerald Downing, Alan Kirk, and Sharon Lea Mattila herself— have only gestured toward a solution. Mattila’s problem, I argue, has not been answered satisfactorily.

### 2.3 Compositional Methods for Hellenistic and Roman Historical Writing

In its basic outline, ancient compositional technique is hardly controversial. Scholarship on various Greek and Latin authors from the relevant period have reached roughly the same conclusions. New Testament scholars, consequently, rehearse the same handful of studies, shifting their emphases according to their rhetorical objectives. I offer, first, a sketch of the working methods common to ancient historical and biographical writing, then revisit a handful of representative primary sources to review my own special object of interest: the preservation of a source's wording.

T.J. Luce and Christopher Pelling, in their studies of Greek and Latin compositional practice, reconstruct the typical procedure of biographers and historians as follows.<sup>15</sup> First, the author reviewed a broad array of sources in order to select one work as their primary source (or *Hauptquelle*) for the entire work or relevant section.<sup>16</sup> The author might draw upon additional sources from memory or their working notebooks. Typically, however, authors had access to only their *Hauptquelle* while drafting prose. In the actual act of composition, then, authors re-

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<sup>15</sup> Luce, *Livy*, 139–229; Christopher Pelling, *Plutarch and History: Eighteen Studies* (Classical Press of Wales, 2002), 19–25. 7-15

<sup>16</sup> Luce, *Livy*, 174.

read the relevant block of their *Hauptquelle* immediately before drafting. Notably, authors at this stage reviewed their source in narrative chunks, not line-by-line. This source, therefore, furnished authors with a narrative structure and plenty of details but not wording. Verbal echoes are common but verbatim agreement is exceedingly rare.<sup>17</sup>

“Verbatim copying of sources,” state F.J. Foakes-Jackson and Kirsopp Lake in their survey of Greek history writing, “was not tolerated.”<sup>18</sup> This characterization of historical writing is, of course, central to Mattila’s proposed “problem.” It may be illustrated by reviewing three representative authors: Livy, Plutarch, and Josephus. These authors work according to the method outlined above, closely following a single source for information but re-telling the narrative in their own language. Verbatim agreement is exceedingly rare wherever one of these works can be compared with its source material.

### 2.3.1 Livy

Livy wrote his history of the Roman empire at the beginning of the first century CE — a generation before the evangelists. Although many of Livy’s sources do not survive, his *From the Founding of the City* uses Polybius’ *Histories* as its *Hauptquelle* for much of the second and third centuries BCE. Livy, according to Luce, drew upon Polybius from memory, not with an eye (or ear) on the text itself.<sup>19</sup> Consequently, Livy does not merely render Polybius into Latin, but

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<sup>17</sup> This is not to deny that verbatim copying was possible. Explicit quotations, manuscript reproduction, and other conservative compositional behaviors demonstrate that writers in our period were able to maintain direct access to a textual exemplar if they had reason to. See, for instance, a notable exception discussed at fn. 31. The studies surveyed here demonstrate, rather, that verbatim copying was not conventional compositional behavior.

<sup>18</sup> FJ Foakes-Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity: The Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 2 (London: Macmillan, 1920), 13.

<sup>19</sup> Luce, *Livy*, 212–21.

“recasts” and “abridges” his predecessor.<sup>20</sup> The result is that Polybius’ wording is almost never preserved by Livy.

An example of how Livy treated Polybius’ *Histories* might illustrate the difference between source usage typical of historical writing and what is evinced in the gospels. According to Luce, Livy adheres most closely to Polybius’ language for technical or detailed descriptions.<sup>21</sup> One passage adduced by Luce as an example of especially *close* literary dependence between the two historians are the parallel descriptions of a missile invented during the Third Macedonian War. Consider the passages in synopsis below.

Polybius, *The Histories* 27.11<sup>22</sup>  
Κέστρος. ξένον ἦν τοῦτο τὸ εὖρημα κατὰ τὸν Περσικὸν πόλεμον. τὸ δὲ βέλος τοιοῦτον· διπάλαιστον ἦν, ἴσον ἔχον τὸν αὐλίσκον τῇ προβολῇ. τούτῳ ξύλον ἐνήρμοστο τῷ μὲν μήκει σπιθαμιαῖον, τῷ δὲ πάχει δακτυλιαίαν ἔχον τὴν διάμετρον. εἰς δὲ τούτου τὸ μέσον ἐσφήνωτο πτερύγια τρία ξύλινα, βραχέα παντελῶς. τοῦτο, δυεῖν κώλων ἀνίσων ὑπαρχόντων τῆς σφενδόνης, εἰς τὸ μέσον ἐνηγκυλίζετο τῶν κώλων εὐλύτως. λοιπὸν ἐν μὲν τῇ περιαγωγῇ τεταμένων τούτων ἔμενε· ὅτε δὲ παραλυθεῖν θάτερον τῶν κώλων κατὰ τὴν ἄφεσιν, ἐκπίπτον ἐκ τῆς ἀγκύλης καθαπερὶ μολυβδῖς ἐκ τῆς σφενδόνης ἐφέρετο καὶ προσπίπτον μετὰ βιαίας πληγῆς κακῶς διετίθει τοὺς συγκυρήσαντας

Cestrus: This was an unfamiliar invention at the time of the war of Perseus. The missile was like this: It was two palms long, the tube being as long as the point. Wood was inserted

Livy, *The History of Rome* 42.65.9-10<sup>23</sup>  
maxime cestrosphendonis vulnerabantur. hoc illo bello novum genus teli inventum est. bialme spiculum hastili semicubitali infixum erat, crassitudine digiti;

huic abiegnae breves pinnae tres, velut sagittis solent, circumdabantur; funda media duo scutalia inparia habebat; cum maiori nisu libratum funditor habena rotaret,

excussum velut glans emicabat.

They were injured mainly by the *cestrophendons*. This is a new kind of weapon invented during that war. The arrow was two

<sup>20</sup> Luce, 205–6.

<sup>21</sup> Luce, 205.

<sup>22</sup> W.R. Paton, F.W. Walbank, and Christian Habicht, *Polybius. The Histories, Volume V: Books 16-27*, Loeb Classical Library 160 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 580.

<sup>23</sup> Evan T. Sage and Alfred C. Schlesinger, *Livy. History of Rome, Volume XII: Books 40-42*, Loeb Classical Library 332, n.d., 496.

in this as long as a cubit and as thick as a finger in diameter. And three very short, little wing-like pieces of wood were fixed into the middle of this. Two of the members of the sling being uneven, it was fit into the middle of members easily. It remained then extended in the rotation of these; and when one of these members was let go at the moment of release, it went out of the thong like a lead weight shot from a sling and striking with force inflicted terrible injury on those who were hit.

palms long, fastened to a shaft as long as a half-cubit and as thick as a finger;  
 three short feathers were fixed around this piece of soft-wood, just as is customary for arrows; the sling held† two uneven thongs in the middle; when the thong should rotate, swung by great force, being stopped, it was expelled like a bullet.

Luce selected passage as an example of Livy at his most conservative. And, indeed, Livy’s use of Polybius’ *Histories* is clear. Both authors describe the same features of the missile are in the same order. They even use similar language. And yet—even allowing for the vagaries of translation from Greek to Latin—Livy preserves only traces of Polybius’ actual wording. At his most conservative, Livy does not approach the conservatism evinced throughout *Matthew* and *Luke*.

### 2.3.2 Plutarch

Plutarch composed biographies at the end of the first century and the beginning of the second. He was, therefore, an exact contemporary of the authors of *Matthew* and *Luke*. Like Livy, Plutarch composed his *Lives* by reading widely, selecting a *Hauptquelle* for each biography, and drawing on this for the structure of his narrative and many of its details.<sup>24</sup> For his life of Coriolanus, for instance, Plutarch used Dionysius of Halicarnassus’ *Roman Antiquities*.<sup>25</sup> While Plutarch drew the structure and narrative elements of Coriolanus’ life from the *Roman Antiquities*, he seldom reproduces Dionysius’ language. In the words of D.A. Russell, “Plutarch

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<sup>24</sup> Pelling, *Plutarch and History*, 7–15, 19–25.

<sup>25</sup> Russell, “Plutarch’s Life of Coriolanus.”

naturally felt no obligation to follow Dionysius' wording or rhetorical treatment."<sup>26</sup> In even the closest parallels adduced by Russell, Plutarch and Dionysius share only a few lexemes.<sup>27</sup>

Likewise Plutarch's *Lives* of Pompey, Caesar, and their Roman contemporaries were dependent on Asinius Pollio.<sup>28</sup> While the *Roman Antiquities* survive, the historical writings of Pollio must be reconstructed from Ernst Kornemann's synopsis of Plutarch and Appian (along with parallels in Strabo, Cassius Dio, and Suetonius).<sup>29</sup> Pelling concludes that Pollio furnished Plutarch with narrative structures, information, and "even a series of verbal echoes."<sup>30</sup> The evidence for direct literary borrowing, however, never amounts to more than the occasional shared phrase or smattering of common lexemes.<sup>31</sup>

Consider the following passage offered by Pelling as an example of evidence for Plutarch and Dio's dependence on a common source.

Plutarch,  
*Pompey* 48.1-2<sup>32</sup>

Cassius Dio,  
*Roman Antiquities* 38.6.3-4<sup>33</sup>

Plutarch,  
*Cato the Lesser* 32.3-5<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Russell, 22.

<sup>27</sup> Russell, 22 fn. 7.

<sup>28</sup> Pelling, *Plutarch and History*, 12.

<sup>29</sup> Ernst Kornemann, *Die historische Schriftstellerei des C. Asinius Pollio; zugleich ein Beitrag zur Quellenforschung über Appian und Plutarch*. (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1896), 672–91.

<sup>30</sup> Pelling, *Plutarch and History*, 12.

<sup>31</sup> Pelling, 4–5, 12. One exception, noted by FG. Downing, is a portion of Flaminius' proclamation of freedom for Greece. Polybius (*History* 18.46.5), Livy (33.32.5), and Plutarch (*Flaminius* 10.5) repeat one part of this speech nearly verbatim. This does not, however, represent their working method — even for other famous speeches. Francis Gerald Downing, "Writer's Use or Abuse of Written Sources," *New Studies in the Synoptic Problem. Oxford Conference, April 2008. Essays in Honour of Christopher M. Tuckett*, 2011, 548.

<sup>32</sup> Bernadotte Perrin, *Plutarch. Lives, Volume V: Agesilaus and Pompey. Pelopidas and Marcellus.*, Loeb Classical Library 87 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917), 238.

<sup>33</sup> Earnest Cary and Herbert B. Foster, *Dio Cassius. Roman History, Volume III: Books 36-40*, Loeb Classical Library 53 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), 206–8.

<sup>34</sup> Perrin, *Plutarch. Lives, Volume V: Agesilaus and Pompey. Pelopidas and Marcellus.*, 312.

Βύβλω τε γὰρ εἰς ἀγορὰν τῷ  
ὑπάτῳ κατιόντι μετὰ  
Λευκόλλου καὶ Κάτωνος  
ἄφνω προσπεσόντες  
κατέκλασαν τὰς ῥάβδους,  
αὐτοῦ δέ τις κοπρίων  
κόφινον ἐκ κεφαλῆς τοῦ  
Βύβλου κατεσκέδασε, δύο δὲ  
**δήμαρχοι** τῶν  
συμπροπεμπόντων  
ἐτρώθησαν. οὕτω δὲ τῶν  
ἐνισταμένων τὴν ἀγορὰν  
ἐρημώσαντες ἐπέκύρωσαν  
τὸν περὶ τῆς διανομῆς τῶν  
χωρίων νόμον·

For when Bibulus, the  
consul, was going down into  
the forum with Lucullus and  
Cato, suddenly falling upon  
him they broke the **staffs** and  
someone poured a basket of  
dung on the head of Bibulus  
himself, and two of the  
**tribunes** who were sent in  
front were wounded. These  
things happening **in this**  
**way**, after emptying the  
forum, they **ratified** the law  
concerning the distribution of  
the land;

καὶ τὸ πλῆθος νυκτὸς τὴν  
**ἀγορὰν** προκατέλαβεν,  
ἐπῆλθε μετὰ τῶν  
παρεσκευασμένων, καὶ πρὸς  
μὲν τὸ Διοσκόρειον, ἀφ'  
οὔπερ ἐκεῖνος ἐδημηγόρει,  
διέπεσεν, τὰ μὲν αἰδοῖ τῶν  
ἀνθρώπων ὑπεικόντων οἱ, τὰ  
δὲ καὶ νομιζόντων αὐτὸν μὴ  
καὶ ἐναντιωθήσεσθαι σφισιν,  
ὡς δὲ ἄνω τε ἐγένετο καὶ  
ἀντιλέγειν ἐπειρᾶτο, αὐτὸς τε  
κατὰ τῶν ἀναβασμῶν ἐώσθη  
καὶ αἱ **ῥάβδοι** αὐτοῦ  
συνετρίβησαν, πληγᾶς τε καὶ  
τραύματα ἄλλοι τε καὶ οἱ  
**δήμαρχοι** ἔλαβον. καὶ ὁ μὲν  
νόμος οὕτως ἐκυρώθη, [...]

And the multitude seized the  
forum at night, [Bibulus]  
arrived with those he had  
prepared and reached the  
Temple of the Dioscuri from  
which [Caesar] was speaking.  
They fell back, some of the  
people yielding to humility  
and others thinking he would  
not oppose them. But when  
[Bibulus] arrived and  
attempted to speak against  
[Caesar], he was pushed  
down the stairs and his **staffs**  
were broken and the **tribunes**  
and others received blows  
and wounds. And **in this way**  
the law was **ratified** [...]

καὶ πρῶτον μὲν αὐτῷ τῷ  
Βύβλω καταβαίνοντι κοπρίων  
ἐπεσκεδάσθη κόφινος, ἔπειτα  
τοῖς ῥαβδούχοις προσπεσόντες  
αὐτοῦ κατέκλασαν τὰς  
**ῥάβδους**· τέλος δὲ καὶ βελῶν  
φερομένων καὶ πολλῶν  
συντιτρωσκομένων, ἔφυγον ἐξ  
ἀγορᾶς, δρόμῳ μὲν οἱ λοιποὶ  
πάντες, ἔσχατος δὲ Κάτων  
ἀπῆει βάδην,  
μεταστρεφόμενος καὶ  
μαρτυρόμενος τοὺς πολίτας,  
οὐ μόνον οὖν τὴν διανομὴν  
**ἐκύρωσαν**, ἀλλὰ [...]

First, when Bibulus himself  
was going down, a basket of  
dung was poured on his head,  
then falling upon his lictors  
they broke the **staffs**. And,  
finally, missiles flying and  
many being wounded, they  
fled from the forum. All the  
rest in a run, Cato lastly  
walked out, turning and  
imploring the citizens.  
Therefore, they not only  
**ratified** the distribution,  
but[...]

Cassius Dio's *Roman Antiquities* and Plutarch's lives of Pompey and Cato the Lesser all narrate the assault on Bibulus. The two biographies by Plutarch do, indeed, share several terms with each other, suggesting that Plutarch drew upon the same set of private notes in both of his

works. The relationship between Plutarch’s biographies and Dio’s history is nowhere near as close. Dio and Plutarch share only a few key words: ἀγορά, ῥάβδος, δήμαρχος, and κυρώ in a paragraph selected by Pelling for its especially close correspondence. This pattern of terminological agreement across several books is more than sufficient for scholars of Plutarch to establish a literary relationship between these authors but, in degree and extent, the resultant verbal similarities do not approach the extensive, verbatim reproduction of source material that characterizes the synoptic gospels.<sup>35</sup> Whereas at least half of the wording for any given Markan episode is assumed into *Matthew* and *Luke*, Plutarch and Dio share only the odd lexeme.

#### 2.3.4 Appian of Alexandria

Appian of Alexandria was a second century Greek historian who drew upon Plutarch’s *Lives*, among others, for his Roman histories. Pelling presents a parallel between Plutarch’s *Caesar* and Appian’s *Civil Wars* as especially strong evidence that the latter borrowed directly from the former.<sup>36</sup>

Plutarch, *Caesar* 14.7-8<sup>37</sup>

Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.2.14<sup>38</sup>

ὀλίγω δ’ ὕστερον Καῖσαρ ἠγάγετο  
Καλπουρνίαν θυγατέρα Πείσωνος, τὸν δὲ

Ὁ δὲ καὶ τὴν ἀποδημίαν οἱ χρόνιον ὀρῶν  
ἐσομένην καὶ τὸν φθόνον ὡς ἐπὶ μεγίστοις δὴ  
τοῖς δεδομένοις μείζονα, Πομπηίῳ μὲν  
ἐξεύγνυ τὴν θυγατέρα, καίπερ ἐνηγγυημένην  
Καιπίωνι, δεδιώς, μὴ καὶ φίλος ὢν  
ἐπιφθονήσειε τῷ μεγέθει τῆς εὐδαιμονίας,  
τοὺς δὲ θρασυτάτους τῶν στασιωτῶν ἐπὶ τὰς  
ἀρχὰς τοῦ μέλλοντος ἔτους παρήγε. καὶ  
ὑπατον μὲν ἀπέφηεν Αὐλὸν Γαβίνιον, φίλον

<sup>35</sup> The closest literary relationships are evinced where Plutarch is relying on his own notes in two different places. See Pelling, *Plutarch and History*, 4; Philip A. Stadter, “Plutarch’s Compositional Technique: The Anecdote Collections and the Parallel Lives,” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 54, no. 4 (August 30, 2014): 665–86.

<sup>36</sup> Pelling, *Plutarch and History*, 36 fn. 75.

<sup>37</sup> Perrin, *Plutarch. Lives, Volume V: Agesilaus and Pompey. Pelopidas and Marcellus.*, 474.

<sup>38</sup> Brian McGing, *Appian. Roman History, Volume IV: Civil Wars, Books 1–2*, Loeb Classical Library 5 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020), 266.

Πείσωνα κατέστησεν ὕπατον εἰς τὸ μέλλον, ἐνταῦθα δὴ καὶ σφόδρα μαρτυρομένου **Κάτωνος** καὶ **βοῶντος** οὐκ ἀνεκτὸν εἶναι **γάμοις διαμαστροπευομένης τῆς ἡγεμονίας**, καὶ διὰ γυναιῶν εἰς ἐπαρχίας καὶ στρατεύματα καὶ δυνάμεις ἀλλήλους ἀντισταγόντων.

A little while later, Caesar **took** [to marry] **Calpurnia**, a **daughter of Piso**, and appointed Piso **consul** for the next year. Here also **Cato** objected vehemently, even **shouting** that it is intolerable for **hegemonies to be exchanged for marriages** and for authority and armies and other powers to be bestowed on one another through women.

ἑαυτοῦ· Λευκίου δὲ Πείσωνος τοῦ σὺν αὐτῷ μέλλοντος ὑπατεύσειν τὴν **θυγατέρα Καλπουρνίαν** αὐτὸς ἤγετο, **βοῶντος Κάτωνος διαμαστροπεύεσθαι γάμοις τὴν ἡγεμονίαν**.

And seeing that he would be away for some time and that envy would be greatest for those given more, [Caesar] joined his daughter [in marriage] to Pompey — even though she was promised to Caepio — because he was afraid that even though [Pompey] was a friend he might begrudge [Caesar's] success. And [Caesar] introduced the boldest of his supporters to offices for the coming year. He declared Aulus Gabinius, his friend, **consul**. And with him to be the next consul, **Lucius Piso whose daughter, Calpurnia**, he **took** [to marry], when **Cato shouted** that **hegemony was exchanged for marriages**.

The agreement here is closer than those used to reconstruct the lost work of Pollio. Plutarch and Appian report Cato's objection to Caesar's nepotism in the same words. This includes a form of the otherwise unattested verb διαμαστροπεύω. Whether Appian discovered Cato's turn of phrase in Plutarch (as Pelling suggests) or both authors drew upon a common source, this agreement is strong evidence for a literary relationship. At the same time, the shared phrase is only four-words long and slightly adapted by Appian. The four-word agreement is embedded in an otherwise completely re-written narrative that shares only a handful of lexemes (i.e. ἄγω, βοάω) and proper nouns (i.e. Πείσων, Κάτων, Καλπουρνία). In even the strongest examples of literary dependence between first and second century historical writers, therefore, nothing can be found that resembles the wholesale reproduction of source material evinced in the synoptics.

### 2.3.5 Josephus

Flavius Josephus (37-100 CE) is a particularly interesting *comparandum* for the composition of the gospels. He was a Jewish author embedded in Roman literary culture, writing Greek histories at the end of the first century.<sup>39</sup> His *Jewish Antiquities* is apparently modeled on Dionysius of Hallicarnassus' *Roman Antiquities*.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, Josephus —like the synoptic evangelists— was steeped in the Jewish scriptures. Also like the gospels, his subject matter is (what we might call) sacred history — God's actions in history. Since the Jewish scriptures are Josephus' primary source for the *Jewish Antiquities*, we can directly compare the composition of this Greek historian to his primary source.

Like Livy and Plutarch, Josephus derives a narrative structure and much of his information from his primary source(s).<sup>41</sup> Moreover, Josephus' *Antiquities* is full of verbal echoes of scripture, especially in reported speech. Excluding explicit quotations, however,

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<sup>39</sup> Josephus' command of the Greek language has been questioned on the basis of his preface to *Jewish Wars*. For a critique of that interpretation, see Gohei Hata, "Is the Greek Version of Josephus' 'Jewish War' a Translation or a Rewriting of the First Version?," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 66, no. 2 (1975): 89–108. Josephus' choice of secondary sources is telling with regard to his (target) literary milieu. The *Antiquities* consistently supplements or corroborates the Jewish scriptures with Greek historians. See also, Tessa Rajak, *Josephus, the Historian and His Society* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 185–222.

<sup>40</sup> J. Andrew Cowan, "A Tale of Two Antiquities: A Fresh Evaluation of the Relationship between the Ancient Histories of T. Flavius Josephus and Dionysius of Halicarnassus," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 49, no. 4–5 (June 14, 2018): 475–97.

<sup>41</sup> Josephus, according to Thomas W. Franxman, followed the sequence of *Genesis* with "unquestionable fidelity." Thomas W. Franxman, *Genesis and the "Jewish Antiquities" of Flavius Josephus* (Biblical Institute Press, 1979), 9. Christopher T. Begg, following Franxman, notes several significant exceptions. Josephus, for instance, omits *Genesis* 38 and inverts the order of the "Table of the Nations" (10:1-32) and the "Tower of Babel" (11:1-9). Christopher T. Begg, "Genesis in Josephus," in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 317–18. Josephus' treatment of parallel material in *Samuel-Kings* and *Chronicles* has garnered a great deal of attention by students of the synoptic problem. The *Antiquities* alternates between these sources in blocks, showing that ancient historians were more than capable of employing more than one primary source if they felt the need. Still, it seems, Josephus does not engage in micro-conflation of his sources. F. Gerald Downing, "Redaction Criticism: Josephus' Antiquities and the Synoptic Gospels (I)," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 2, no. 8 (May 1, 1980): 46–65; F. Gerald Downing, "Redaction Criticism: Josephus' Antiquities and the Synoptic Gospels (II)," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 3, no. 9 (September 1, 1980): 29–48; F. Gerald Downing, "Compositional Conventions and the Synoptic Problem," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107, no. 1 (1988): 74–76; Christopher Begg, *Josephus' Story of the Later Monarchy* (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2000), 623.

Josephus rarely reproduces the wording of scripture. Instead, he summarizes, paraphrases, and re-describes the events of Jewish scripture in his own language.<sup>42</sup>

Intriguingly, however, this is not an accurate characterization of the beginning of Josephus' *Antiquities*. Instead, Josephus' work begins with an exact quotation of the first verse of *Genesis* and the ensuing creation narrative adheres closely to the language of scripture.<sup>43</sup> This is exception, however, actually proves the rule since it is precisely here that Josephus repeatedly cites "Moses" as the source of the wording itself. Josephus does not present this language as his own composition but, rather, frames the passage as a quotation (1.*Preface*.4). Indeed, he repeats quotation markers throughout (e.g. Μωυσης [...] φησι at 1.1.1, Μωυσης [...] ἤρξατο [...] λέγων οὕτως at 1.1.2, φησι at 1.1.3). Once Josephus moves beyond the creation account, he produces his own description of events and, concurrently, the Mosaic attributions disappear. Josephus' repeated acknowledgement of his appropriation of Mosaic language suggests that the reproduction of a source's wording was not a normal method of composition for Josephus.

Consider the passage immediately after Josephus stops explicitly citing Moses.

*Genesis* (LXX)<sup>44</sup>  
2:17  
καὶ ἐνετείλατο κύριος ὁ θεὸς τῷ Ἀδὰμ λέγων  
Ἀπὸ παντὸς ξύλου τοῦ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ

Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 1.1.4<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Begg, "Genesis in Josephus," 304, 327; Franxman, *Genesis and the "Jewish Antiquities" of Flavius Josephus*, 24–27; Begg, *Josephus' Story of the Later Monarchy*, 630–32; Ken Olson, "Unpicking on the Farrer Theory," in *Questioning Q: A Multidimensional Critique*, ed. Mark S. Goodacre and Nicholas Perrin (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 127–50.

<sup>43</sup> This is arguably an explicit citation rather than an example of the conservative use of source material since Josephus' preface introduces the phrase as the words of Moses.

<sup>44</sup> John William Wevers, *Septuagint. Band 1: Genesis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974).

<sup>45</sup> H. St J. Thackeray, *Josephus: Jewish Antiquities (Books 1-3)*, Loeb Classical Library 242 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 20–23. Translation is my own.

βρώσει φάγη, ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ ξύλου τοῦ  
γινώσκειν καλὸν καὶ πονηρόν, οὐ φάγεσθε  
ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ· ἢ δ’ ἂν ἡμέρα φάγητε ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ,  
θανάτῳ ἀποθανεῖσθε

3:1-5

Ὁ δὲ ὄφις ἦν φρονιμώτατος πάντων τῶν  
θηρίων τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ὃν ἐποίησεν κύριος ὁ  
θεός· καὶ εἶπεν ὁ ὄφις **τῇ γυναικί** Τί ὅτι εἶπεν  
ὁ θεός Οὐ μὴ φάγητε ἀπὸ παντὸς ξύλου τοῦ  
ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ; (2) καὶ εἶπεν ἡ γυνὴ τῷ  
ὄφει Ἀπὸ καρποῦ ξύλου τοῦ παραδείσου  
φαγόμεθα, (3) ἀπὸ δὲ καρποῦ τοῦ ξύλου, ὃ  
ἐστὶν ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ παραδείσου, εἶπεν ὁ θεός  
Οὐ φάγεσθε ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ οὐδὲ μὴ  
ἄψησθε αὐτοῦ, ἵνα μὴ ἀποθάνητε. (4) καὶ  
εἶπεν ὁ ὄφις **τῇ γυναικί** Οὐ θανάτῳ  
ἀποθανεῖσθε· (5) ἤδει γὰρ ὁ θεός ὅτι ἐν ἡ  
ἡμέρα φάγητε ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ, διανοιχθήσονται  
ὀφθαλμοί, καὶ ἔσεσθε ὡς θεοὶ  
γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρόν.

Genesis 2:16-17

<sup>16</sup>And the Lord **God** ordered **Adam**, saying  
“You will eat as food from every tree in  
paradise, <sup>17</sup>but from the tree of knowing good  
and evil, you shall not eat from it; and on the  
day which you eat from it, you will die by  
death.

Genesis 3:1-5

<sup>1</sup>And the **snake** was the wisest of all the  
animals upon the earth which the Lord God  
made. And the snake said to **the woman**,  
“Why is it that God said you shall not eat  
from any tree in paradise?” <sup>2</sup>And the woman  
said to the snake, “We eat from the fruit of the  
tree of paradise, <sup>3</sup>but from the fruit of the tree  
which is in the middle of paradise, God said  
not to eat from it nor even touch it lest you  
die.” <sup>4</sup>And the snake said to the woman, “You  
will not die by death <sup>5</sup>for God knew that on  
the day that you would eat from it, your eyes

Ὁ δὲ τοίνυν θεὸς τὸν Ἄδαμον καὶ τὴν  
γυναῖκα τῶν μὲν ἄλλων φυτῶν ἐκέλευε  
γεύεσθαι,

τοῦ δὲ τῆς φρονήσεως  
ἀπέχεσθαι, προειπὼν ἀψαμένους ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ  
ὄλεθρον γενησόμενον.

ὁμοφωνούντων δὲ κατ’ ἐκεῖνο καιροῦ τῶν  
ζώων ἀπάντων ὄφις συνδιαιτώμενος τῷ τε  
Ἀδάμῳ καὶ **τῇ γυναικί** φθονερῶς μὲν εἶχεν  
ἐφ’ οἷς αὐτοὺς εὐδαιμονήσειν ὤετο  
πεπεισμένους τοῖς τοῦ θεοῦ παραγγέλμασιν,  
οἰόμενος δὲ συμφορᾷ περιπεσεῖσθαι  
παρακούσαντας ἀναπειθεὶ κακοήθως **τὴν  
γυναῖκα** γεύσασθαι τοῦ φυτοῦ τῆς  
φρονήσεως ἐν αὐτῷ λέγων εἶναι τὴν τε  
τάγαθον καὶ τοῦ κακοῦ διάγνωσιν, ἣς  
γενομένης αὐτοῖς μακάριον καὶ μηδὲν  
ἀπολείποντα τοῦ θείου διάξειν βίον. καὶ  
παρακρούεται μὲν οὕτω τὴν γυναῖκα τῆς  
ἐντολῆς τοῦ θεοῦ καταφρονῆσαι· γευσαμένη  
δὲ τοῦ φυτοῦ καὶ ἡσθεῖσα τῷ ἐδέσματι καὶ  
τὸν Ἄδαμον ἀνέπεισεν αὐτῷ χρήσασθαι.

Now, therefore, **God** commanded **Adam** and  
the woman to taste of the other plants but to  
abstain from [the tree] of understanding,  
predicting that they would be destroyed by  
taking from it.

And at that time all living animals spoke the  
same language and the snake who lived with  
Adam and the woman and was envious of  
them, supposing they were happy obeying the  
commandments of God and thinking that  
when they disobeyed they would meet with  
catastrophe, he maliciously persuaded **the  
woman** to taste of the plant of understanding  
by telling her that it was the discernment of  
good and evil which would make them happy  
and allow them to lead a life not less than

will be opened and you will be as gods knowing good and evil.”

divine. In this way he misled the woman to despise the commandment of God.

In his retelling of God’s command and Eve’s temptation, Josephus assiduously avoids the language of *Genesis*. The only words held in common are “God,” “snake,” “Adam,” and “woman.” Where *Genesis* speaks of “the fruit” (καρπός) of a “tree” (ξύλον), Josephus describes only a “plant” (φυτόν). In *Genesis*, Eve is tempted to “eat” (φαγεῖν) in order to gain “knowledge” (γινώσκειν), whereas Josephus uses the terms “taste” (γεύω) and “understanding” (φρόνησις). In these cases, the difference in meaning is negligible, but Josephus is not adhering to the language of scripture. Josephus, writing as a Greek historian, rewrites the narratives of Jewish scripture without reproducing its wording.

In sum, the conservative compositional procedure evinced in *Matthew* and *Luke* is unparalleled in contemporary history and biography — as, indeed, Mattila noted thirty years ago. This does not mean that the gospels are not biographies or histories. Genre analysis need not be so blunt an instrument. The disanalogy does, however, indicate that a different set of literary conventions governed the treatment of *Mark* in the composition of *Matthew* and *Luke*.

## 2.4 An Unsolved Problem?

This *other* synoptic problem is a problem indeed. I argued above that the effective reproduction of *Mark* by the authors of *Matthew* and *Luke* does not reflect the compositional procedure of contemporary Hellenistic or Roman historical writing. This problem has not, however, been wholly “neglected.” There is a long history of scholars setting out to understand the relationship between the synoptic gospels in terms of contemporary literary conventions and compositional methods. In this section, I survey the failure of New Testament scholarship to

reckon with the distinctively conservative compositional procedure evident in the synoptic gospels. Many scholars have simply taken the conservatism of the synoptics for granted, ascribing the evangelist's reproduction of their source's wording to the absence of literary property or copyright laws in antiquity. The next section will review the evidence for proprietary conceptions of literature in the first and second century. Other scholars have acknowledged the problem but dismissed it with an unsatisfactory analogy. Only a few scholars, I argue, have made suggestions that will point us toward a solution to this not-quite-neglected, *other* synoptic problem.

#### 2.4.1 William Sanday

William Sanday's essay "The Conditions under which the Gospels were Written" sets out to demonstrate the need for a "documentary" solution to the synoptic problem as well as explain the evangelists' willingness to alter their source material.<sup>46</sup> Sanday shows that the evangelists retain the wording of *Mark* not only in re-narrating the same speech or event but also when they describe different events at the same point in the narrative. In this important demonstration of literary dependence, Sanday takes for granted that an evangelist acting as an ancient historian should reproduce so much of their primary source's wording.<sup>47</sup> What requires an explanation for Sanday is, rather, the observation that the evangelists differ amongst themselves. Sanday's explanation for the evangelist's willingness to alter their source is now uncontroversial: the gospels are the products of creative authors, not copyists (see chapter four). Nevertheless,

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<sup>46</sup> William Sanday, "The Conditions under Which the Gospels Were Written, in Their Bearing upon Some Difficulties of the Synoptic Problem," in *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, ed. William Sanday (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 1–26.

<sup>47</sup> Sanday qualifies his characterization of the evangelists as ancient historians: First of all, according to Sanday, the evangelists were "naïve and not very developed" (12). Second, they were motivated by "homiletic" purposes (14).

Sanday's analysis entirely misses the problem of the unconventional conservatism exhibited by the synoptic evangelists.

#### 2.4.2 B.H. Streeter

B.H. Streeter claims that the treatment of *Mark* by the authors of *Matthew* and *Luke* was wholly conventional according to contemporary literary norms.<sup>48</sup> Only a few ancient historians, according to Streeter, dared to be original. More typical was the method of “scissors and paste,” according to which historians would “copy page after page from his source.”<sup>49</sup> Streeter, it seems, spotted the problem in the synoptics without recognizing that it was problematic. As the review of biographers and historians above demonstrates, Streeter's characterization of historiographical conventions is inaccurate. First and second century historians may closely follow a source, but they do not employ a method of “scissors and paste.” As illustrated above, the extent and degree of verbatim agreement between the synoptics is unparalleled in Greek historical writing.

In support of his characterization of ancient historiography, Streeter adduces two examples of analogous conservatism: *1 & 2 Chronicles* and Diodorus Siculus' *Bibliotheca Historica*. The author of *Chronicles*, Streeter argues, re-wrote *Samuel* and *Kings* with a conservatism akin to the synoptics. Whatever the merits of this comparison, *Chronicles* was composed in Hebrew during the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>50</sup> If our aim is to reconstruct contemporary compositional conventions for the evangelists, a book written five-hundred years earlier in a different language and culture is hardly a promising resource.

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<sup>48</sup> Burnett Hillman Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins, Treating of the Manuscript Tradition, Sources, Authorship, & Dates* (London: Macmillan, 1924), 155–57.

<sup>49</sup> Streeter, 156.

<sup>50</sup> Ralph W. Klein, *1 Chronicles: A Commentary*, Hermeneia--a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 13–14.

It is notable, furthermore, that the Greek title of *Chronicles* reflects a re-interpretation of the work's relationship to its predecessors for a Hellenistic context. The two-volume history was retitled Παραλειπομένων, meaning "leftovers." The redundancy of *Chronicles* to *Kings-Samuel* apparently led Hellenistic Jewish readers to recategorize the work as a compliment to the other historical books. *Chronicles* was produced in a radically different cultural context and this title may reflect that its relationship to *Kings-Samuel* did not comport to Greek expectations for historical writing.

Streeter's second proposed analogy, Diodorus Siculus' *Bibliotheca Historica*, would seem to be a more promising candidate for comparison with the synoptics. Diodorus wrote a kind of history in the Greek language during the first century BCE. At the remove of only two centuries, therefore, Diodorus might furnish valuable evidence for reconstructing the literary culture of the synoptic evangelists. Moreover, Streeter is not wrong to characterize Diodorus as conservative. Even though recent scholarship has increasingly emphasized the artistry of Diodorus' paraphrase and editorial interventions, the *Bibliotheca Historica* evinces an unmistakable conservatism in its handling of source materials.<sup>51</sup> Most famously, the very wording of Ephorus' *History* is reflected in Diodorus' work.<sup>52</sup> The later synoptic evangelists, Streeter would have us believe, were simply working in the historiographical tradition of Diodorus' *Bibliotheca Historica*.

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<sup>51</sup> For Diodorus' conservatism, see the analysis at Jane Hornblower, *Hieronymus of Cardia*, Oxford Classical and Philosophical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 27–32. On Diodorus' editorial and paraphrastic creativity, see Charles Muntz, *Diodorus Siculus and the World of the Late Roman Republic* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

<sup>52</sup> Edward Mewburn Walker, "The Newly Discovered Fragments of Ephorus," *Rice Institute Pamphlet - Rice University Studies* 6, no. 13 (1919): 240–61. For a word of caution, however, see Thomas W. Africa, "Ephorus and Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 1610," *The American Journal of Philology* 83, no. 1 (1962): 86–89.

Streeter's carefully crafted presentation of Diodorus Siculus obscures the crucial disanalogy between this book and the synoptic gospels: The *Bibliotheca Historica* is an anthology. Diodorus follows the very wording of his sources —unlike contemporary historical writing— because his work is explicitly and self-consciously a collection of excerpts from other books.

The very title of Diodorus' work signals its anthological character to the reader. The term βιβλιοθήκη means “book-shelf” or “library.” Diodorus selected this title, Michael Rathmann argues, to refer to his method of composition.<sup>53</sup> Pliny the Elder agrees that Diodorus himself selected the title, βιβλιοθήκη (*Natural History*, Preface 25). Whether or not it is credible, Pliny's claim is instructive for the reception of Diodorus' work in the first century CE. Pliny's reference reveals, first, that Diodorus' anthology was known under this title in antiquity. Secondly, as Jane Hornblower observes, Pliny groups Diodorus' *Bookshelf* with other explicitly anthological works.<sup>54</sup> This first century reader, therefore, recognized the genre of Diodorus' *Bookshelf* as distinct from other kinds of composition.

The use of βιβλιοθήκη as a title is not unique to Diodorus. The *Bookshelf* of pseudo-Apollodorus is a more-or-less contemporary anthology of myths drawn from Homer, Hesiod, and a host of earlier authors.<sup>55</sup> Likewise, the Byzantine-era *Bookshelf* of Photius is composed of nearly three hundred *précis* of earlier writings. Whether the title was given to this work by Diodorus himself (as Pliny asserts) or assigned to the work before the middle of the first century

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<sup>53</sup> Michael Rathmann, *Diodor und seine Bibliothek: Weltgeschichte aus der Provinz* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 118–55.

<sup>54</sup> Hornblower, *Hieronymus of Cardia*, 23.

<sup>55</sup> Michael Simpson, *Gods and Heroes of the Greeks: The Library of Apollodorus* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1976).

CE (as Pliny reflects), the term βιβλιοθήκη marked Diodorus' work as a collection of excerpts from other books. Diodorus Siculus' *Bibliotheca Historica* is not, therefore, representative of contemporary historiographical practice.

Furthermore, there is a notable disanalogy between Diodorus' treatment of his sources and that compositional practice reflected in the synoptics: Diodorus' anthology is conservative but not comprehensive. Diodorus is not reproducing the entirety of other works in his *Bookshelf*. The authors of *Matthew* and *Luke*, in contrast, reproduce *Mark* from beginning to end. They skip the occasional pericope but the narrative scope is the same. In the language of ancient literary criticism, all three synoptics share the same *hypothesis*. This is not true of Diodorus' anthological project. The *Bookshelf of History* selects episodes from various historians, but it neither preserves entire nor itself adheres to the *hypothesis* of any preceding work.

Streeter claimed that the conservative method evinced in the synoptics was typical of ancient history writing but failed to provide any examples of analogously conservative historians from the literary milieu of the evangelists. Indeed, Streeter's decision to pass over the many well-known Greek historians and biographers contemporary with the evangelists in order to select a Hebrew chronicle from the 4<sup>th</sup> BCE and a Hellenistic anthology is revealing. Streeter's claim is simply not true. The working methods evinced in *Matthew* and *Luke* do not reflect the compositional conventions of contemporary Hellenistic or Roman historical writing.

### 2.4.3 Francis Gerald Downing

In a pair of articles published in 1980, F.G. Downing compared Josephus' treatment of Jewish scripture to the synoptic gospels.<sup>56</sup> Here, Downing recognized the difference between Josephus' redescription of events and the conservative rewriting evinced in the synoptics. "Josephus' literary dependence," Downing observes, "very rarely leads to word-for-word resemblance."<sup>57</sup> Downing, then, inverts Sanday's question: "It is not the divergencies among the synoptists [...], in parallel contexts, that are remarkable: it is the extraordinary extent of verbal similarities."<sup>58</sup> Thus, writing in 1980, Downing became the first author to articulate fully the problem of synoptic conservatism.

Downing's solution, however, is not satisfactory. The authors of *Matthew* and *Luke*, Downing proposes, had "a much greater respect" for their sources than Josephus had for Jewish scripture.<sup>59</sup> This runs contrary to everything we know about Josephus' attitude toward scripture and what little we can infer about the attitude of the evangelists toward their sources. On one hand, a reverence for Jewish scripture pervades the writings of Josephus. The Jewish historian calls his sources "holy books" (ἱερῶν βιβλῶν) and "doctrines of God" (θεοῦ δόγματα) which are "rightly believed" (δικαίως πεπιστευμένα) (*Against Apion* 1.1, 38, 42; *Antiquities* Preface). Josephus' *Antiquities* reflect the adaptation of these stories to a Roman context but his deference to their continuing authority is undeniable.

In contrast, first and second century gospel authors consistently represent their works as improvements upon their predecessors. The author of *Luke* uses the disparaging verb ἐπιχειρέω

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<sup>56</sup> Downing, "Redaction Criticism (I)"; Downing, "Redaction Criticism (II)."

<sup>57</sup> Downing, "Redaction Criticism (II)," 33.

<sup>58</sup> Downing, 33.

<sup>59</sup> Downing, 33.

to characterize previous efforts at gospel writing and boasts in writing an “orderly” (καθεξῆς) account himself (1:1-4). The genre of Papias’ work is a matter of debate, but he situates himself in the tradition of the gospels.<sup>60</sup> Papias, as preserved in Eusebius, described *Mark* as written “accurately” (ἀκριβῶς) but “not in order” (οὐ μέντοι τάξει).<sup>61</sup> While this reflects a certain level of respect for *Mark*, it also sets up Papias to produce a superior account. Similarly, Papias says Matthew “arranged” (συνετάξατο) the Jesus tradition in Hebrew, but this is available to readers only as translated (ἠρμήνευσε) according to the abilities of others.<sup>62</sup> This too reflects Papias’ respect for the apostolic gospel while carving out space for him to produce a more useful account. Papias’ own investigation into “the [commandments] of the Lord,” he tells us, is preferable to reliance on books (Eusebius, *EH* 3.39). Papias thus presents his own book of Jesus traditions as superior to earlier gospels. Lastly, Marcion claimed that other gospel books — including his Lukan *Hauptquelle*— were corrupted by his theological opponents (Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 4.2-3). Irenaeus tells us that Marcion represented himself as more credible than the apostolic evangelists (AH 1.27.2), and the *Adamantius Dialog* (perhaps echoing Marcion’s *Antitheses*) depicts Marcionites polemicizing against other gospels (1.5). This second century evangelist (see chapters four and five) also represented his work as superior to its predecessors.

Downing’s explanation for the greater conservatism in the synoptics compared to Josephus, therefore, has little to recommend it. Josephus esteemed his scriptural sources and

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<sup>60</sup> For an attempt to characterize Papias’ work as a kind of gospel, see Richard Bauckham, “Did Papias Write History or Exegesis?,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 65, no. 2 (2014): 463–88. For an outline of the debate and a re-assertion of an older position, see the forthcoming work by Stephen Carlson. No matter what one concludes about Papias’ genre, it is sufficient for my point that (1) Papias’s book contained Jesus traditions and (2) Papias compared his work to gospels.

<sup>61</sup> Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, Apostolic Fathers (Early Christian Collection). English & Greek. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2007), 738–41.

<sup>62</sup> Holmes, 740–41.

repeatedly refers his readers to them as an enduring authority. In contrast, evangelists either do not acknowledge their source materials or disparage them. There is, in the end, no reason to think that the synoptic evangelists respected their sources more than Josephus admired his scriptures.

In a subsequent essay, “Compositional Conventions and the Synoptic Problem,” F.G. Downing argues that the treatment of *Mark* and the Q source by the authors of *Matthew* and *Luke* “fits snugly in the known cultural context of the time.”<sup>63</sup> Downing makes this claim without regard for the distinctive conservatism of the synoptic gospels. Rather, Downing is interested in arguing that authors in our period did not conflate multiple sources on a word-by-word basis. Although he once recognized the distinctive conservatism of the synoptics, Downing now claims that the compositional method evinced in the synoptics “fits snugly” in first and second century literary culture. This, as we have seen, is not accurate.

Decades later, Downing would revisit the problem.<sup>64</sup> At this later point, Downing will abandon his speculation about the reverential disposition of the evangelists. As this most recent treatment of compositional conventions by Downing depends on subsequent scholarship, I address it below.

#### 2.4.4 R.A. Derrenbacker Jr.

Robert A. Derrenbacker Jr.’s *Ancient Compositional Practices and the Synoptic Problem* is the first monograph-length attempt to situate the production of the synoptic gospels in the compositional conventions of the first and second century. “There is no reason to assume,” Derrenbacker argues, “that the production of the Gospels was any different than the conventional

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<sup>63</sup> Downing, “Compositional Conventions and the Synoptic Problem,” 70.

<sup>64</sup> Downing, “Writer’s Use or Abuse of Written Sources.”

production of texts in antiquity.”<sup>65</sup> I agree. Derrenbacker reviews scholarship on Hellenistic and Roman compositional practices in order to adjudicate between competing solutions to the synoptic problem. The two-source theory, Derrenbacker concludes, presents “the fewest problems in light of the compositional practices of antiquity.”<sup>66</sup> The synoptic gospels are, however, uniquely conservative on any of the major source-critical models. And, unfortunately, this disanalogy with contemporary norms of composition does not figure in Derrenbacker’s list of potential problems. Derrenbacker fails to cite Mattila’s article, published a decade earlier.

In his review of compositional practices, Derrenbacker emphasizes the conservatism of ancient source usage.<sup>67</sup> This works rhetorically to minimize the difference between the compositional methods of contemporary writers and the synoptic evangelists. Derrenbacker’s proof-text for the alleged conservatism of ancient authors is an excerpt from Dionysius of Halicarnassus’ *On Literary Composition*. Dionysius, according to Derrenbacker, characterizes “the science of composition” as judging “whether any modification is required in the material used — I mean subtraction, addition, or alteration — and to carry out such changes with a proper view to their future purpose.”<sup>68</sup> This account from Dionysius, according to Derrenbacker, shows that ancient authors “often freely cop[ied] sections of sources verbatim without credit.”<sup>69</sup>

This is a misinterpretation of Dionysius. In the passage Derrenbacker quotes, Dionysius describes all literary composition —undertaken by poets, philosophers, and historians alike— as a three-step process. The author (1) selects words that will sound beautiful in combination, (2)

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<sup>65</sup> R. A. Derrenbacker, *Ancient Compositional Practices and the Synoptic Problem*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium; 186 (Leuven; Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2005).

<sup>66</sup> Derrenbacker, 258.

<sup>67</sup> Derrenbacker, 44–46.

<sup>68</sup> Derrenbacker, 44.

<sup>69</sup> Derrenbacker, 44.

arranges them harmoniously, and (3) makes any necessary changes. Derrenbacker quotes Dionysius' description of the third step in isolation as evidence for the conservative character of ancient source usage. But the "material" in Derrenbacker's quotation of Dionysius is *not* the written works of an author's predecessors. The "material" which the author must decide how to modify is, rather, the words already chosen (in step one) and arranged (in step two) by the author themselves. Dionysius does not describe the treatment of literary sources but an author's revision of their own first draft.

If there was any ambiguity about this interpretation of Dionysius, the very next section of *On Literary Composition* re-describes the same three stages of composition. Here Dionysius compares literary composition to the construction of a house or ship. The first step is selecting building materials, like wood and stone. The second is fitting this material together. The carpenter's third step is reviewing their own construction to decide if anything needs to be trimmed or redone. Dionysius makes no mention, as Derrenbacker might lead us to expect, of imitating or refashioning other houses or ships. Rather, Dionysius once again describes the third step as deciding "if any of the selected nouns or verbs [from step one] requires modification" or "how it may be fitted in [from step two] more harmoniously and to better effect."<sup>70</sup>

Derrenbacker's interpretation of Dionysius' *On Literary Composition* is indefensible.

It is not clear whether Derrenbacker ever recognized the problem of synoptic conservatism. He does not cite Streeter's examples of conservatism, remark upon Downing's

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<sup>70</sup> Stephen Usher, *Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Critical Essays, Volume II. On Literary Composition. Dinarchus. Letters to Ammaeus and Pompeius* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1985), 56–57.

explanation for the difference between Josephus and the synoptics, or cite Mattila's critique.<sup>71</sup> Derrenbacher's single piece of evidence that verbatim reproduction of source material was characteristic of Greek historical writing requires a misinterpretation of Dionysius of Halicarnassus. In the end, Derrenbacher's study of compositional practices fails to reckon with this fundamental difference between the synoptic gospels and the conventions of contemporary history and biography.

#### 2.4.5 John S. Kloppenborg

In "Variation in the Reproduction of the Double Tradition and an Oral Q?," John S. Kloppenborg defends the need for a simple, documentary explanation for the verbatim agreements in the double-tradition.<sup>72</sup> The agreements between *Matthew* and *Luke* (without *Mark*), argues Kloppenborg, are too numerous and extensive to be explained by oral tradition or documentary hypotheses more complex than the Two Source Hypothesis.<sup>73</sup> Thus Kloppenborg, following in the tradition of Sanday, rightly disposes with non-documentary and other highly speculative explanations for the verbatim agreements between the synoptics.

In the second half of his article, Kloppenborg observes that, according to the Two Source Theory, the authors of *Matthew* and *Luke* "used Q far more 'woodenly' than other writers employed their sources."<sup>74</sup> The relevant piece from Mattila is not cited.<sup>75</sup> Following Streeter,

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<sup>71</sup> Streeter and Downing are, of course, discussed throughout Derrenbacher's book. See especially Derrenbacher, *Ancient Compositional Practices and the Synoptic Problem*, 92–97.

<sup>72</sup> John S Kloppenborg, "Variation in the Reproduction of the Double Tradition and an Oral Q?," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 83 (2007): 53–80.

<sup>73</sup> Indeed, Mark Goodacre has argued that the agreements in double tradition are too close to be explained by independent access to a common source (i.e. 2SH). Mark Goodacre, "Too Good to Be Q: High Verbatim Agreement in the Double Tradition," in *Marcan Priority Without Q: Explorations in the Farrer Hypothesis*, LNTS 455 (London & New York: T & T Clark, 2015), 82–100.

<sup>74</sup> Kloppenborg, "Variation in the Reproduction of the Double Tradition and an Oral Q?," 63.

<sup>75</sup> Kloppenborg does cite two other pieces by Mattila critiquing efforts to quantify the agreement between gospels. Kloppenborg, 54 n. 7.

Kloppenborg adduces Diodorus Siculus as the closest analogy to the synoptics but proceeds to argue that even Diodorus is more prone to paraphrase than the latter synoptics (see my fuller treatment above).<sup>76</sup> The synoptic gospels, Kloppenborg concludes, are “dramatically out of step” with contemporary historical writing.<sup>77</sup> Kloppenborg too has recognized the problem.

Kloppenborg goes on to propose a solution with some merit. Texts of a “scriptural, legal, regulatory, or instructional nature,” he suggests, furnish a better analogy for the “high-agreement copying” evinced in the synoptics.<sup>78</sup> My third chapter argues that a kind of “instructional literature,” indeed, furnishes the closest analogies for the composition of the synoptic gospels. Kloppenborg is not, however, comparing the synoptic gospels to the kind of technical literature treated by Loveday Alexander in her study of the Lukan preface.<sup>79</sup> Rather, Kloppenborg is pointing to the kind of uncreative “documents” produced by “the *librarius* or archivist/scribe.”<sup>80</sup> Kloppenborg thus proposes that the conservatism of the synoptic evangelists is attributable to their low social status.<sup>81</sup> “[I]f they can be classed as scribes,” says Kloppenborg, “they were scribes of relatively modest accomplishment and status, though of course not without some degree of sophistication.”<sup>82</sup> The synoptic gospels, *ex hypothesi*, were the products of literate laborers accustomed to revising and reproducing receipts, contracts, or regulatory texts.

Kloppenborg’s solution is unsatisfactory as a description of the synoptic tradition. The third gospel opens with a literary preface (discussed in chapter three). And its sequel, *The Acts of*

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<sup>76</sup> Kloppenborg, 63–67, 73.

<sup>77</sup> Kloppenborg, 73.

<sup>78</sup> Kloppenborg, 74.

<sup>79</sup> Loveday Alexander, *The Preface to Luke’s Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1-4 and Acts 1.1*, Society for New Testament Studies 78 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

<sup>80</sup> Kloppenborg, “Variation in the Reproduction of the Double Tradition and an Oral Q?,” 78.

<sup>81</sup> Kloppenborg, 77–80.

<sup>82</sup> Kloppenborg, 79.

*the Apostles*, is not the work of a mere archivist. To my knowledge, no student of *Acts* has ever attributed the work to a bureaucratic clerk. Indeed, Kloppenborg's allowance for "some degree of sophistication" hardly describes the kind of creative and ideologically coherent revision of *Mark* exhibited in *Matthew* and *Luke* (as argued in chapter four). Marcion and Tatian, furthermore, do not fit Kloppenborg's image of unaccomplished scribes. Both synoptic-type evangelists were itinerant teachers with a sizeable following. Reportedly, Marcion was wealthy (Tertullian, *On the Prescription of Heretics* 30.2); and Tatian's *Oration to the Greeks* reflects more than a modicum of education and ability.<sup>83</sup> Kloppenborg attributes the conservatism of the synoptics to the ineptitude of their scribal would-be-authors. It is more plausible, I propose, to explain this conservatism as an intentional part of each author's participation in a particular literary sub-culture.

Kloppenborg's choice of *comparanda* is not compelling. Kloppenborg proposes *4QpaleoExod<sup>m</sup>* (4Q22), the *Community Rule* (1QS), and the *Didascalia Apostolorum* as the best analogies for understanding gospel writing. The first two, indeed, evince a conservatism comparable to the gospels. They are, however, Hebrew texts re-writing other Hebrew texts, produced by a sectarian community in Qumran. By contrast, *Matthew* is a Greek gospel re-writing other Greek gospels and relying on a Greek translation of the Jewish scriptures. Moreover, the author of *Luke-Acts*, Marcion, and Tatian treated their sources in a similar fashion but evidently belong to a cultural world very different from the scribes at Qumran. It is unclear

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<sup>83</sup> Molly Whittaker, "Tatian's Educational Background," in *Studia Patristica*, vol. 12 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1975), 57–59; John Eugene Fojtik, "Tatian the Barbarian: Language, Education, and Identity in the *Oratio Ad Graecos*," in *Continuity and Discontinuity in Early Christian Apologetics*, ed. Anders-Christian Jacobsen, Majjastina Kahlos, and Jörg Ulrich (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2009), 23–34.

the extent to which Qumran's scribal culture reflect the kind of wide-spread Greek literary norms that would have informed the various evangelists.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> century *Didascalia Apostolorum* is a composite charter that reproduces part of an earlier church order. Although later than all known instances of synoptic-type gospel writing, it may be close enough in time and cultural context to provide some meaningful insight into first and second century literary conventions. The resemblance to the synoptic gospels, however, is itself less close than Kloppenborg's other examples. Unlike the sustained reproduction of *Mark* (and, perhaps, Q) in *Matthew* and *Luke*, the *Didascalia Apostolorum* and *Didache* agree for only one small segment: the "Two Ways" section.<sup>84</sup> This is a paraenetic set-piece with parallels in Qumran's *Community Rule*, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, and other church orders. The restriction of the agreement to only this well-known section of moral instruction is a significant disanalogy from the comprehensively conservative compositional program evinced in the synoptic-type gospels.

Kloppenborg should be credited for correctly identifying the problem — a decade after Matilla. His solution, however, is unsatisfactory. If the synoptic evangelists are recognized as creative and ideologically coherent authors, it is difficult to imagine them also as unimaginative scribes. If the evangelists, indeed, drew upon literary conventions in their revision of *Mark* (e.g. the Lukan preface), it is difficult to imagine them also approaching their work as mere copyists. Lastly, Kloppenborg's *comparanda* are not satisfactorily similar to the synoptic-type gospels.

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<sup>84</sup> Kloppenborg, "Variation in the Reproduction of the Double Tradition and an Oral Q?," 77.

#### 2.4.6 F.G. Downing (again)

In a 2008 conference contribution, Downing revisited the problem of the gospel's compositional conservatism with a conclusion markedly different from his earlier studies (discussed above).<sup>85</sup> Expanding the purview of his investigation beyond Josephus, Downing notes the absence of any comparatively conservative treatment of source material in a wide variety of Greek literature. Downing, thus, contravenes his own earlier verdicts, confirming that there is, indeed, a problem fitting the synoptics "snugly" into contemporary compositional conventions.<sup>86</sup>

Following Mattila (without citation), Downing turns to Alexander's study of *Fachprosa* for his "suggested cultural context."<sup>87</sup> The conservatism evinced in technical literature, according to Downing, promises better analogies for the literary relationship of the synoptics. Unfortunately, Downing provides no survey of compositional conventions for such technical literature nor any explanation for why a fourth century book about horse surgery might illuminate the cultural background of the synoptic gospels. Rather, Downing proposes three potential analogs for the composition of the gospels: Vitruvius' *On Architecture*, Pelagonius' *Ars Veterinaria*, and Galen's careful quotations of medical rivals.<sup>88</sup> Vitruvius' work is explicitly anthological and, therefore, presents the same problems of disanalogy confronted with Diodorus' *Historical Bookshelf* above. Namely, the gospels do not present themselves as compilations of excerpts from other authors. Galen's quotation of professional rivals suffers from a different disanalogy of form: The narrative of the third gospel is not laced with explicit citations of *Mark*.

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<sup>85</sup> Downing, "Writer's Use or Abuse of Written Sources."

<sup>86</sup> Downing, "Compositional Conventions and the Synoptic Problem," 70.

<sup>87</sup> Downing, "Writer's Use or Abuse of Written Sources," 533.

<sup>88</sup> Downing, 534–35.

Rather, the synoptics reproduce the scope and language of their *Hauptquelle* without attribution. Lastly, Pelagonius' *Ars Veterinaria*—a fourth century treatise on horse surgery—is more promising. Although this example from Downing is somewhat late to be ideal evidence for reconstructing first and second century literary culture, Pelagonius' work fits a wider pattern of source usage in technical literature. I adduce contemporary examples and explicit descriptions of this convention of conservatism in the following chapter as a account of how such radically different books can help explain the composition of the synoptic gospels.

#### 2.4.7 J. Andrew Doole

In his monograph, *What was Mark for Matthew?*, J. Andrew Doole argues that redaction critics have over-emphasized *Matthew's* changes to *Mark* and, therefore, failed to recognize the degree to which the author of *Matthew* must have approved of *Mark*. Doole, therefore, emphasizes the conservative treatment of *Mark* evinced in *Matthew*. It is curious, therefore, that Doole characterizes the author of *Matthew* as “a conventional scribe” whose use of *Mark* was “fully in line with the practice of his contemporaries.”<sup>89</sup> The “very high level of continuity in the [synoptic] tradition,” according to Doole, finds precedent in the “tradent of Hebrew scripture.”<sup>90</sup> Here, once again, New Testament scholarship appeals to a reconstruction of bronze or iron age scribal culture to explain the behavior of first and second century Greek authors.<sup>91</sup>

Elsewhere, Doole proposes three contemporary analogues for understanding the compositional procedure evinced in *Matthew*: Josephus, Paul, and *The Temple Scroll*.<sup>92</sup> Doole

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<sup>89</sup> J. Andrew Doole, *What Was Mark for Matthew?: An Examination of Matthew's Relationship and Attitude to His Primary Source* (Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 169.

<sup>90</sup> Doole, 172.

<sup>91</sup> Doole fails to cite the relevant studies by Mattila, Kloppenborg, or Downing.

<sup>92</sup> Doole, *What Was Mark for Matthew?*, 144–63.

points to explicit citations of scripture in the works of Josephus and Paul to show that ancient authors quote their sources verbatim. But this is not a good analogy for the kind of rewriting that makes the synoptics distinct. Neither *Matthew* nor *Luke* contain explicit quotations of earlier gospels. So far as we know, neither did Marcion or Tatian's gospels. The synoptic-style evangelists do not cite their sources but, rather, reproduce them within their own work.

Doole's third analogy, *The Temple Scroll*, does treat its scriptural sources with a striking conservatism reminiscent of the synoptic gospels. As with the *Community Rule* adduced by Kloppenborg, the problem with using the *Temple Scroll* as an analogy for understanding the synoptic gospels is the considerable uncertainty surrounding the extent to which Hebrew texts recovered from a sectarian community at Qumran reflect the Greek literary culture in which all of the synoptic gospels were written. One thing we know for certain about the literary context of the synoptic evangelists is that it was Grecophone. Moreover, the author of *Luke-Acts*, Marcion, and Tatian belong to the cosmopolitan world of the Greek-speaking Roman empire. The analogy between the *Community Rule* and the synoptic gospels may, indeed, be meaningful by means of causal structures not yet understood.<sup>93</sup> But without an explanation for the exchange of literary conventions between Esenes in the Judean desert and a dualistic ship-owner from Pontus, it will be methodologically prudent to look elsewhere for the literary conventions governing the composition of synoptic-type gospels.

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<sup>93</sup> For example, both the convention of conservatism in technical literature (which I argue in chapter three explains the gospels) and the conservatively re-written texts at Qumran may be explicable in terms of their pedagogical use.

#### 2.4.8 Alan Kirk

In his 2016 monograph, *Q in Matthew: Ancient Media, Memory, and Early Scribal Transmission of the Jesus Tradition*, Alan Kirk sets out to explain the logistics of *Matthew*'s treatment of the hypothetical Q source in light of memory, orality, and ancient media. In his survey of "source utilization practices," Kirk cites with approbation Mattila and Kloppenborg's independent diagnoses of the same problem.<sup>94</sup> In Kirk's own words, the "stylistic canons and patterns of variation and agreement vis-à-vis sources" evinced in contemporary historical writings are "a far cry from what one sees in the synoptics."<sup>95</sup> Kirk, thus, recognizes our *other* synoptic problem.

Kirk's own explanation for this difference between the synoptics and contemporary literary practice is not, however, convincing. Such compositional conservatism, according to Kirk, reflects "ancient Near Eastern scribal cultures."<sup>96</sup> While Hellenistic and Roman culture, "sharply distinguished scribal and literary functions," the "Near Eastern scribal cultures [...]" combined what in Greco-Roman society tended to be separated.<sup>97</sup> Kirk adduces substantial evidence from Jewish scripture, Old Babylonian seals, Neo-Assyrian inscriptions, Talmudic literature, and Islamic scholarship that administrative scribes occupied a higher social position in Near Eastern cultures than in the first century Roman empire.<sup>98</sup> Accordingly, these scribal cultures, *ex hypothesi*, did not draw the same distinctions between copying and composing. "[T]he framers of *Matthew* and Q," Kirk concludes, are likely to be found among "native scribes

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<sup>94</sup> Alan Kirk, *Q in Matthew: Ancient Media, Memory, and Early Scribal Transmission of the Jesus Tradition*, UK ed. edition (London ; New York: T&T Clark, 2016), 34–35.

<sup>95</sup> Kirk, 34.

<sup>96</sup> Kirk, 60, see 60–71.

<sup>97</sup> Kirk, 60, 65–71.

<sup>98</sup> Kirk, 65–69.

active in cultural and political resistance to Hellenism and the Roman Imperium.”<sup>99</sup> On Kirk’s account, the reproduction of *Mark* and *Q* by the author of *Matthew* (and, presumably, *Luke*) conforms to the conventions of Near Eastern scribal culture, against Hellenistic and Roman literary conventions.

This is, in certain respects, a repackaging of Streeter’s proposal. While Streeter points to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE Chronicler, Kirk adduces Michael Fishbane’s “*scribal tradents*” of the Hebrew Bible and Christine Hayes’ “redactors of rabbinic texts” as analogues for the evangelists.<sup>100</sup> Kirk, however, improves upon Streeter in helping us to imagine how literature from Bronze and Iron Age Judea (as well as medieval Baghdad) might be relevant for understanding first century Greek authors. Namely, *Matthew* was produced by “native scribes” engaged in “cultural and political resistance” as reflected in their conservative treatment of source material.

Kirk fails, however, to provide examples of culturally and chronologically proximate authors behaving analogously. That is, Kirk offers no evidence (beyond *Matthew* itself and alone) that Greek authors participated in such “ancient Near Eastern scribal cultures” in their Hellenistic and Roman context.<sup>101</sup> There are more than a few first and secondary century Greek authors who also hail from a (to adopt Kirk’s category) “Near Eastern” culture. Meleager, Josephus, Philo, Lucian, and Porphyry, for example, have such a pedigree but all these wrote Greek books according to Greek literary conventions. If the behavior of the synoptic evangelists

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<sup>99</sup> Kirk, 69–71.

<sup>100</sup> Kirk, 40.

<sup>101</sup> Kirk, 60.

is explicable in terms of a clash between literary cultures, we would expect to see examples beyond the synoptic gospels themselves.

Kirk, in fact, offers two examples of Greek books that evince analogously conservative compositional procedures: Apollonius Sophista's *Homer Lexicon* and Byzantine Florilegia.<sup>102</sup> Strikingly, however, neither of these works reflect the influence of Near Eastern scribal culture. Apollonius Sophista was a Roman Grammarian, the son of an Alexandrian Grammarian, and his lexicon is a typical product of the Hellenistic grammatical tradition. Byzantine florilegia, on the other hand, can only be traced back to the 5th century CE compiler, Stobaeus.<sup>103</sup> The only two analogies proposed by Kirk do not, therefore, illustrate his own explanation for synoptic conservatism. Kirk's silence regarding contemporary, Greek analogues to *Matthew* as the product of Near Eastern resistance to Hellenism is damning.

The two case studies offered by Kirk are, rather, putative examples of a very different cultural setting: Hellenistic and Roman grammatical scholarship. Kirk introduces such scholarship as an apparent afterthought. Following an eleven-page argument for the "Near Eastern" solution outlined above, Kirk includes a two-paragraph qualification that a certain class of Greek authors "combined writing activity with the study and transmission of cultural tradition and thus formed a rough counterpart to the traditional scribal class of the east."<sup>104</sup> Hellenistic philologists like Apollonius Sophista, we are told, share the conservatism of Kirk's Near Eastern scribes. Kirk offers no argument for understanding this similarity in method as anything more than a coincidence.

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<sup>102</sup> Kirk, 73–92.

<sup>103</sup> Kirk, 79.

<sup>104</sup> Kirk, 71–72.

Even apart from the failure of these examples to illustrate Kirk's own explanation for the compositional conservatism of the gospels, these two case studies are poor analogues for understanding the cultural setting of the synoptic gospels. The florilegia collections considered by Kirk are 9th and 10th century Byzantine catalogs of excerpts from early Christian commentators. At the remove of almost a millennium, such collections are self-evidently dubious evidence for reconstructing 1st and 2nd century literary conventions.

Apollonius' dictionary is a more perplexing example. Kirk, notably, does not attempt to demonstrate that grammatical scholarship is itself governed by conservative compositional conventions.<sup>105</sup> Instead, he points to the reuse of Arrian's dictionary and other Homeric commentaries in Apollonius' lexicon as primary evidence of such conservatism. Even if this example is granted, therefore, it would not establish a wide-spread set of conservative compositional conventions in grammatical scholarship. The example itself, however, is troubling. Arrian and Apollonius' works are both alphabetic lists of difficult words from the same literary corpus. Although there are few surviving *comparanda*, the incorporation of previous lexical scholarship seems to be the nature of dictionary writing. If Apollonius' compositional conservatism is due to the character of the book that he is writing rather than an underlying literary convention, it will not be a useful analogy for understanding the conservatism evinced in the gospels (since they are not the same kind of book). In other words, if Apollonius is re-using Arrian's material because he is writing a dictionary (and not because Greek

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<sup>105</sup> Most grammatical scholarship took the form of treatises (e.g. Dionysius' *On Quantities*), often surviving only in scholia. There is no evidence for such a conservative compositional procedure evinced by these works. Ancient philological scholarship evinced another kind of conservatism discussed at length in chapter five.

grammarians were conservative), it will not help us understand the gospels (because the latter are not dictionaries).

In sum, Kirk recognizes this *other* synoptic problem as already outlined by Mattila and Kloppenborg. Moreover, he is right to push scholars to look for literary analogues beyond the historical compositions of the Hellenistic and Roman elite. Kirk's own solution, however, is not persuasive. He provides no evidence that the influence of Near Eastern scribal culture on Greek literature produced works like *Matthew*. Moreover, Kirk's two case-studies hardly illuminate a first and secondary century literary culture in which the treatment of *Mark* by the authors of *Matthew* and *Luke* would have been conventional.

In a single sentence, however, Kirk points scholarship toward a workable solution. Embedded in a paragraph on Hellenistic and Roman philological scholarship, Kirk notes, “[h]ere one might also include the disciplinary school tradition discussed by Loveday Alexander and others.”<sup>106</sup> Apart from this, unfortunately, Greek technical literature receives little attention in Kirk's monograph.<sup>107</sup>

#### 2.4.9 Eric Eve

In his 2021 monograph *Relating Gospels*, Eric Eve argues that the Farrer Hypothesis “fits” ancient methods of literary composition.<sup>108</sup> In his review of Downing, Derrenbacker, and

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<sup>106</sup> Kirk, *Q in Matthew*, 72.

<sup>107</sup> Earlier in the chapter, Kirk cites Alexander's discussion of technical literature as an analogy for conservatism as a product of concern to transmit a tradition. He immediately cautions against identifying the author of *Matthew* as belonging to such a literary culture. Kirk, 41. Importantly, the scientific literature treated by Alexander should not be conflated with the grammatical scholarship Kirk has in view. The librarians of Ptolemaic Alexandria belong to a different cultural context from the independent experts responsible for much of the surviving technical literature.

<sup>108</sup> Eric Eve, *Relating the Gospels: Memory, Imitation and the Farrer Hypothesis* (London ; New York: T&T Clark, 2021), 5.

Kirk, Eve acknowledges the problem of synoptic conservatism. “[W]hat is surprising about parallel passages in the gospels,” says Eve, “is not the degree to which they differ but the degree to which they agree.”<sup>109</sup> Eve’s solution to this problem is a recapitulation of Kirk’s argument that the evangelists belonged to different “social settings” than elite Greek authors.<sup>110</sup> No new analogs for gospel writing are adduced and the disanalogous conservatism of the synoptics is not raised again — even in Eve’s extended treatments of “imitation” in literary composition and the extensive verbatim agreements between *Matthew* and *Luke*. Eve qualifies Kirk’s solution by suggesting that the author of *Luke* may have aspired to greater literary sophistication (by the standards of Greek literature) than the scribes imagined by Kirk.<sup>111</sup> This does not move us closer to a solution.

In summary, most New Testament scholarship has failed to reckon with the discontinuity between the synoptics and contemporary historical writings. A few scholars recognized the problem but dismissed it with a putative analogue or dubious explanation. Kloppenborg and Kirk took the problem more seriously. Their explanations, however, do not prove much more convincing. Upon closer consideration, therefore, this *other* synoptic problem remains a problem: The conservative treatment of *Mark* by the authors of *Matthew* and *Luke* does not reflect contemporary compositional conventions.

## 2.5 Plagiarism

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<sup>109</sup> Eve, 7.

<sup>110</sup> Eve, 7. Eve’s summary of Kirk’s argument elides the latter’s characterization of Near Eastern scribal culture with the examples drawn from Greek scholarship by minimizing the ethnic component of Kirk’s analysis and focusing on similarities of class and economic status. This change in emphasis is not backed with any new primary evidence.

<sup>111</sup> Eve, 15.

There is an oft-repeated myth that speaking of proprietary conceptions of literature in antiquity is viciously anachronistic. This misconception has functioned in New Testament scholarship to obscure the distinctive conservatism of the synoptic gospels. There is, on the contrary, abundant evidence for notions of literary property in the Hellenistic and Roman imagination. It follows from this analysis that, unless we are willing to identify the synoptic evangelists as plagiarists in the eyes of their contemporaries, the distinctive conservatism of the synoptic gospels remains a problem. I conclude this section by arguing that the synoptic evangelists were probably not engaged in literary theft and, so, some other set of literary conventions should be sought to explain their behavior.

New Testament scholars have used the myth that literary property is a vicious anachronism to portray the treatment of *Mark* by the authors of *Matthew* and *Luke* as typical of ancient history writing. B.H. Streeter, for instance, characterizes “the conception of property in literature” as a byproduct of the printing press.<sup>112</sup> In Streeter’s argument, this characterization functions as evidence that pre-modern historians (like the evangelists) employed the conservative “method of ‘scissors and paste.’”<sup>113</sup> Likewise, Derrenbacker, citing Streeter, repeatedly falls back upon this myth to characterize the evangelist’s “free use of previously ‘published’ sources” as consonant with wider literary norms.<sup>114</sup>

This myth is not, however, unique to studies of the synoptic problem. For instance, Pieter J.J. Botha and Bruce Malina, in their critiques of applying authorship language to first century phenomena, claim that notions of plagiarism and intellectual property are unknown in

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<sup>112</sup> Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, 155–56.

<sup>113</sup> Streeter, 156.

<sup>114</sup> Derrenbacker, *Ancient Compositional Practices and the Synoptic Problem*, 40 nn. 81, 43, 53.

antiquity.<sup>115</sup> Whether the evangelists should be characterized as ‘authors’ is the subject of chapter four. I am concerned, here, to correct this wide-spread misunderstanding of Hellenistic and Roman literary culture in order to prevent further obfuscation of the distinctive character of the synoptic gospels.

### 2.5.1 Literary Property

There is an unwieldy amount of evidence that ancient Greek and Roman authors had proprietary conceptions of literature. This is not a novel re-interpretation of the primary sources but, rather, a thoroughly documented conclusion in the relevant scholarship. ‘Plagiarism,’ defined as “culpable reuse through which an author presents another’s work as his own,” is a well-attested concern in the first and second centuries.<sup>116</sup> It is, rather, New Testament scholarship that has ignored the relevant evidence in order to preserve a primitivistic notion of early Christian book culture.

It is true that ‘literary property’ rarely enjoyed legal protection.<sup>117</sup> But concepts and conventions do not depend on the sanction of the state. Kathrina de la Durantaye demonstrates that the protection of authorial interests —namely, ensuring correct attribution and averting plagiarism, unsanctioned publication, and the falsification of texts— “was effected by means of

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<sup>115</sup> Pieter JJ Botha, “Authorship in Historical Perspective and Its Bearing on New Testament and Early Christian Texts and Contexts,” *Scriptura* 102 (2013): 495; Bruce J Malina, “Were There ‘Authors’ in New Testament Times?,” in *To Set at Liberty: Essays on Early Christianity and Its Social World in Honor of John H Elliot* (Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014), 262–71. Note that Karen King’s similar critique of “authorship” language acknowledges (*contra* Botha and Malina) that authorial attribution and plagiarism were, indeed, a matter of concern for first century authors. Karen L. King, “‘What Is an Author?’ Ancient Author-Function in the Apocryphon of John and the Apocalypse of John,” in *Scribal Practices and Social Structures among Jesus Adherents*, ed. William E. Arnal et al., 2016.

<sup>116</sup> Scott McGill, “Plagiarism or Imitation? The Case of Abronius Silo in Seneca the Elder’s *Suasoriae* 2.19-20\*,” *Arethusa* 43, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 113. See fn. 134 for a summary of the relevant secondary literature.

<sup>117</sup> There are a handful of exceptions. The Ptolemies, according to Vitruvius, tried plagiarists for theft (*On Archeology* 7.Preface.3). Roman aediles, in imitation of an Athenian practice, kept an official text of dramas. The *Lex Cornelia “De Falsis”* outlawed the forgery or falsification of legal documents. Augustus, as discussed below, attempted to outlaw anonymous and pseudonymous pamphleteering.

powerful social norms” in the late Roman Republic and throughout the Principate.<sup>118</sup> These social forces are easily recognized in literature from this period.

Galen begins *On my own Books* with an amusing encounter at a Roman bookseller (9). The physician witnessed an unnamed “philologian” (τις ἀνὴρ τῶν φιλολόγων) take up a book attributed to “Galen the Doctor.” After reading only two lines, the man declared that the inscription was a lie and tore it out of the work.<sup>119</sup> Later in the same treatise, Galen furnishes another illustration of similar social forces. Galen claims that his unscribed lecture notes had been inherited by the descendants of their proper recipients (10-11). These inheritors exhibited Galen’s work under their own names. Galen’s readers, however, recognized the plagiarism and re-inscribed the books with Galenic attributions. Whether these anecdotes are historical or a fabrication in service of Galen’s self-promotion is unimportant to my argument; it is enough that Galen participated in a moral universe where stories about a third party enforcing proper authorial attribution were plausible. Indeed, Galen’s reflection on his own scholarship and critiques of rival scholars helped constitute such social realities.<sup>120</sup>

In his history of forgery and its detection, Anthony Grafton shows that *Echtheitskritik* in Classical Greece is as old as authorial attribution itself.<sup>121</sup> For the centuries between Peisistratus and Paul, Grafton surveys myriad artists, scholars, and statesmen who concerned themselves

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<sup>118</sup> Katharina de la Durantaye, “The Origins of the Protection of Literary Authorship in Ancient Rome,” *Boston University International Law Journal* 25.37 (2008): 37–111.

<sup>119</sup> οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ λέξις αὕτη Γαληνοῦ καὶ ψευδῶς ἐπιτέγραπται τοῦτὶ τὸ βιβλίον. Kühn 19: 9.

<sup>120</sup> Ann Ellis Hanson, “Galen: Author and Critic,” in *Editing Texts = Texte Edieren*, ed. Glenn W. Most, Aporemata ; Bd. 2 (Göttingen : Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998., 1998), 1–21.

<sup>121</sup> Herodotus, for instance, records the exile of Onomacritus in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE for forging an oracle (7.6). Anthony Grafton, *Forgers and Critics, New Edition: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1960), 8–9. Not discussed by Grafton is Theognis of Megara’s mention of a “seal” against plagiarism and corruption in the 6<sup>th</sup> century (lines 19-23).

with detecting forgeries and preserving or recovering authorial texts.<sup>122</sup> Forgery and falsification waxed rather than waned during the Roman Principate; and scholars like Galen rose to meet the challenge.<sup>123</sup> Playful subversions of authorial norms, as Irene Peirano argues, may have grown up out of Roman rhetorical exercises but this is not evidence against established notions of authorship.<sup>124</sup> On the contrary, Peirano acknowledges that such authorial fictions are parasitic on a “well-developed concept of originality and authorship.”<sup>125</sup> Wolfgang Speyer, Norbert Brox, Anthony Grafton, Jeremy N. Duff, and Bart D. Ehrman have each argued that readers and writers at the turn of the millennium recognized pseudepigraphy and plagiarism (as well as textual tampering, discussed in chapter four) as species of deception.<sup>126</sup>

Similar passages could be piled up to support this picture of the social constitution of literary property. Martial exhorts his friends and patrons to publicly denounce verses plagiarized or wrongly ascribed (*Epigrams* 1.52; 7.72). Elsewhere, he says that books can be stolen only if they are not already well-known (1.66).<sup>127</sup> Various teachers reputedly expelled students for

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<sup>122</sup> Grafton, 9–18. A more detailed (but less accessible) history of authorship and literary property is Jeremy N. Duff, “A Reconsideration of Pseudepigraphy in Early Christianity” (Doctor of Philosophy, Oxford, Oxford University, 1998), 109–18..

<sup>123</sup> Grafton, *Forgers and Critics, New Edition*, 18–22.

<sup>124</sup> Irene Peirano, *The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake: Latin Pseudepigrapha in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). Peirano is critical of the language of “forgery” and the assumption of deceptive intentions behind pseudepigraphy and tampering with text traditions, but this does not arise from a skepticism about the applicability of authorship language to phenomena in antiquity. Peirano, 44–45. I cannot agree with some of her conclusions (as reflected in my survey of normative language applied to such behaviors below) but this disagreement is irrelevant for my purposes here.

<sup>125</sup> Peirano, *The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake*, 32.

<sup>126</sup> Wolfgang Speyer, *Die Literarische Falschung im Heidnischen und Christlichen Altertum Ein Versuch Ihrer Deutung* (München: Verlag CH Beck, 1971); Norbert Brox, *Falsche Verfasserangaben: zur Erklärung der frühchristlichen Pseudepigraphie*, Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 79 (Stuttgart: KBW Verlag, 1975); Grafton, *Forgers and Critics, New Edition*; Duff, “A Reconsideration of Pseudepigraphy in Early Christianity”; Bart D Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery: The Use of Literary Deceit in Early Christian Polemics* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>127</sup> *Mutare dominum non potest liber notus*. D.R. Shackleton Bailey, *Martial. Epigrams, Volume I: Spectacles, Books 1-5*, Loeb Classical Library 94 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 86.

publishing lecture notes under their own name.<sup>128</sup> Seneca complains that some scholars were overly concerned with detecting plagiarism (*surripio*) (*Moral Letters* 108.34). The emperor Augustus, according to Suetonius, even took official action against pseudonymity (*Lives of the Caesars*, Augustus, 55).<sup>129</sup> Proprietary conceptions of literature in antiquity were not made up of laws but these kinds of social pressure.

For good or ill, authors in antiquity bore responsibility for their compositions. When the Roman Senate condemned the complete works of Cassius Severus to the flame, they did not exile his Muse or readership. Instead, the Senate sent Cassius himself to Crete (Tacitus, *Annals* 1.72; 4.21). Probably, Cassius would not agree with Malina's judgement that ancient "writers" were not held "distinctly and personally responsible for [their] creation."<sup>130</sup> Likewise, Ovid claims he was banished for a pair of crimes: "a poem and a mistake" (*Trist.* 4.10).<sup>131</sup> During the Roman Principate, poets (like Clutorius Priscus), playwrights (like Mamerus Aemilius

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<sup>128</sup> Hermodorus of Syracuse, according to Durantaye, was a proverbial instance, well known in contemporary Greek and Latin literature. de la Durantaye, "The Origins of the Protection of Literary Authorship in Ancient Rome," 60. See also the memory of Empedocles' expulsion from the school of Pythagorus. Anton-Hermann Chroust, "Charges of Philosophical Plagiarism in Greek Antiquity," *Modern Schoolman* 38, no. 3 (1961): 223.

<sup>129</sup> *Etiam sparsos de se in curia famosos libellos nec expavit et magna cura redarguit ac ne requisitis quidem auctoribus id modo censuit, cognoscendum posthac de iis, qui libellos aut carmina ad infamiam cuiuspiam sub alieno nomine edant.* JC Rolfe, *Suetonius, Lives of the Caesars, Volume 1*, ed. Jeffrey Henderson, LCL 31 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), 232. Suetonius notes that the emperor was permissive toward public and anonymous criticism but banned pseudepigraphic defamation. On the use of "cognosco" to mean something like "tried judicially," see Lewis & Short 3.A.1-2. Earlier in the same section, Suetonius names two exceptional measures taken by Augustus against extreme cases (51). The banishment of a certain Junius Novatus is probably due to his use of pseudepigraphy. On this passage, see Frederick H. Cramer, "Bookburning and Censorship in Ancient Rome: A Chapter from the History of Freedom of Speech," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 6, no. 2 (1945): 163-64.

<sup>130</sup> Malina, "Were There 'Authors' in New Testament Times?," 263.

<sup>131</sup> Here again the veracity of Ovid's claim is unimportant; Ovid inhabited a social world where it was comprehensible to claim that writing a poem was the cause of one's ruin.

Scaurus), and historians (like Aulus Cremutius Cordus) lost their lives because of the content of their writings.<sup>132</sup>

This authorial responsibility was often described in proprietary language. Pliny the Younger instructs Caninius Rufus, an aspiring poet, to “form and hammer something which can be yours forever. For everything else that you own will be divided out to one owner or another after you. This [your poetry] will never stop being yours, if only it should begin (*Ep* 1.3.4).”<sup>133</sup> Pliny compares his friend’s prospective composition to other kinds of property. All of Rufus’ possessions will someday belong to someone else. Everything, according to Pliny, except for what Rufus writes. Literature is the only thing that Rufus can own forever.

In particular, ancient discussions of plagiarism reflect a proprietary conception of literature.<sup>134</sup> Greek authors refer to such unattributed borrowing as κλοπή or, less often, ὑφαίρεσις.<sup>135</sup> Both nouns and the correlated verbs, κλέπτειν and ὑφαίρεισθαι, are conventional terms for “theft” in non-literary contexts. Similarly, Latin authors use *furtum*, meaning “theft,” and the verb *surripere*, “to steal,” for culpable, unattributed borrowing of another author’s verbal expression.<sup>136</sup> In its evocation of criminality, this language reflects the moral opprobrium

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<sup>132</sup> Whether the charge was a pretext (as with Scaurus) or the actual source of the offense (as with Cordus) is irrelevant. That the charge of “literary treason” was comprehensible is sufficient to demonstrate (contra-Botha and Malina) that Romans held authors responsible for the content of their creations. For a discussion of these examples, see Cramer, “Bookburning and Censorship in Ancient Rome,” 186–94.

<sup>133</sup> *Effinge aliquid et excude, quod sit perpetuo tuum. Nam reliqua rerum tuarum post te alium atque alium dominum sortientur, hoc numquam tuum desinet esse si semel coeperit.* Betty Radice, *Pliny the Younger, Letters, Volume I: Books 1-7*, LCL 55 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 6.

<sup>134</sup> Plagiarism in Greek literature has not enjoyed much attention since Eduard von Stemplinger, *Das Plagiat in der griechischen Literatur* (Leipzig; Berlin: B.G. Teubner, 1912). In contrast, Scott McGill’s recent monograph provides a wealth of evidence for plagiarism in Latin literature. Scott McGill, *Plagiarism in Latin Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>135</sup> Konrat Ziegler, “Plagiat,” *Real-Encyklopädie Der Christlichen Alterthümer* 20, no. 2 (1950): 1956–97.

<sup>136</sup> McGill, *Plagiarism in Latin Literature*, 8.

attached to such behavior.<sup>137</sup> Vitruvius, at the end of the first century BCE, claims that the Hellenistic monarch Ptolemy prosecuted poets for borrowing from earlier authors without attribution (*On Architecture* 7.Preface.7). Whatever the historicity of Vitruvius' anecdote, it reflects a wide-spread normative judgement about appropriating language from the work of others. Legal ramifications for plagiarism were rare but it was widely recognized as an illicit behavior.

There is also considerable discussion in ancient authors about the fuzzy lines between homage, imitation, and plagiarism. For instance, Longinus, writing in the first century CE, exhorts aspiring authors to study the classics of Greek literature so that they might imitate their expressions (13.1-4). "The act is not theft (κλοπή)," Longinus clarifies, "but like the imitation of sculptures or works of craftsmanship from good habits."<sup>138</sup> This is a recommendation of stylistic emulation, not verbal borrowing. Longinus and his contemporaries (e.g. Seneca the Elder, *Susatoriae* 3.3.5-7) distinguished such imitation from culpable verbal reproduction. While *imitatio* was an important part of literary culture, Hellenistic and Roman authors despised plagiarism. Although there are variations in how this was understood, plagiarism was widely recognized as entailing the reproduction of the very wording of a source (e.g. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Lysias* 57, Fronto *To Lucius Verus* 5).<sup>139</sup>

Even substantially revising borrowed material did not exonerate an author from the charge of plagiarism. Theft, according to Seneca the Elder, could not be avoided by "omitting,

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<sup>137</sup> McGill, 10.

<sup>138</sup> ἔστι δ' οὐ κλοπή τὸ πρᾶγμα, ἀλλ' ὡς ἀπὸ καλῶν ἠθῶν ἢ πλασμάτων ἢ δημιουργημάτων Stephen Halliwell et al., *Aristotle, Longinus, Demetrius. Poetics. Longinus: On the Sublime. Demetrius: On Style* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 212.

<sup>139</sup> Conceptual plagiarism (i.e. intellectual property) is also attested but this set of conventions are significantly more complicated and well beyond the purview of this study (e.g. Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* 15).

changing, or adding wording” in otherwise borrowed language (*Controversiae* 10.20).<sup>140</sup> Even a single stolen word embedded in otherwise original material, claims Seneca, could sometimes constitute plagiarism (*Suasoriae* 2.19). Similarly, Martial accuses an author of plagiarism for mixing Martial’s verse with his own (10.100, 102).<sup>141</sup> As all these comments make clear, first and second century readers were more than capable of nuanced thought about the fuzzy boundaries between influence and plagiarism. Such reflections, however, invariably presuppose a conception of literary borrowing as theft.

First century authors also clearly distinguish between ownership of an artefact and literary ownership. Seneca the Younger furnishes a helpful reflection on the conceptual distinction between these kinds of ownership in light of the linguistic ambiguity (*On Benefits* 7.6).

We say that books are Cicero’s [books]; Dorus, the bookseller, calls these same [books] his own — and both are true. One declares ownership because he is their author (*auctor*), the other because he is their buyer. And it can be rightly said that they belong to both because they do belong to both, but not in the same way. Thus, Titus Livy can acquire or buy his own books from Dorus.<sup>142</sup>

Both men, says Seneca, own the same book in different senses. The artefact belongs to the bookseller while the text belongs to Cicero. Similarly, Martial mocks a plagiarist for trying to

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<sup>140</sup> *Triarius hoc ex aliqua parte, cum subriperet, inflexit. Hos aiebat Severus Cassius qui hoc facerent similes sibi videri furibus alienis poculis ansas mutantibus. Multi sunt qui detracto verbo aut mutato aut adiecto putent se alienas sententias lucri fecisse.* Michael Winterbottom, *Seneca the Elder. Declamations, Volume II: Controversiae, Books 7-10. Suasoriae. Fragments*, Loeb Classical Library 464 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 468.

<sup>141</sup> McGill, *Plagiarism in Latin Literature*, 99–103.

<sup>142</sup> *Libros dicimus esse Ciceronis; eosdem Dorus librarius suos vocat, et utrumque verum est. Alter illos tamquam auctor sibi, alter tamquam emptor adserit; ac recte utriusque dicuntur esse, utriusque enim sunt, sed non eodem modo. Sic potest Titus Livius a Doro accipere aut emere libros suos.* John W. Basore, *Seneca. Moral Essays, Volume III: De Beneficiis*, Loeb Classical Library 310 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), 470. See the discussion at J. Mira Seo, “Plagiarism and Poetic Identity in Martial,” *American Journal of Philology* 130, no. 4 (2009): 580.

become an author by buying his books (1.66, 72).<sup>143</sup> He recommends that, in order to get away with this theft, the plagiarist must buy not only the book but the silence of those who know the identity of the real author. Other epigrams too presuppose this distinction between literary and artefactual ownership in order to exploit ambiguities in language about ownership (1.29; 2.20).<sup>144</sup> And examples could be multiplied from other authors as well: Galen's unpublished works had to be reclaimed (*On My Own Books* 10-11). Suetonius relates that Servius Clodius was disowned and ostracized for publishing the work of his father-in-law as his own (*On Grammarians* 3). All this to say, ownership of a manuscript did not license the holder to publish it as their own. It is a proprietary conception of texts—as distinct from their material instantiations—that underlies the taboo against plagiarism.

In sum, literary property existed in the imagination of Hellenistic and Roman authors. The invention of the printing press was not a prerequisite for imaging texts to be the property of their authors. Contrary to the claims of Streeter, Derrenbacker, and others, the modern charge of “plagiarism” maps onto a well-attested actor's (or “native”) category of first century Greek and Latin book culture.<sup>145</sup> The distinct conservatism of the synoptic gospels cannot, therefore, be explained by different attitudes toward literary borrowing in antiquity.

### 2.5.2 Gospel Writing as Plagiarism?

If the compositional procedure evinced in *Matthew* and *Luke* does not comport with conventions of contemporary biography and history, perhaps these evangelists engaged in a

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<sup>143</sup> Martial's epigram 1.66 is quoted and further discussed below. Martial's epigrams 1.53 and 10.100 makes it clear that the plagiarism involves literary borrowing, not just the appropriation of ideas.

<sup>144</sup> See the analysis at McGill, *Plagiarism in Latin Literature*, 82–85.

<sup>145</sup> The term “plagiarism” itself means “kidnapping” and is first applied to culpable literary borrowing by Martial (1.52).

counter-cultural behavior. Despite the scorn of the author's considered above, plagiarism is one compositional procedure attested for Greek literature during the Roman principate that did, in fact, treat source material with a conservatism similar to that evinced in the synoptic tradition. The inheritors-turned-publishers of Galen's lecture transcripts, for instance, seem to have been conservative indeed. Were the authors of *Matthew* and *Luke*, likewise, plagiarists? Were Marcion and Tatian?

This is unlikely.<sup>146</sup> There is, rather, substantial evidence from the synoptic gospel tradition itself that the evangelists' treatment of source material was a conventional behavior. First, the sheer number of synoptic-type gospels weighs against the theory that evangelists were engaged in an illicit behavior. Within a single century, between the composition of *Matthew* and Tatian's *Diatessaron*, as many as a dozen gospels were composed according to the distinctly conservative procedure evinced in the synoptics. This was undertaken by Jesus followers as ideologically distinct from one another as the "Jewish-Christian" author of *The Gospel of the Hebrews* and Marcion. Strictly speaking, it is possible that all these Christians determined to write a new gospel by violating contemporary ethical and literary norms. It seems more likely, however, that some wide-spread literary convention which permitted behavior otherwise considered plagiarism informed their diverse compositional projects.

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<sup>146</sup> "Plagiarism," defined above as *culpable* literary borrowing, is a normative judgement. As such, it is only meaningful relative to a set of specified ethical conventions. It follows that there is no sense in asking "Did Marcion plagiarize?" *simpliciter*. I pose the question here relative to the compositional context of the evangelists as best as we can reconstruct them. We must, nevertheless, recognize that even next-door neighbors do not always agree on normative judgements. Pliny the Elder, I am convinced, would deem the author of *Luke* a plagiarist without regard for the evangelist's invocation of a well-established compositional convention (as argued in chapter four). My claim that the evangelists were not plagiarists, therefore, is not categorical but a characterization of how the author and initial readers would have perceived the action.

Second, several of these evangelists called attention to their compositional behavior. These authors, therefore, did not employ their sources surreptitiously. The work of the plagiarist, by way of contrast, is typically secretive. The Lukan prologue acknowledges that others have “attempted to arrange this narrative” (ἐπεχείρησαν ἀνατάξασθαι διήγησιν) but, the third evangelist claims, in his present work everything will be written “in order” (καθεξῆς). Likewise, Marcion prefaced his gospel with a work called the *Antitheses*. In this introductory work, according to Tertullian, Marcion claimed to have restored the gospel (*Against Marcion* 4.2-3). These authors are not disguising their dependence on other gospels.<sup>147</sup>

It is true that *Matthew*, for instance, lacks any such acknowledgement of literary predecessors. It might be objected, therefore, that the composition of *Matthew* should be treated separately. Nothing obliges us to conclude that the authors of *Matthew* and *Luke* were doing the same thing. A single explanation for the distinctive compositional behavior of all the synoptic-type evangelists, however, is simpler than supposing that *Matthew* and the *Diatessaron* were products of plagiarism while the author of *Luke* and Marcion treated their source material the same way for different reasons. The choice of these evangelists to call attention to their written sources suggests that their reader was expected to recognize the work’s dependence on other gospels.

In his ironic instructions for successful plagiarism, Martial says that the act can only succeed if the book is not already well-known (*Epigrams* 1.66). It is possible that *Matthew* was composed before its author considered *Mark* well-known. But, given the acknowledgement of

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<sup>147</sup> Papias’ contrast of his own practice with other gospels supports this interpretation. Unlike other evangelists, Papias does not rely on books, but the living voice. This suggests that already at the beginning of the second century, readers recognized the synoptics as literarily inter-dependent.

source material by the third evangelist and Marcion, it seems unlikely that this was true at the beginning of the second century. Tatian, writing at the end of the second century, must have known that his sources would be recognized.

It cannot be demonstrated that the synoptic gospels were never understood as a work of plagiarism by any second century reader. Nevertheless, a single explanation for the distinctive behavior of several culturally and chronologically proximate authors, writing within a genetically related, literary tradition is heuristically preferable to an assortment of explanations. The evidence surveyed above suggests that the distinctively conservative treatment of source material evinced in the work of these evangelists was permitted according to some yet-unspecified literary convention.

## 2.6 Gospel as *hypomnēmata*?

In his 2018 monograph, *Gospels Before the Book*, Matthew Larsen proposes a new explanation for the relationship between the synoptic gospels.<sup>148</sup> The synoptics, according to Larsen, are “a fluid, unfinished, and relatively open constellation of textual objects” that “should not be viewed as different books” but as an indefinite number of manuscripts belonging to “the same unfinished textual tradition of ‘the gospel.’”<sup>149</sup> Larsen’s claims about the instability of the synoptic manuscript tradition are largely derived from David Parker’s *Living Text of the Gospels* — treated at length in chapter four. Larsen’s original contribution, then, is to propose that the gospels belong to a category of sub-literary, unfinished notes called *hypomnēmata* or

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<sup>148</sup> Matthew Larsen, *Gospels before the Book* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018); Matthew D.C. Larsen, “Accidental Publication, Unfinished Texts and the Traditional Goals of New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 39, no. 4 (June 1, 2017): 362–87.

<sup>149</sup> Larsen, *Gospels before the Book*, 85, 114.

*commentarii*. These, according to Larsen, are a kind of raw material prepared without expectation of wider readership and meant to be reworked into a book. Larsen reasons that, alongside the synoptic text tradition, testimonia to the gospels before Irenaeus reflects the reception of the synoptics as *hypomnēmata*.

This proposal would explain what Larsen describes as the “remarkable similarity between the text traditions” of the synoptic gospels.<sup>150</sup> If one understands *Matthew* and *Mark* as distinct books, claims Larsen, “there are no two works from the ancient world more similar to each other than the Gospel according to Mark and the Gospel according to Matthew.”<sup>151</sup> This statement, I show in chapter three, is probably not correct. The kind of similarity evinced by *Matthew* and *Mark* (as well as the rest of the synoptic tradition) is, in fact, typical of discrete, authored, and published works, composed according to the conventions of a particular sub-culture of first and second century Greek literature. Nevertheless, Larsen’s claim rightly acknowledges the distinctive conservatism of the synoptic tradition.

Although he is not explicitly engaging with Mattila, Downing, and Kloppenborg, Larsen’s proposal is a novel solution to the problem they identified. The compilers of (the manuscripts of) *Matthew* and *Luke* did not treat (the manuscripts of) *Mark* the same way that Plutarch and Josephus treated their primary sources because, *ex hypothesi*, copies of *Mark* were not regarded as witnesses to an authored, published, or finished book. Instead, the early readers of (the manuscripts of) *Mark*, according to Larsen, considered it raw textual material, ripe to be

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<sup>150</sup> Larsen, 100–114.

<sup>151</sup> Larsen, 101.

refashioned. The *other* synoptic problem outlined above would, indeed, find an explanation in Larsen's account of the reception of (manuscripts of) *Mark* as sub-literary notes.

Larsen's original proposal falters at three points:

- (1) The terms *hypomnēmata/comentarii* do not pick out a class of sub-literary, unfinished notes as distinct from other kinds of literature.
- (2) The rewriting and publication of someone else's notes was not a conventional practice.
- (3) There is no evidence that first or second century Jesus followers understood gospel literature as sub-literary, unfinished notes.

### 2.6.1 Defining *Hypomnēmata*

The noun *hypomnēmata* is the plural of ὑπόμνημα, the deverbative of ὑπομνήσκω, meaning “to put one in mind or remind one of.”<sup>152</sup> The noun is used throughout Greek literature to refer to objects and activities related to commemoration: statues, tombs, buildings, clothing, and rituals. Philo of Alexandria, for instance, calls the engraved stones in the priestly garment ὑπομνήματα (*Who is the Heir of Divine Things* 176). Etymology, of course, does not determine meaning. But the pattern of usage for this term is clear: *hypomnēmata* picks out nouns that cause one to remember or think of something.

The attested uses of *hypomnēmata* for textual objects fit within this same pattern of use. Polybius (2<sup>nd</sup> cent BCE) refers to all the books on historical subjects written by his predecessors as *hypomnēmata* (*Historiae* 1.1.1). Likewise, he calls his own historical work *hypomnēmata*

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<sup>152</sup> Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, and Roderick McKenzie, *Greek-English Lexicon, Ninth Edition with a Revised Supplement*, ed. Henry Stuart Jones, 9th edition (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 1996), 1889.

(1.35). There is no connotation of incompleteness or privacy in either instance. On the contrary, Polybius contrasts the preface of his work with the prefaces that are typical of other historical *hypomnēmata* (1.1.1) Clearly, Polybius has formal literature, not drafting notebooks, in view. Polybius, then, claims that readers will benefit from his *hypomnēmata* in particular (1.35). It is clear, therefore, that Polybius intended his work for distribution.

Philo of Alexandria (1<sup>st</sup> cent. CE) describes the five books of Moses as “*hypomnēmata* of the lives of the ancients” containing their “acts and reasonings” (*On Abraham* 6).<sup>153</sup> Needless to say, Philo does not believe that Torah is sub-literary, unauthored, or unfinished. Elsewhere, he uses the term *hypomnēmata* to refer to an historical account in the Jewish scriptures (Philo, *On Flight and Finding* 4) and, in several places, to refer to historical books in general (*On Moses* 2.48; *On Dreams* 2.268). Like Polybius, Philo employs *hypomnēmata* to refer to any book with historical subject matter.

Strabo (1<sup>st</sup> cent. CE) entitled one of his lost works *Historical Hypomnēmata* (*Geography* 1.1.23). He tells us that this work concerned the significant events in the lives of important persons, and Plutarch (1<sup>st</sup> cent. CE) cites Strabo’s *Historical Hypomnēmata* (by this title) as an authority on early Roman history (*Lucullus* 28.8). Strabo says that his *Geography* is addressed to the same illustrious readership who appreciated his *Historical Hypomnēmata*. There can be no question, therefore, that Strabo’s *hypomnēmata* were not private, sub-literary notes, but an authorial work “published” according to the conventions of ancient book culture.

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<sup>153</sup> ὡς δεόντως ἂν τινα φάναι, τοὺς τεθέντας νόμους μηδὲν ἄλλ’ ἢ ὑπομνήματα εἶναι βίου τῶν παλαιῶν, ἀρχαιολογοῦντας ἔργα καὶ λόγους, οἷς ἐχρήσαντο. F.H. Colson, *Philo. On Abraham. On Joseph. On Moses.*, Loeb Classical Library 289 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), 6.

None of these uses referred to private, unfinished, or sub-literary notes. Quite the opposite, these authors used the term to refer to the literary compositions of esteemed predecessors.<sup>154</sup> In all three cases *hypomnēmata* refers to literature with historical content.<sup>155</sup> The reason seems clear: historical books, by definition, remind the reader of past events. As we will see, this presents a serious problem for Larsen’s interpretation of the reception of the gospels.

At the same time, informational texts of all kinds serve “to remind” readers of their content. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that various scientific and technical books are called *hypomnēmata*. Ptolemy (2<sup>nd</sup> cent. CE) refers to the geographical treatise of his predecessor Marinus as *hypomnēmata* (1.6.2). This is a work, according to Ptolemy, published in multiple editions by an esteemed scholar (1.6.1). Likewise, (Ps-)Longinus (1<sup>st</sup> cent. CE) refers to his own treatise *On the Sublime* as a *hypomnēma* (44.12). This book contains an authorial self-identification, a dedication, and a reflection on its own generic identity as technical writing (1). None of these examples of books described as *hypomnēmata* belong to a genre of unfinished, unauthored notes.

It is true, of course, that the term *hypomnēmata* was also used to refer to informal, work-a-day notes (e.g. Arrian, *Discourses* 1; Lucian, *Rival Philosophies* 2, *How to Write History* 47-48). This use of the term follows logically from the semantic conventions outlined above: Informal notes, like all the other literary *hypomnēmata*, remind the reader of something. Crucially, however, this is only one of many well-attested uses of *hypomnēmata* as applied to textual objects. As I have shown above, the term *hypomnēmata* refers to publicized, authorial,

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<sup>154</sup> In the case of Strabo, this was his own earlier work.

<sup>155</sup> Lucian (2<sup>nd</sup> cent. CE), for instance, refers to the historical subject matter of Socratic Apologies as ὑπομνήματα (*The Parasite* 56). Other examples are considered below.

and literary works, to informal notes, and to a variety of textual objects (with some relationship to memory) in between. It cannot, therefore, be assumed that this term applied to any particular text connotes a sub/pre-literary, unauthored, or unfinished status. And, as we will see, the few instances where *hypomnēma(ta)* language is applied to the gospels do not reflect this use.

### 2.6.2 Publishing *Hypomnēmata* as Plagiarism

Larsen cites an epigram of Martial as evidence that ancient authors acquired unfinished notes and published them under their own name (1.66).<sup>156</sup> If you can find an unpublished and unknown book, advises Martial, “buy it [...] For whoever recites other people’s poems and seeks fame // Must buy not the book, but the silence [of the one who produced it].”<sup>157</sup> This explains, according to Larsen, Pliny the Younger’s claim that a certain Licinus offered an exorbitant sum for his famous uncle’s *hypomnēmata*.<sup>158</sup> Larsen concludes that these two passages furnish evidence that it was a conventional practice to purchase, revise, and publish the unfinished notes of other authors.

Larsen, it seems, has failed to recognize Martial’s “advice” as satire. Martial is explicitly addressing a “thief” (*fur*) and offering counsel on how he might have gotten away with his crime. The plagiarist, advises Martial, should not only buy a book but also pay for the silence of anyone who knows the identity of its author. Why? Because the action described in Martial’s advice

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<sup>156</sup> Larsen, “Accidental Publication, Unfinished Texts and the Traditional Goals of New Testament Textual Criticism,” 369; Larsen, *Gospels before the Book*, 18–19.

<sup>157</sup> I reproduce here Larsen’s own translation in order to show that Larsen shares my interpretation of the final clause (discussed below). Larsen, *Gospels before the Book*, 18.

<sup>158</sup> Larsen, 17–19. It is a trope that the literary remains (often called *hypomnēmata*) of a great thinker are valuable (e.g. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 8.42). This, I believe, adequately explains the passage without positing some otherwise unattested literary practice.

might otherwise be exposed as theft.<sup>159</sup> The satirical force of Martial's epigram depends on the reader recognizing his advice as illicit. This critique of a literary rival does not provide evidence for any conventional compositional practice.

Notably, Martial instructs his thief to purchase not only an unfinished manuscript but also the silence of its author. This indicates that Martial understood the stolen notes as, nevertheless "authored." Martial, it seems, agrees with Suetonius and Galen that the re-use of someone else's unpublished writings would constitute literary theft — that is, plagiarism. Larsen's primary piece of evidence, therefore, contradicts his own account of the status of *hypomnēmata* as raw materials, available to be reused by other authors. In the end, Larsen presents no evidence that acquiring and reworking someone else's notes would be recognized as a legitimate form of authorship in the first or second century.<sup>160</sup>

### 2.6.3 Testimonia to Gospels as *Hypomnēmata*

Lastly, Larsen contends that readers before Irenaeus of Lyon (d. 202 CE) understood the gospels as sub-literary, unauthored, and unfinished *hypomnēmata*. In response to the claims of Parker, Larsen, and others, I argue at length in chapter four that there is a tremendous amount of evidence for bookish conceptions (i.e. authored, discrete, public works) of gospel literature before Irenaeus. The present critique of Larsen's original proposal will conclude, therefore, by

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<sup>159</sup> In my survey of scholarship, I could not find a single interpreter who failed to recognize Martial's advice at 1.66 as satire. Mira Seo, for instance, calls it "ironic advice" given to "an incompetent plagiarizer". See de la Durantaye, "The Origins of the Protection of Literary Authorship in Ancient Rome," 72; J. Mira Seo, "Plagiarism and Poetic Identity in Martial," 581–82; McGill, *Plagiarism in Latin Literature*, 103–8; Peirano, *The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake*, 48.

<sup>160</sup> As discussed above, it is not impossible that the evangelists were, indeed, plagiarists in the eyes of their contemporaries. In that scenario, however, Larsen's category of unfinished *hypomnēmata* does no explanatory work: Gospels need not be reimagined as notes in order to explain why a subsequent author engaged in plagiarism.

considering Larsen’s positive claim that some Christian readers thought of the gospels as sub-literary. There is, I argue, no evidence for this claim.

Larsen argues that Papias, Clement, and several later authors describe the gospels as sub-literary notes. Papias, on Larsen’s description of the evidence, says that “Mark [...] textualized Peter’s teaching in the form of *apomnēmonēumata*, which in the context is roughly a synonym of *hypomnēmata*.”<sup>161</sup> Setting aside the distinctions between *apomnēmonēumata* and *hypomnēmata* in different literary contexts, this is simply not what Papias says.<sup>162</sup> The passage cited by Larsen reads, “Mark, indeed, having become an interpreter of Peter, carefully wrote everything he remembered (ἐμνημόνευσεν), though not in order, [...] for he neither heard the Lord nor followed him [...] so that Mark did nothing wrong writing in this way the things as he remembered (ἀπεμνημόνευσεν)” (Eus. *EH* 3.39.15).<sup>163</sup> Papias, as quoted by Eusebius, uses the verbs μνημονεύω and ἀπομνημονεύω interchangeably to describe Mark’s access to the Jesus tradition. Papias tells the reader that Mark was not an eyewitness but, rather, wrote from his memory of Peter’s teaching. Notably, Papias does not call the gospels either *hypomnēmata* or *apomnēmonēumata*. Rather, he uses the verb “to remember” in its most conventional sense. Larsen fails to justify—or even acknowledge—his leap in reasoning from two instances of the verb for “remembering” to a special class of textual objects.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Larsen, *Gospels before the Book*, 90.

<sup>162</sup> I treat *apomnēmonēumata*, an established sub-genre of philosophical biography well-attested in the first and second century, at length in chapter four.

<sup>163</sup> Larsen, *Gospels before the Book*, 90–91. Μάρκος μὲν ἐρμηνευτῆς Πέτρου γενόμενος, ὅσα ἐμνημόνευσεν, ἀκριβῶς ἔγραψεν, οὐ μέντοι τάξει [...] ὥστε οὐδὲν ἤμαρτεν Μάρκος οὕτως ἕνια γράψας ὡς ἀπεμνημόνευσεν. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 738–41.

<sup>164</sup> For a similar line of argumentation regarding Papias, see the critical review of Larsen in Chris Keith, *The Gospel as Manuscript: An Early History of the Jesus Tradition as Material Artifact* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020), 51–55.

Clement of Alexandria, writing between the end of the second century and the beginning of the third, furnishes Larsen with his second piece of putative evidence for the reception of gospel literature as unauthored, unfinished notes. Larsen, of course, recognizes that Clement typically treated the gospels as discrete, authored books, but claims that the Alexandrian scholar “retains reminiscences and traditions from previous discourses.”<sup>165</sup> Larsen finds evidence of this in Eusebius’ quotation from Clement’s lost *Outlines* (Eus. *HE* 2.15.1). The hearers of Peter, according to Clement, asked Mark to “leave behind, by means of writing, a memorial (*hypomnēma*) of the teaching that was handed down to them by means of speech.”<sup>166</sup> Mark wrote “his gospel,” according to Clement, so that his audience would have a written memorial of Peter’s teaching. Here, Clement uses *hypomnēma*, in the singular, according to the most widely attested sense: a memory inducing noun (i.e. a “memorial”). Clement goes on to relate that Peter authorized the publication of his teaching in Mark’s gospel, satisfying the well-attested conventions of a teacher’s ownership over their teachings. There is nothing, here, to suggest that Clement refers to sub-literary notes against his more widely attested conception of gospels as discrete, authored books. Rather, Clement’s specification that this “memorial” took the form of writing (διὰ γραφῆς) suggests that *hypomnēma* did not, by itself, designate a class of textual objects.<sup>167</sup> I have no objection to finding “disjointed discourses of gospel textuality and authorship” in any author, but Larsen needs to present some warrant for positing a “previous discours[e]” preserved by Clement in tension with his usual book-ish language for describing

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<sup>165</sup> Larsen, *Gospels before the Book*, 96.

<sup>166</sup> παρακλήσεσιν δὲ παντοίας Μάρκον, οὗ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον φέρεται ἀκόλουθον ὄντα Πέτρου, λιπαρήσαι, ὡς ἄν και διὰ γραφῆς ὑπόμνημα τῆς διὰ λόγου παραδοθείσης αὐτοῖς καταλείψοι διδασκαλίας [...] Gustave Bardy, ed., *Eusèbe de Césarée. Histoire ecclésiastique* 2, Sources Chrétiennes 41 (Paris: Ed. du Cerf, 1955), 70.

<sup>167</sup> The plural form, *hypomnēmata*, not used by Clement is more typical of references to preliminary drafts or work-a-day notes; but there are examples of the singular used in this way.

gospels. Larsen adduces no justification for interpreting Clement's *hypomnēma* as sub-literary, un-authored notes.

Larsen refers his reader to three other instances of *hypomnēma/commentarius* terminology applied to gospel literature in the third and fourth century.<sup>168</sup> These are found in works by Tertullian, Origen, and Eusebius. Larsen acknowledges that all three of these authors conceptualize the gospels as “stable, published pieces of literature” — that is, not as unfinished raw materials.<sup>169</sup> Nevertheless, according to Larsen, their use of *hypomnēmata* language is a “remnant of prior discourses” in which gospels were conceptualized as sub-literary and unfinished notes.<sup>170</sup> As demonstrated above, however, the term *hypomnēmata* is used to refer to all sorts of historical and informational literature without any implication for that work's finished-ness. There is no reason to interpret the use of *hypomnēmata* in these three authors against those authors' more widely attested conceptualization of gospels as discrete, stable, and authored literature. More likely, these authors refer to gospels as *hypomnēmata* for the same reason that Polybius and Philo of Alexandria refer to a history of Rome and the books of Moses as *hypomnēmata*: Books with historical subject matter serve to remind the reader of their content.

In sum, Larsen has proposed an original thesis that would, indeed, explain the distinctive conservatism evinced in the synoptic gospels. His account of first and second century literary conventions and the reception of gospel literature, however, cannot withstand scrutiny. The practice Larsen describes was not a conventional mode of authorship. And Larsen provides no

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<sup>168</sup> Larsen, *Gospels before the Book*, 83.

<sup>169</sup> Larsen, 83.

<sup>170</sup> Larsen, 83. Larsen consistently refers to this whole conception of sub-literary textual objects as *hypomnēmata*, in keeping with his wider proposal. Since, as I have demonstrated above, the application of this term to texts does not consistently designate such sub-literary objects, I spell out Larsen's conception of the term when paraphrasing his work instead of merely quoting Larsen's use of *hypomnēmata* as a shorthand.

compelling evidence that any reader understood any of the gospels as sub-literary unfinished notes.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

There is *another* synoptic problem. The conservative treatment of *Mark* evinced in *Matthew* and *Luke* does not comport with Hellenistic and Roman compositional practice. No contemporary Greek historian or biographer reproduces the wording and scope of their sources with a thoroughness that even resembles the reproduction of *Mark* by the authors of *Matthew* and *Luke*. What accounts for this radical difference between the compositional procedure of the synoptic gospels and the conventions of the literary culture in which they were embedded? New Testament scholarship, I argue throughout this chapter, has failed to offer a compelling answer.

## Chapter 3

### The Divine Art: Technical Literature, Independent Religious Experts, and the Synoptics

#### 3.1 Introduction

Alexander of Abonoteichus (105-170 CE) was a doctor. He inherited the medical practice of his teacher, an unnamed physician from Tyana (Lucian, *Alexander* 5).<sup>1</sup> Lucian of Samosata, a critic of Alexander, concedes that Alexander “prescribed therapies and diets, knowing (as I said in the beginning) also many useful drugs (22).”<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Lucian describes an ointment that Alexander himself formulated. There is every reason, therefore, to regard Alexander as a practitioner of ancient medicine. This is not, however, why Alexander is famous.

Alexander styled himself a prophet and a priest. These activities, not his medical practice, earned him the ire of Lucian.<sup>3</sup> According to Lucian, Alexander used ventriloquism to pronounce oracles with a puppet mounted on the body of a snake. Whatever we make of Lucian’s polemical portrait, archeological evidence suggests that the historical Alexander developed innovative ritual practices within a broader Asclepian tradition.<sup>4</sup>

Alexander also weighed into philosophical controversies. The doctor-turned-prophet aligned himself with the Pythagoreans (*Alexander* 4, 33) while claiming a philosophical

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<sup>1</sup> ὁ δ’ αὐτὸς ἐκεῖνος δημοσίᾳ μὲν ἰατρὸς δῆθεν ἦν [...]. AM Harmon, *Lucian. Anacharsis or Athletics. Menippus or The Descent into Hades. On Funerals. A Professor of Public Speaking. Alexander the False Prophet. Essays in Portraiture. Essays in Portraiture Defended. The Goddess of Surrye*, Loeb Classical Library 162 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925), 182.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander also taught medicine to other physicians (Lucian, *Alexander* 60). τοῖς δὲ θεραπείας προὔλεγεν καὶ διαίτας, εἰδώς, ὅπερ ἐν ἀρχῇ ἔφην, πολλὰ καὶ χρήσιμα φάρμακα. μάλιστα δὲ εὐδοκίμουν παρ’ αὐτῶ αἱ κυτμίδες, ἀκόπου τι ὄνομα πεπλασμένον, ἐκ λίπους ἀρκείου συντεθειμένου. Harmon, 204.

<sup>3</sup> This language is borrowed from Heidi Wendt. I discuss her work further below. Heidi Wendt, *At the Temple Gates: The Religion of Freelance Experts in the Roman Empire* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Adrian W Zorogniotti, “Alexander of Abonoteichus: False Priest of Asclepius,” *JAMA* 224, no. 1 (1973): 87–89; Florian Steger, “Der Neue Asklepios Glykon / The New Asklepios Glykon,” *Medizinhistorisches Journal* 40, no. 1 (2005): 3–18.

eclecticism (25). This eclecticism did not, however, extend to the Epicureans. Alexander reportedly burned Epicurean books (47) and raised crowds to harass Epicurean and, intriguingly, Christian opponents (25, 38).

In his person, therefore, Alexander combined technical —namely, pharmaceutical and medical— expertise with religious and philosophical teaching. Although Alexander seems to have been unusually successful at attracting followers, his integration of medicine with philosophy and theology is not exceptional. The synoptic-type gospels, this chapter argues, are evidence of a similar intersection of philosophical/religious innovation with the technical disciplines.

In chapter two, I set forward *another* synoptic problem. The synoptic gospels treat their primary source(s) with a conservatism unparalleled in contemporary historical or biographical literature. The authors of *Matthew* and *Luke* (and, later, Marcion and Tatian) preserve the wording and reproduce the scope of their primary source(s) with a fidelity unparalleled in the historical writings of their day. Scholars who set out to explain the composition of the synoptic gospels in terms of contemporary literary practices, I argued, fail to situate the evangelists' conservative treatment of source material in a historical context.

It is in the literature of the technical arts, this chapter argues, that the compositional behavior evinced in the synoptic gospels finds its closest analogy. Indeed, there is considerable evidence from the first and second century that the extensive reproduction of wording from written sources was a widely recognized mode of composition for technical literature. Both contemporary discussions and surviving examples of technical books attest this compositional conservatism. This *other* synoptic problem, therefore, finds its solution not among historians or

biographers but contemporary writings on medicine, military tactics, and other technical subjects.

Gospels are self-evidently *not* medical treatises or handbooks on military tactics. It is not my claim that synoptic-type gospels are themselves examples of technical literature. It will be necessary, therefore, to give some account of how the evangelists were influenced by the compositional conventions of technical writing in their use of written sources. Drawing on the scholarship of Heidi Wendt, I argue that the competitive and bookish culture of independent religious experts can explain why the literary conventions associated with technical literature influenced the production of synoptic-type gospels. Namely, the evangelists participated in a marketplace of therapies for the soul without rigid disciplinary boundaries.<sup>5</sup> Teachers of medicine, mathematics, and astrology saw each other as rivals, and Christianity was another school of doctrine and praxis competing for students and patronage. Christian teachers appropriated this compositional procedure from technical experts as a fitting way to demonstrate their mastery of an established discipline (i.e. Christian teaching) while simultaneously distinguishing themselves as teachers worthy of attention.

There is, as laid out below, direct evidence that the well-attested rivalry between Christian teachers and technical experts shaped gospel literature. The Lukan preface, in particular, closely resembles the prefatory material of technical literature. Justin Martyr, likewise, characterizes Christianity as a divine *technē* which, like other areas of expertise, must

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<sup>5</sup> A turn of phrase borrowed from Gianluca Del Mastro, “La scienza medica nei papiri ercolanesi,” in *Greek Medical Papyri*, ed. Nicola Reggiani (De Gruyter, 2019), 193. The anachronistic character of “disciplines” is also noted at Markus Asper, *Griechische Wissenschaftstexte : Formen, Funktionen, Differenzierungsgeschichten*, Philosophie der Antike 25 (Stuttgart: F. Steiner Verlag, 2007), 14.

be learned from books — namely, the gospels. Whether through conscious imitation or unconscious influence, the synoptic-type evangelists participated in the literary sub-culture of independent experts and teachers.

### 3.2 What is Technical Literature?

Alexander of Abonoteichus, according to Lucian, had an aptitude for study (4).<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, Lucian does not describe the miracle worker's medical education. If we assume that it was typical of first century physicians, Alexander's training probably involved the guided study of books on medical subjects.<sup>7</sup> Such medical treatises were the earliest and, often, paradigmatic examples of technical literature.

#### 3.2.1 Defining Technical Literature

The category “technical literature” is (to a certain extent) an analytic category. Markus Asper defines *Wissenschaftstexte* as “texts which, in the intention of their authors, are concerned to transmit *secure*, proportional, non-narrative knowledge [...] the contents of or validation methods for which are regarded, usually by a certain group, as a matter of consensus.”<sup>8</sup> That is,

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<sup>6</sup> [...] καὶ τό τε περίεργον καὶ εὐμαθὲς καὶ μνημονικὸν καὶ πρὸς τὰ μαθήματα εὐφυῆς [...] Harmon, *Lucian. Anacharsis or Athletics. Menippus or The Descent into Hades. On Funerals. A Professor of Public Speaking. Alexander the False Prophet. Essays in Portraiture. Essays in Portraiture Defended. The Goddess of Surrye*, 178.

<sup>7</sup> Lesley Dean-Jones, “Literacy and the Charlatan in Ancient Greek Medicine,” in *Written Texts and the Rise of Literate Culture in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 87–121; Ann Ellis Hanson, “Doctors’ Literacy and Papyri of Medical Content,” in *Hippocrates and Medical Education*, 2010, 18; Caroline Petit, “Hippocrates In The Pseudo-Galenic Introduction: Or How Was Medicine Taught In Roman Times?,” in *Hippocrates and Medical Education*, ed. Manfred Horstmanshoff (Boston: Brill, 2010), 343–59.

<sup>8</sup> „Als ‚Wissenschaftstexte‘ sollen hier Texte gellen, die in der Intention ihrer Autoren gesichertes, proportionalisierbares, nicht-narratives, d. h. keiner Zeitstruktur unterworfenen Wissen weiterzugeben bemüht sind, dessen Inhalt oder auch Validierungsweisen in der Regel einer bestimmten Gruppe als konsensfähig gelten.“ Asper, *Griechische Wissenschaftstexte*, 13. Emphasis is in the original.

technical books are those designed (or understood as designed) to convey generally applicable instruction regarding an established body of knowledge.<sup>9</sup>

Such books appear under diverse native designations. Instances of technical literature, according to Thorsten Fögen, were identified as εἰσαγωγή, συναγωγή, ἐγχειρίδιον, ὑπόμνημα, τέχνη, λόγος, πραγματεία, ἐπιτομή, διήγησις, and σύνοψις.<sup>10</sup> Likewise, the subject matter of books we deem “technical” includes everything from aqueducts to arteries, stars to syntax, and musical harmony to military horsemanship. Despite this diversity, historians have found that the category ‘technical literature’ picks out a cluster of phenomena related to each other in meaningful ways (outlined below).<sup>11</sup> And what more do we want from our words? A review of some family resemblances which constitute the category will acquaint the reader with the relevant corpora.

First and foremost, technical books typically concern those disciplines deemed “arts” (τέχναι) by ancient authors. Sextus Empiricus defines *technē* as “a system of organized understandings taken up for a purpose useful to life.”<sup>12</sup> In his Socratic *Memorabilia*, Xenophon (4<sup>th</sup> cent. BCE) adduces rhetoric (1.2), military arts (2.1, 4.2), painting (3.10), sculpture (3.10), couture (3.10), cooking (3.14), medicine (4.2), architecture (4.2), mathematics (4.2), astronomy (4.2), and rhapsody (4.2) as uncontroversial examples of *technai*. Strikingly, Xenophon already

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<sup>9</sup> Accepting this definition of technical literature does not imply that such “generally applicable [...] knowledge” is actually a coherent concept. Asper’s definition is explicitly an attempt to characterize the purport of technical authors.

<sup>10</sup> Thorsten Fögen, “Technical Literature,” in *A Companion to Greek Literature*, ed. Martin Hose and David Schenker, 1st edition (Chichester, West Sussex England; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 267.

<sup>11</sup> For two recent treatments of genre and technical literature, see Asper, *Griechische Wissenschaftstexte*, 18–23; Courtney Roby, *Technical Ekphrasis in Greek and Roman Science and Literature: The Written Machine between Alexandria and Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 26–42.

<sup>12</sup> Πᾶσα τοίνυν τέχνη σύστημά ἐστιν ἐκ καταλήψεων συγγεγυμνασμένων καὶ ἐπὶ τέλος εὔχρηστον τῷ βίῳ λαμβανουσῶν τὴν ἀναφορὰν· R. G. Bury, *Sextus Empiricus: Against the Professors*, Loeb 382 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1949), 194.

associated many of these arts with the study of books (*Memorabilia* 4.2). Plato's *Gorgias*, likewise, adduces music, medicine, astronomy, husbandry, arithmetic, geometry, generalship, painting, construction, and sculpture as uncontroversial *technai*. At the same time, this category was the site of some controversy. Plato's Socrates argues for the exclusion of rhetoric, while Xenophon's Socrates argues for the inclusion of statecraft. While the category's boundaries were contested, similar lists of *technai* by Philo of Alexandria (*Allegorical Interpretation* 1.17), Pliny the Elder (*Natural History* 7.37-39), Julius Pollux (*Onomasticon* 4.16), Galen of Pergamum (*On the Constitution of the Art of Medicine* 1; *Exhortation to Study the Arts* 5), and Philostratus of Athens (*Life of Apollonius* 8.7) show that the paradigmatic examples of *technai* were relatively stable across time.

There is, as Philippe Fleury observes, a "family of authors" who write books on the same technical subjects.<sup>13</sup> Philo of Byzantium (3<sup>rd</sup> BCE) wrote on mathematics, mechanics, military arts, and construction. Hipparchus (2<sup>nd</sup> BCE) wrote on mathematics, mechanics, astronomy, geography, and optics.<sup>14</sup> Posidonius (1<sup>st</sup> BCE) wrote on mathematics, military arts, astronomy, grammar, geography, divination, and other areas of natural science.<sup>15</sup> Hero of Alexandria (1<sup>st</sup> cent. CE) wrote on geometry, mechanics, military arts, geography, and optics. Claudius Ptolemy (2<sup>nd</sup> cent. CE) wrote on astronomy, astrology, music, geometry, geography, mechanics, and

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<sup>13</sup> Fleury does not list mathematics in her initial articulation of the point but treatises on mathematics and geography are found alongside the others in the bibliography of Philo of Byzantium, Heron of Alexandria and others. "Mais la notion de «famille de texte» nous paraît importante car elle correspond à une réalité antique. Il existe par exemple une famille regroupant les auteurs sur la construction, la mécanique et la tactique militaire." Philippe Fleury, "Les Textes Techniques de l'Antiquité. Sources, Études et Perspectives," *Euphrosyne: Revista de Filologia* 18 (1990): 359–94.

<sup>14</sup> G. J. Toomer and Alexander Jones, "Hipparchus," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> I Edelstein and IG Kidd, *Posidonius. Volume I. The Fragments.*, Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries 13 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

optics.<sup>16</sup> No author wrote on all the standard *technai*, and many technical authors also wrote non-technical books. The writings of these authors on technical subjects, nevertheless, represent an array of intersecting literary traditions that constitute the fuzzy but useful category of ‘technical literature.’<sup>17</sup>

Second, many of the books designated ‘technical’ share stylistic features. “Certain types of textual objects” according to Courtney Roby, are more common in technical literature than other kinds of books.<sup>18</sup> These include directive verb forms, claims about standards of demonstration, and informational tables. Technical authors, Thorsten Fögen observes, emphasize “clarity” (*σαφήνεια/perspicuitas*) in their meta-linguistic reflections.<sup>19</sup> Likewise, “simplicity” and “brevity” are often held up as virtues in technical writing.<sup>20</sup> These aspirations, says Fögen, reflect the “pedagogical background” of the books we deem ‘technical.’<sup>21</sup> Instructional texts place a premium on accessibility. These authors, of course, achieved such clarity, brevity, and simplicity with different degrees of success.<sup>22</sup> Some, like Vitruvius (discussed below), even strove to distance themselves from the plain language that characterized previous treatments of their

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<sup>16</sup> F. E. Robbins, *Ptolemy. Tetrabiblos*, Loeb Classical Library 435 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940), ix–x.

<sup>17</sup> I use “literary tradition” here to refer to a genetically related series of books with significant overlapping content. Grammatical and medical literature have relatively independent literary traditions. At the same time, Archimedes of Tralles (2<sup>nd</sup> BCE), Asclepiades of Myrlea (2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> BCE), Didymus Chalcenterus (1<sup>st</sup> BCE), and Marcus Terentius Varro (1<sup>st</sup> BCE), and Posidonius wrote books on grammar and other technical subjects. Likewise, Nicander of Colophon (2<sup>nd</sup> BCE), Aulus Cornelius Celsus (1<sup>st</sup> CE), Soranus of Ephesus (1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>CE), and Galen wrote medical treatises as well as books on other technical subjects.

<sup>18</sup> Roby, *Technical Ekphrasis in Greek and Roman Science and Literature*, 38.

<sup>19</sup> Thorsten Fögen, *Wissen, Kommunikation und Selbstdarstellung: Zur Struktur und Charakteristik römischer Fachtexte der frühen Kaiserzeit*, Zetemata 134 (Munich, Germany: C. H. Beck, 2009), 28.

<sup>20</sup> Fögen, 30–31.

<sup>21</sup> Fögen, 28.

<sup>22</sup> Fögen, 33–34.

technical subject matter. Technical literature, thus, is far from homogenous. Nevertheless, as noted by Roby and Fögen, these books share stylistic tendencies.<sup>23</sup>

Likewise, Fögen notes that technical books employ technical vocabularies that are distinct from “literary language.”<sup>24</sup> Ancient readers noted that discipline-specific terminology and idiosyncratic uses of ordinary words were typical features of technical literature. Different authors, of course, had different measures of success in explicating the terminology of their discipline. Some promise to define their idiosyncratic vocabularies, while others claim to use clearer language than their predecessors. It was, nevertheless, already in antiquity recognized as characteristic of books that we call ‘technical’ to employ a discipline-specific vocabulary.

Third, Loveday Alexander demonstrated that (what she calls) “scientific books” have highly conventional —bordering on formulaic— prefaces.<sup>25</sup> This is not to say that all or, even, most technical literature contains a preface.<sup>26</sup> Rather, the prefaces that do appear across medical, mechanical, and military literature are strikingly similar and distinct from other literary prefaces. This is strong evidence that the production of the kinds of books that we deem ‘technical’ was governed by shared literary conventions. We will return to Alexander’s study below in connection with the Lukan preface.

Technical literature, therefore, is an analytic category that picks out books dedicated to the instruction of some *technē*, sharing certain stylistic, linguistic, and other literary tendencies.

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<sup>23</sup> Fögen, 32.

<sup>24</sup> Thorsten Fögen, “Metasprachliche Reflexionen antiker Autoren zu den Charakteristika von Fachtexten und Fachsprachen,” in *Antike Fachschriftsteller: Literarischer Diskurs und sozialer Kontext* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2003), 31–60; Fögen, *Wissen, Kommunikation und Selbstdarstellung*, 34–48.

<sup>25</sup> Loveday Alexander, *The Preface to Luke’s Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1–4 and Acts 1.1*, Society for New Testament Studies 78 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

<sup>26</sup> Alexander, 42–46.

We will consider below books on medicine, mechanics, and military tactics for evidence of additional conventions particular to technical literature. The argument of the present chapter does not presuppose homogeneity or any kind of generic essentialism for technical literature. Rather, I am outlining family resemblances that constituted a literary sub-culture in the first and second centuries of the common era.

### 3.2.2 A Note on Terminology

The modern category of ‘technical literature’ itself goes under a variety of names in anglophone scholarship. Alexander, for instance, prefers the adjective “scientific” as an equivalent of the German *Wissenschaftlich*.<sup>27</sup> Asper defines this “science” (as used in the category *Wissenschaftstexte*) as both the “knowledge which can be stated in general propositions and is understood by a certain group as consensus-established facts” and the “knowledge-oriented practices of this group.”<sup>28</sup> The adjective ‘scientific’ captures the systematic representation of established knowledge and practice that is characteristic of technical literature. It is, however, potentially misleading, given the conventional restriction of this term to the natural sciences in 21<sup>st</sup> century English. There is some overlap between technical literature and the natural sciences (e.g. medicine, astronomy) but not all writings concerned with natural science belong to technical literature and not all technical literature concerned the natural sciences.

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<sup>27</sup> Alexander, 21.

<sup>28</sup> „Unter dem für Anachronismen anfälligen Begriff ‚Wissenschaft‘ verstehe ich einerseits Wissen, das in allgemeine Sätze gefaßt werden kann und einer bestimmten Gruppe als konsensfähiger Faktenbestand gilt, andererseits die wissensorientierten Praktiken dieser Gruppe.“ Asper, *Griechische Wissenschaftstexte*, 11.

Aude Doody, Sabine Föllinger, and Liba Taub give “specialist literature” as an alternative to “technical.”<sup>29</sup> This, indeed, captures something significant about the texts under discussion. Perhaps better than any of the alternatives, the adjective ‘specialist’ acknowledges the broad spectrum of subject matters belonging to the category. Additionally, ‘specialist’ suggests the functional constitution of this category.<sup>30</sup> By this, I mean that technical literature is, in part, defined by a (at least, putatively) pedagogical purpose. The modifier ‘specialist’ evokes images of a student seeking specific information or training. The disadvantage of the term, however, is the connotation of esotericism or advanced learning. Some technical literature was, indeed, directed toward advanced practitioners or theorizers of a discipline but primers, study aides, and other introductory materials are also common.

In the end, I prefer the adjective ‘technical.’ It is cognate with the native designation of the relevant disciplines as *technai*. Moreover, the title evokes both the specialized knowledge and the concern with technique that characterizes this literature. Lastly, ‘technical’ has the advantage of relative popularity in contemporary anglophone scholarship.

Finally, the noun ‘literature’ has a contentious history. It has long served as a normative category, referring to texts with a certain cultural capital or reception history. Some scholars, therefore, prefer to speak of technical ‘writing’ or ‘texts.’ This, I think, is an unnecessary capitulation to classicist prejudices.<sup>31</sup> Since my project is not concerned with the aesthetic

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<sup>29</sup> Aude Doody, Sabine Föllinger, and Liba Taub, “Structures and Strategies in Ancient Greek and Roman Technical Writing: An Introduction,” *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, Structures and Strategies in Ancient Greek and Roman Technical Writing, 43, no. 2 (June 1, 2012): 233–36.

<sup>30</sup> This is a widely accepted characteristic of technical literature. Asper, *Griechische Wissenschaftstexte*, 13–23.

<sup>31</sup> I would urge scholars who argue that gospels should not be treated as “literature” since they fall short of the stylistic expectations espoused by super-elite 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century literary criticism to reconsider whose aesthetic judgements they are allowing to dictate our historical descriptions.

judgements of first or twenty-first century readers, I use the term ‘literature’ as a descriptive category for all manner of written products of communicative acts. In stipulating this non-normative use of ‘literature,’ I follow the lead of many scholars of technical literature — including Aude Doody, Sabine Föllinger, and Liba Taub.<sup>32</sup>

### **3.3 Compositional Conservatism in Technical Literature**

The compositional conservatism of the synoptic-type gospels (see chapter 2) finds its closest analogies in technical literature. This convention of conservatism is (1) reflected in the prefatory remarks of technical authors, (2) attested in contemporary reflections on technical literature, and (3) evinced in extant technical literary traditions. These three classes of primary data provide considerable evidence that a mode of re-writing which involved the reproduction of structure and content as well as wording was, indeed, conventional in this literary subculture. That is, reproducing the very language of one’s primary source was recognized as a legitimate mode of composition for technical literature in the first and second century. I review these three classes of evidence in turn.

As noted above, technical literature is far from homogenous. Many technical authors produced original compositions. Others are profoundly indebted to their literary predecessors. It is emphatically not my claim that the compositional conservatism outlined below characterizes all technical literature. The treatment of source material in this literature is significant, rather, for its singularity in contemporary literary culture. My point is not that *all* technical books are written this way, but that (other than gospels) *only* technical books are.

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<sup>32</sup> Doody, Föllinger, and Taub, “Structures and Strategies in Ancient Greek and Roman Technical Writing,” 233–34.

### 3.3.1 Galen of Pergamum

Alexander's most famous medical colleague, Galen of Pergamum (129-216 CE), provides a clear description of the distinctively conservative compositional procedure reflected in some first and second century technical literature. As discussed in chapter one, Galen uses *hypothesis* language throughout his corpus to refer to subject matter and content shared across multiple works, by different authors (e.g. *On Hippocrates Surgery* 1.1). In his *On Hippocrates' Regimen in Acute Diseases*,<sup>33</sup> Galen describes how some such books are composed.

“A second book written in the place of an older book is said to be ‘re-prepared’ (ἐπιδιασκευάσθαι) when they have the same *hypothesis* and most of the words — some of these [words] removed from the former composition, some added, and some subtly changed” (1.4).<sup>33</sup>

Thus, Galen explains that the Hippocratic verb ἐπιδιασκευάσθαι refers to a particular compositional procedure. In this mode of re-writing, according to Galen, the author of a new work preserves most of the words from their literary source while omitting, adding, and altering material as they see fit.

The compositional procedure described by Galen entailed reproducing most of the wording from one's *Hauptquelle*. As argued in chapter two, this is a conservatism unparalleled in contemporary historical writing. At the same time, Galen describes a work of authorial creativity. This compositional behavior is not the correction of a text toward some real or imagined original/authorial text. It entails more than the addition of a preface or conclusion. The act of composition is, rather, a thoroughgoing re-writing with a distinctive conservatism. More than

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<sup>33</sup> Ἐπιδιασκευάσθαι λέγεται βιβλίον ἐπὶ τῷ προτέρῳ γεγραμμένῳ τὸ δεύτερον γραφέν, ὅταν τὴν ὑπόθεσιν ἔχον τὴν αὐτὴν καὶ τὰς πλείστας τῶν ῥήσεων τὰς αὐτὰς τινὰ μὲν ἀφηρημένα τῶν ἐκ τοῦ προτέρου συγγράμματος ἔχη, τινὰ δὲ προσκείμενα, τινὰ δ' ὑπὸ ἀλλαγμένα· Antoine Pietrobelli, ed., *Galien, Oeuvres: Tome IX, Ire Partie: Commentaire Au Regime Des Maladies Aigues d'Hippocrate: Livre I*, 1st edition (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019), 8.

any other Hellenistic or Roman description of source usage, Galen's explanation of the Hippocratic verb, ἐπιδιασκευάζω, is an apt description of *Mark's* treatment at the hands of subsequent synoptic-type evangelists.

The verb ἐπιδιασκευάζω, however, occurs nowhere else in Greek literature. And Galen feels the need to define it.<sup>34</sup> It is probably not, therefore, a technical term for a certain mode of composition (as Galen seems to suggest). The passage is significant, rather, for Galen's description of a distinctly conservative compositional practice. This second century Greek medical author describes a particular mode of re-writing that explains an unfamiliar word which he encountered in medical literature.<sup>35</sup> The present argument does not require any particular interpretation of what the Hippocratic author meant by ἐπιδιασκευάζω. It is meaningful, rather, that Galen interpreted the unique verb as a reference to a distinctively conservative mode of re-writing. As we will see, Galen's account stands alongside other descriptions of conservatism in

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<sup>34</sup> Beyond his explicit exegesis, it is not clear how Galen would have understood this Hippocratic *hapax*. The verb ἐπιδιασκευάζω is derived from σκευάζω, meaning "to prepare." Galen's exposition suggests that he understood the adpositional preverb ἐπι- to be iterative, not unlike the English "re-." How, then, does Galen understand that action which is to be repeated? In his two examples of this verbal action (as discussed in chapter two), Galen glosses ἐπιδιασκευάζω with διασκευάζω and ἐκδίδωμι. The former is often reserved for editorial activities — including different kinds of compilation (*On Hippocrates' On the Nature of Humanity* 10; *On Hippocrates and Plato* 8.2.12), interpolation (*On Hippocrates and Plato* 6.3.27, 30), and revision (*On Hippocrates and Plato* 6.6.5). At the same time, Galen uses this same verb to describe Pindar's composition of epic poetry (*An Exhortation to the Study of the Arts* 13) and, apparently, the composition of an original medical work wrongly attributed to Hippocrates (*On Hippocrates' On the Nature of Humanity* 109). The second verb, ἐκδίδωμι, is a common term for publication of all kinds of literature. It is probably a mistake, therefore, to look to the inherited Hippocratic term for much information about Galen's conception of this conservative compositional behavior. It is, in any case, the compositional practice invoked by Galen to explain ἐπιδιασκευάζω that is meaningful for my argument.

<sup>35</sup> Galen's choice of two plays by the Athenian playwright Eupolis probably reflects his program to elevate the literary and intellectual status of the art of medicine. In any case, the pairing of this example with the *Cnidian Sentences* suggests that the choice of two versions of a work by the same author was *not* significant for Galen's understanding of the compositional behavior he describes. In the logic of Hippocrates' argument and Galen's own interpretation, the different works circulating as *Cnidian Sentences* were authored by different people. Moreover — given that Athenian dramas were "published" as a performance — Eupolis' second *Autolycus* was probably not merely a second edition of the same work but a separate, second play, performed on the same dramatic *hypothesis*.

the composition of technical literature. Together these provide clear evidence of a convention of extremely conservative re-writing in the sub-culture of technical literature.

### 3.3.2 Hero of Alexandria

Hero of Alexandria was a late first century CE polymath. He wrote technical treatises on all manner of subjects, including mechanics, mathematics, optics, and military technology. In composing many of these treatises, Hero self-consciously participated in a tradition of technical writing that traced its origins back to Ctesibius of Alexandria (3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE). Hero, as we shall see, was heavily dependent on the writings of Ctesibius as well as Ctesibius' successors. Although Hero does not describe his compositional procedure with the degree of detail found in Galen, the prefaces to his technical works reflect a convention of conservative re-writing similar to that described by Galen.

The study of pneumatics, according to Vitruvius, began with Ctesibius (*On Architecture* 9.8.2). Unfortunately, we do not have Ctesibius' work to compare with Hero's *Pneumatics*. Vitruvius does, however, offer his own description of several pneumatic devices invented by Ctesibius. These descriptions, A.G. Drachmann observes, bear a striking resemblance to Hero's account of the same.<sup>36</sup> Hero supplemented Ctesibius' *hypomnemata* with Philo of Byzantium's treatise on the same subject. Hero's *Pneumatics* reproduces (with modifications) about 20% of Philo's treatise but more precise comparison is not possible since Philo's work survives only in a revised and heavily interpolated Arabic translation.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Even though Vitruvius is summarizing, not copying, Ctesibus' work, there are several terminological agreements between Hero's *Pneumatica* and Vitruvius' description of Ctesibus' book. Aage Gerhardt Drachmann, *Ktesibios, Philon and Heron, a Study in Ancient Pneumatics.*, Acta Historica Scientiarum Naturalium et Medicinalium ; v. 4 (Copenhagen: E. Munksgaard, 1948), 4–5, 7, 12.

<sup>37</sup> Drachmann, 100–102, 126.

In the preface to his *Pneumatics*, Hero offers a brief description of his own compositional method.

Since the matter of pneumatics was judged worthy of attention to the ancient philosopher and mechanists [...] we decided to arrange into order (εἰς τάξιν ἀγαγεῖν) what was handed down by the ancients, and also to insert (εἰσθέσθαι) what we have discovered. For thus it will help those who wish to concern themselves with these things in their studies (1.Proem).<sup>38</sup>

Thus, Hero describes his authorial labor as the arrangement and supplementation of received material. The modesty of Hero’s claim to “insert” (εἰσθέσθαι) original material reflects his conservatism.<sup>39</sup> This picture of Hero’s method can be clarified by comparing his *Pneumatica* with the two prefaces from his *Automata*.

Hero’s *Automata* is a work in two parts: The first, titled simply “*On Automata*” (περὶ αὐτομάτων), concerns “mobile” (ὑπάγοντα) mechanisms.<sup>40</sup> In the preface to this first book, Hero says that his subject, “automaton-making” (αὐτοματοποιητική), has been deemed worthy of consideration by his predecessors but —unlike the preface to the *Pneumatics*— Hero does not describe himself as dependent on received material (1.1).<sup>41</sup> He does not purport to re-arrange and update his sources. Instead, Hero claims that the content of the first book of his *Automata* is “our own” (κατὰ γε ἡμᾶς) (1.8). Hero rejects the designs of his predecessors as aesthetically deficient

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<sup>38</sup> Τῆς πνευματικῆς πραγματείας σπουδῆς ἡξιωμένης πρὸς τῶν παλαιῶν φιλοσόφων τε καὶ μηχανικῶν, τῶν μὲν λογικῶς τὴν δύναμιν αὐτῆς ἀποδεδωκότων, τῶν δὲ καὶ δι’ αὐτῆς τῆς τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἐνεργείας, ἀναγκαῖον ὑπάρχειν νομίζομεν καὶ αὐτοὶ τὰ παραδοθέντα ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχαίων εἰς τάξιν ἀγαγεῖν, καὶ ἃ ἡμεῖς δὲ προσεuerήκαμεν εἰσθέσθαι· οὕτως γὰρ τοὺς μετὰ ταῦτα ἐν τοῖς μαθήμασιν ἀναστρέφεσθαι βουλομένους ὠφελεῖσθαι συμβήσεται. Wilhelm Schmidt, *Heron von Alexandria Druckwerke und Automatentheater* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1899), 2.

<sup>39</sup> See the discussion in Drachmann, *Ktesibios, Philon and Heron, a Study in Ancient Pneumatics.*, 80–84.

<sup>40</sup> Francesco Grillo, “Heron of Alexandria’s *Automata*: A Critical Edition and Translation, Including a Commentary on Book One.” (Ph.D., Glasgow, University of Glasgow, 2019), lxiv–lxx.

<sup>41</sup> Text from Grillo, 2.

(2.12) or difficult, dangerous, and uninteresting (20.1). Accordingly, Hero seems to have composed with relative freedom in the first book of his *Automata*.<sup>42</sup>

In contrast, the second half of Hero's *Automata* is a thoroughgoing but conservative re-write of Philo of Byzantium's lost treatise on the same *hypothesis*. The second book of Hero's *Automata* has its own title: "On Stationary Automata" (περὶ στατῶν αὐτομάτων). This title, argues Grillo, is probably derived from Philo's work.<sup>43</sup> Two lines of evidence persuade Richard Schöne and Francesco Grillo that the "main part of the [second] book was derived *verbatim* from Philo."<sup>44</sup> First, there is a shift in style from Hero's impersonal, third-person imperative instructions in the first book to the first-person singular present, future, and aorist descriptions in the second book. This is important because the former is typical of Hero while the latter is typical of Philo's extant works.<sup>45</sup> Second, Hero opens the second book by outlining two improvements that he intends to make to Philo's *Automata* (20.2-4, 21.2). The modesty of this claim differs markedly from the claim to originality in the first book of the *Automata* but closely resembles his claim in the *Pneumatics* to "introduce" his own discoveries into received material. It is all the more striking, then, that Hero's two proposed improvements on Philo are not carried out consistently. Rather, Hero lapses back into Philo's descriptions — instances of "editorial fatigue."<sup>46</sup> Hero, it seems, preserved the wording of his primary source with such fidelity that he

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<sup>42</sup> Francesco Grillo detects Hero's reliance on tradition in some of the treatise's redundancies but, unlike the *Pneumatics*, there is no reason to suspect a thoroughgoing re-writing of a written source as the basis of the first book of Hero's *Automata*. Grillo, cviii–cxvi.

<sup>43</sup> Grillo, lxx–lxxi.

<sup>44</sup> R. Schöne, "Zu Hyginus und Hero," *Jahrbuch des Kaiserlich Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 5 (January 1, 1890): 77; Grillo, "Hero of Alexandria's *Automata*: A Critical Edition and Translation, Including a Commentary on Book One.," cvii–cviii.

<sup>45</sup> Grillo, "Hero of Alexandria's *Automata*: A Critical Edition and Translation, Including a Commentary on Book One.," civ.

<sup>46</sup> Mark Goodacre, "Fatigue in the Synoptics," *New Testament Studies* 44, no. 1 (1998): 45–58.

not only took over Philo’s distinctive style but accidentally preserved features of Philo’s design that he had planned to suppress.

It is worth considering how Hero’s description of this conservatism differs from the preface to the relatively original first book of his *Automata*. The second book of the *Automata* begins as follows.

“I wish to write something newer on the stationary automata; and I have found that of those books written before us there is nothing more appropriate for the purposes of instruction than Philo of Byzantium’s (20.1).”<sup>47</sup>

Hero, thus, begins his conservative second book by identifying Philo’s work on stationary automata as especially useful for teaching. In the next sections, Hero outlines two places where he plans to improve upon Philo’s design — as already discussed (20.2-3). The preface, then, concludes with a reflection on the arrangement of Hero’s second book.

“Concerning the rest of what happens part-by-part in the arrangement of the Nauplius [automaton], we are happy with the way it was written by him [i.e. Philo] as regards sequence and arrangement. For this reason, we do not reject what has been written by him about which we speak. For in this way we believe that those who encounter [this book] gain the greatest utility, when the things said well by the ancients are set forward to them and the things overlooked or being corrected are included (20.5).”<sup>48</sup>

This programmatic description of the *Automata*’s second book helps clarify Hero’s description of his own method in the preface to his *Pneumatics*. Unlike the preface to the first book of *Automata*, Hero’s *Pneumatics* and the second book both describe themselves as presentations of traditional material with corrections and additions. For the *Automata*, Hero explicitly flags his

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<sup>47</sup> περι δὲ τῶν στατῶν αὐτομάτων βουλόμεθα γράφειν καινότερόν τι· καὶ βέλτιον τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν ἅμα καὶ πρὸς διδασκαλίαν <μᾶλλον> ἀρμόζον οὐδὲν εὔρομεν τῶν ὑπὸ Φίλωνος τοῦ Βυζαντίου ἀναγεγραμμένων. Grillo, “Hero of Alexandria’s Automata: A Critical Edition and Translation, Including a Commentary on Book One.,” 64.

<sup>48</sup> περι δὲ τῶν λοιπῶν τῶν ἐν τῇ διαθέσει τοῦ Ναυπλίου κατὰ μέρος γινομένων εὐαρεστούμεθα ὡς ἐν τάξει καὶ εὐμεθόδως ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ ἀναγεγραμμένων. διὸ δὴ οὐ παρητησάμεθα τὰ ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ περὶ ὧν εἵπομεν γεγραμμένα· οὕτως γὰρ νομίζομεν τοὺς ἐντυγχάνοντας τῆς μεγίστης ὠφελείας τυγχάνειν, ὅταν τὰ μὲν καλῶς ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχαίων εἰρημένα παρατιθῆται αὐτοῖς, τὰ δὲ παραθεωρηθέντα ἢ διορθώσεως τυχόντα καταχωρίζεται. Grillo, 66–68.

*Hauptquelle* as Philo's *On Automata Making*. For the *Pneumatics*, this was probably Cteisbus' *Hypomnema* (see Vitruvius, *On Architecture* 9.8.2) supplemented by the relevant book from Philo.

Hero's prefaces, therefore, offer corroborating evidence for Galen's description of a conventional mode of writing that involved the extensive reproduction of a source's wording. In stark contrast to the attitudes toward plagiarism outline chapter two, Hero and Galen reveal that such conservative re-writing—including *verbatim* copying—was acceptable in the literary sub-culture of technical authors. Although Hero's descriptions cannot be checked against surviving copies of his sources, the *Ars Tactica* tradition discussed below demonstrates that the mode of composition described by Galen and Hero was, indeed, part of technical literary culture.

### 3.3.3 Vitruvius

Almost nothing is known about the life of Vitruvius, a first century BCE author. His *On Architecture*, according to Ingrid D. Rowland and Thomas Howe, is a generic hybrid: “a technical handbook with literary ambitions.”<sup>49</sup> Its subject is architecture, a topic typically treated in technical literature. But its prosaic descriptions are laced with rhetorical flourish and literary allusion. Indeed, Vitruvius' high ambitions for his hybrid project are explicit. As we will see, Vitruvius draws a contrast between how literary sources are treated in the classics of Greek literature with what is typical of technical books. His point, of course, is to align his own work with the former against the latter. Without access to Vitruvius' sources, we do not know the truth

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<sup>49</sup> Ingrid D. Rowland and Thomas Howe, *Vitruvius: Ten Books on Architecture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1.

of the matter. This self-aggrandizing maneuver, however, provides a description of the compositional conventions that distinguish technical writing from other kinds of literature.

Vitruvius begins the seventh book of *On Architecture* by praising historians and philosophers for passing on their knowledge in writing (7.Preface.1-2). Thereafter comes an extended critique of plagiarism (7.Preface.3-7) and a brief anecdote about the impudence of criticizing one's literary forebearers (7.Preface.8-9). He refers to the works of Plato, Xenophon, and Herodotus as well as the scholarship of the famous librarians at Pergamum and Alexandria. Then, with the following sentence, Vitruvius shifts to a description of his own work and the many technical authors from which he drew (7.Preface.10-18).

Certainly I, Caesar, do not publish this work by inserting my name in the heading of other people's works nor supposing that I might establish respectability by disparaging the work of anyone (7.Preface.10).<sup>50</sup>

Vitruvius, thus, denies participating in two behaviors that are common in technical literature. Indeed, as we have seen already from Hero and Galen, these two behaviors are correlated. Galen says the *Cnidian Sentences* were “re-prepared” (ἐπιδικεκέυασθαι) to displace an inferior predecessor (*HVA* 1.4). Likewise, Hero claimed to improve upon the writings of Cteisibus and Philo in his conservative re-writing of their books. Examples could be multiplied.<sup>51</sup> The very location of Vitruvius' self-representation —at the transition between discussions of Hellenistic scholarship on Homer and the long catalog of technical authors upon which Vitruvius himself

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<sup>50</sup> *ego vero, Caesar, neque alienis indicibus mutatis interposito nomine meo id profero corpus neque ullius cogitata vituperans institui ex eo me adprobare [...].* Fritz Krohn, *Vitruvii de Architectura Libri Decem* (Boston; Berlin: De Gruyter, Inc., 1912), 146.

<sup>51</sup> For example, Thessalus, *De Virtutibus Herbarum* 1; Hero of Alexandria, *Automata* 2.12; Aelius Tactica, *Ars Tactica* Preface.

drew— suggests that Vitruvius was aligning himself with the conventions of literary classics against the technical authors who wrote on the subject of architecture before him.

Vitruvius, therefore, provides further evidence that the literary convention described by Galen and reflected in the prefaces of Hero was well-known around the turn of the millennium. Indeed, Vitruvius shows that the practice of reproducing the wording of one's source was so closely associated with technical books that he was compelled to repudiate it. Vitruvius, who aspired to be counted alongside Herodotus and Plato, looks down upon the compositional techniques of the relatively obscure technical writers before him.<sup>52</sup>

### 3.3.4 Pliny the Elder

Pliny the Elder (1<sup>st</sup> CE) was not an author of technical treatises but a historian, biographer, and philosopher.<sup>53</sup> He enjoyed the favor of successive emperors and, as much as any first century author, belonged to the elite of Roman society. Pliny's literary output belongs to the *Hochliteratur* of first century Rome. At the same time, his *Natural History* (like Vitruvius' *On Architecture*) entered the disciplinary domains of contemporary technical literature. Pliny lists Greek doctors, astronomers, geographers, mathematicians, and grammarians among the authorities consulted in writing his *Natural History*. Pliny's disapproving account of the conservatism of first century technical literature emerges from an encounter between these two literary sub-cultures.

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<sup>52</sup> Even so, Vitruvius is not consistent on this point. See the following description of his method: *quorum secutus ingressus in hoc libro perscripsi quae satis esse putavi de aquae varietatibus quo facilius ex his praescriptionibus eligant homines aquae fontes, e quibus ad usum salientes possint ad civitates municipiaque perducere* (8.3.27). Krohn, *Vitruvii de Architectura Libri Decem*, 188.

<sup>53</sup> On the relationship between Pliny's *Natural History* and technical/practical literature, see Mary Beagon, *Roman Nature: The Thought of Pliny the Elder*, 1st edition (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 1992), 5–14.

You will have as a demonstration of my [literary] taste that these volumes are prefaced with the names of authorities. It is, indeed, courteous —so I think— and full of noble modesty to indicate those by whom you were helped and not to behave as did most of those whom I considered. Indeed, you must know that while comparing authorities I discovered that older works were transcribed word for word without acknowledgement by the most serious and most recent authors. (*Natural History*, Preface 21-22)<sup>54</sup>

Pliny's reference to "comparing authorities" for his natural history reveals that Pliny is, here, describing scientific and technical treatises. Their authors, according to Pliny, copied *verbatim* from their own predecessors. Pliny distinguishes this copying from the kind of *imitatio* and literary homage practiced by literary elites, like Virgil, Plato, or Cicero (23). The subsequent discussion, rather, indicates that Pliny has in mind treatises on subjects like sculpture, military tactics, and the natural sciences. In keeping with the proprietary conceptions of literature attested throughout contemporary literary culture (as outlined in chapter two), Pliny considers this practice of reproducing the wording of one's source without attribution (*ad verbum neque nominatos*) to be "theft" (*furtum*) (Preface 23). Pliny, therefore, provides an outsider's perspective on the conservative compositional conventions that characterized technical literature. Pliny acknowledges that such conservatism is characteristic of technical literature but, unlike Galen and Hero (both technical authors themselves), does not approve.

There is, of course, no sense in asking who was right and who was wrong. We see in Vitruvius and Pliny an encounter between two literary sub-cultures with different norms and conventions. Hero and Pliny have different notions of what is acceptable. All agree, however, that this kind of conservative re-writing was common in technical literature.

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<sup>54</sup> *argumentum huius stomachi mei habebis quod his voluminibus auctorum nomina praetexui. est enim benignum (ut arbitror) et plenum ingenii pudoris fateri per quos profeceris, non ut plerique ex his quos attigi fecerunt. scito enim conferentem auctores me deprehendisse a iuratissimis et proximis veteres transcriptos ad verbum neque nominatos.* H. Rackham, *Pliny. Natural History, Volume I: Books 1-2.*, Loeb Classical Library 330 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938), 14.

### 3.35 Aelian and Arrian's *Tactica*

The kinds of evidence considered thus far are testimonia to a convention of conservative re-writing in Greek technical literature. Such testimonia are important for the present argument to show that this method of re-writing explicitly recognized as a literary convention which contemporary authors could consciously participate in or imitate. Hero is not just an author who got away with plagiarism but, rather, describes his treatment of Ctesibus and Philo in considerable detail. Further examples could be provided from the prefaces to technical books (e.g. Aelian, *Tactical Theory* Preface) or the testimony of other authors drawing upon technical books (e.g. Artemidorus *Oneirocritica* 1.Preface.2; Porphyry *Commentary on Ptolemy's Harmonica* 1.Pref.5; Dioscorides Pedanius *On Medical Material*, Preface).

It is important, however, to move beyond these discussions of technical literature to consider concrete examples of the practice. This conservatism, it should be demonstrated, is not merely a literary motif or misrepresentation of some other textual phenomena. As we have already seen in our consideration of the *Cnidian Sentences* and the works of Hero, the surviving evidence makes it difficult to test descriptions of an author's working methods against the texts themselves. Whether due to the accidents of history or the redundancy of preserving books on the same subjects, few technical works survive alongside their primary source(s). Thankfully, there are exceptions: The technical literature on military tactics furnishes direct evidence of the kind of comprehensive and conservative re-writing described above.

Technical treatises on military tactics, called *Tactica*, survive from Asclepiodotus (1st cent. BCE), Aelian (1st cent. CE), and Arrian (2nd cent. CE).<sup>55</sup> All three draw upon a lost source,

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<sup>55</sup> There are additional treatises surviving from the Byzantine, Medieval, and Renaissance eras.

either Posidonius' *Ars Tactica* or Polybius' book on the same subject.<sup>56</sup> Although there is significant overlap in structure, content, and wording between all three-surviving works, the relationship between Aelian and Arrian's tactical treatises is particularly close. Indeed, Aelian's and Arrian's books are so similar that their first modern editor, Hermann Köchly, considered them two recensions of the same work and helpfully printed them in a synopsis.<sup>57</sup> They are, however, discrete works by distinct authors with recognizable styles and interests.<sup>58</sup>

The verbatim agreement between the tactical books of Aelian and Arrian can be illustrated by selecting passages from Köchly's synopsis almost at random. Consider the following pericope-length account of a military maneuver, called "file-joining" (συλλοχισμός).

Aelian, *Tactical Theory* 6<sup>59</sup>

Arrian, *Tactical Art* 7-8

συλλοχισμός δέ ἐστίν, ὅταν τῷ πρώτῳ λόχῳ ἕτερος παρατεθῆ, τῷ μὲν οὖν τοῦ πρώτου στίχου λοχαγῷ ὁ λοχαγὸς τοῦ δευτέρου στίχου, τῷ δὲ ὀπισθεν ἐπιστάτῃ τοῦ πρώτου λοχαγοῦ ὁ τοῦ δευτέρου λοχαγοῦ ἐπιστάτης, καὶ κατὰ τὸ ἐξῆς. παραστάτης δὲ καλεῖται πᾶς ὁ ζυγῶν, οἷον· τῷ τοῦ πρώτου λόχου λοχαγῷ ὁ τοῦ δευτέρου λόχου λοχαγός, καὶ ὁμοίως τῷ τοῦ πρώτου λοχαγοῦ ἐπιστάτῃ ὁ

συλλοχισμός δ' ἐστὶν παράθεσις λόχου ἐτέρῳ λόχῳ. γίννεται δὲ εἰ τῷ τοῦ πρώτου στίχου λοχαγῷ ὁ τοῦ δευτέρου λοχαγὸς ἐπισταθείη, τῷ δὲ τούτου ἐπιστάτῃ ὁ τοῦ δευτέρου λοχαγοῦ ἐπιστάτης, καὶ ἐφεξῆς οὕτως. παραστάτης δὲ πᾶς ὁ συζυγῶν ὀνομάζεται, λοχαγὸς μὲν ὁ πρώτος τῷ δευτέρῳ λοχαγῷ,

<sup>56</sup> Richard Förster argues that Arrian used Aelian directly and Aelian, in turn, relied on Asclepiodotus. This view, however, has fallen out of favor. Alphonse Dain and Philip A. Stadter argue that all three works draw upon Posidonius (and a mediating source) independently. Most recently, AM Devine argues that Polybius, rather than Posidonius, is the common source. On any of these accounts, the agreements between Aelian's and Arrian's *Tactica* provide direct evidence for the compositional procedure described by Galen. R. Förster, "Studien zu den griechischen Taktikern," *Hermes* 12 (January 1, 1877): 426–71; Philip A. Stadter, "The *Ars Tactica* of Arrian: Tradition and Originality," *Classical Philology* 73, no. 2 (1978): 117–28; A. M. Devine, "Polybius' Lost *Tactica*: The Ultimate Source for the Tactical Manuals of Asclepiodotus, Aelian, and Arrian?," *The Ancient History Bulletin* 9, no. 1 (January 1, 1995): 40.

<sup>57</sup> Francesco Robortello published an earlier, non-critical edition in 1552. Köchly's 1855 edition has been surpassed by A. M. Devine, *Aelian's Manual of Hellenistic Military Tactics*, Ancient World, 19 no. 1 & 2 (Chicago: Ares, 1989). Köchly's reconstruction of the literary history of the *Tactica* is dismantled in Förster, "Studien zu den griechischen Taktikern."

<sup>58</sup> See for instance, Förster's identification of characteristic vocabulary in Arrian's *Tactical Arts* on the basis of his surviving corpus. Förster, "Studien zu den griechischen Taktikern," 439–40.

<sup>59</sup> Hermann Köchly and W. Rüstow, *Asclepiodotos' Taktik. Aelianos' Theorie Der Taktik*, Griechische Kriegsschriftsteller, 2.1 (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1855), 276.

τοῦ δευτέρου λοχαγοῦ ἐπιστάτης, καὶ κατὰ τὸ ἐξῆς.

ὅταν οὖν μετὰ τὸν δεύτερον λόχον τρίτος ταγῆ, εἶτα τέταρτος καὶ οὕτως κατὰ τὸ ἐξῆς οἱ λοιποί, τὸ τοιοῦτον συλλοχισμὸς καλεῖται.

File-joining is when another [file] is placed next to the first so that the file-leader of the second line is next to the file-leader of the first line, and the man standing by the file-leader of the second [file] is next to the man standing by the file-leader of the first [file] from behind and the rest accordingly. And each of those in-line are called “a supporter,” such as the file-leader of the second file next to the file-leader of the first file, and likewise the man standing by the file leader of the second [file] is next to the man standing by the file leader of the first file, and the rest accordingly. When, therefore, after the second, a third is arranged, then a fourth and likewise successively for the rest, such a thing is called “file-joining.”

ἐπιστάτης δὲ ὁ πρῶτος τῷ δευτέρῳ ἐπιστάτη, καὶ τοῦτο ἐφεξῆς ἔστε ἐπὶ τοὺς οὐραγοὺς τῶν λόχων. ἐπειδὴν οὖν πολλοὶ ἐφεξῆς λόχοι ταχθῶσι, συλλοχισμὸς τὸ τοιόνδε καλεῖται.

File-joining is the placing of a file next to another file. And it happens if the file-leader of the second is positioned next to the file-leader of the first line, and the man standing by the file-leader of the second [file] is next to the by standing man of this [file], and likewise for the rest. And each of those together in-line are named “a supporter” — on the one hand, the first file-leader next to the second file-leader, on the other hand, the first man standing by the second by standing man, and it will be like this for the rest until the rear of the file. When, therefore, many files are arranged successively, such a thing is called “file-joining.”

Arrian’s account of this maneuver is seventy-one words long. Fifty-one of Arrian’s words (printed in bold) correspond lexically to the parallel passage in Aelian’s *Tactical Theory*. These authors preserve the wording of their *Hauptquelle* while also altering, omitting, and deleting as they see fit. Whether Arrian depended on Aelian directly or both employed a common source, technical books written on the tactical *hypothesis* furnish direct evidence of first and second century authors treating their primary source with a conservatism reminiscent of Galen’s description.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> See footnote 56 for a discussion of the literary relationship between these books.

Examples of this sort could be drawn from throughout the two books on tactics. Indeed, the whole sweep of Aelian's *Tactical Theory* is reproduced in Arrian's *Tactical Art*. This can be illustrated by the following chart, adapted from the study of Philip A. Stadter.<sup>61</sup>

<b>Aelian</b>	<b>Arrian</b>	
1.1-3	1	Introduction
2.1-6	2	Basic divisions of warfare
		Description of combatants by equipment used
2.7-10	3	Infantry
2.11-13	4	Calvary
		Organization of the army
3	5.1-3	Need for organization
4-5	5.4-6	The <i>lochos</i>
6-7.3	7-8	Combinations of <i>lochoi</i>
7.4-6	9.1-2	Light-armed troops and calvary
8	9.3-6	The ideal number for an army
9	10	Army units from the <i>lochos</i> to the full army
		Formation and use of troops in battle
10	—	The phalanx: Officers
11	11	The phalanx: Formations
12	—	The phalanx: Armaments
13-14	12.1-5, 10-11	The phalanx: Different ranks
—	12.6-10	The phalanx: Spacing and the use of the <i>sarissa</i>
15-16	13-14	Light-armed troops
17	15	Archers and spearmen
18-21	16-18	Calvary
22-23	19	Chariots and elephants
		Movements
24	20	Names
25-29	21-25	Description of turns, etc.
30-31	26	Shapes of the phalanx
32-34	—	Other maneuvers
35	27	Relaying commands to the army
		Marches
36	28	Order of the army
37-38	29	Formations on the march
39	30	Baggage
40-42	31-32	Manner of issuing commands
—	33-44	Roman Calvary

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<sup>61</sup> Stadter, "The Ars Tactical of Arrian," 120. Stadter's table displays only material shared between Aelian and Arrian. I have supplied the additional passages using Köchly's synopsis.

As this outline of two different tactical treatises makes clear, the method of composition employed by Aelian and Arrian was decidedly conservative. Not only do these technical authors preserve the wording of their source but adopt its scope and structure.

At the same time, the similarity of the two works should not be overstated. There are countless meaningful differences between Aelian's and Arrian's tactical treatises. Arrian, for instance, provides up-to-date information about weaponry used by the Roman military and their enemies not found in Aelian's or Asclepiodotus' treatises (e.g. 33-44 and *passim*).<sup>62</sup> Most significantly, Arrian concludes his re-writing of Posidonius with an entirely original section — without parallel in Asclepiodotus or Aelian— on the Roman calvary (33-44). Although the preface to Arrian's *Tactical Art* is lost, these variations make it clear that Arrian, a provincial governor, sought to update the *Tactica* of his predecessors with information from his experience of the Roman military.<sup>63</sup> Even if we do not have direct access to his primary source, therefore, a portrait of Arrian as a creative author re-writing the tactical *hypothesis* can be constructed from comparing his work with Asclepiodotus and Aelian.

In sum, the tactical treatises of the first and second century CE provide direct evidence for the convention of conservative re-writing described above. The treatment of source material in the *Tactica* closely resembles Galen's description of the compositional history of the *Cnidian Sentences*, Hero's use of Cteisbus and Philo, and the behavior criticized by Vitruvius and Pliny.

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<sup>62</sup> Stadter, 123.

<sup>63</sup> Everett L. Wheeler, "The Occasion of Arrian's *Tactica*," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 19, no. 4 (January 1, 1978): 351–65.

Most importantly, this method of re-writing closely resembles what must have been involved in the composition of the synoptics.

### 3.4 The Lukan Prolog

I am not the first to suggest that the synoptic gospels owe something to technical literature. In her 2005 monograph, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel*, Loveday Alexander shows that the Lukan prolog is word-for-word a conventional preface for (what she calls) “scientific literature.”<sup>64</sup> In length, style, content, and vocabulary, the Lukan prolog resembles the prefaces of technical treatises over and against the prefaces to historical literature. Alexander, thus, makes a compelling case that the earliest evangelist who explicitly reflected on the relationship of his work to its sources employed the literary conventions of technical writing to do so.

#### 3.4.1 Loveday Alexander

Alexander lists nineteen “characteristics” of the Lukan prolog, including brevity, detachability, a first-person speaker, a second-person address, a reference to previous treatments of the subject matter, a statement of the author’s decision to write, and a review of the author’s qualifications.<sup>65</sup> With respect to each characteristic, *Luke’s* preface is typical of technical writing, often in ways that are distinct from other kinds of literature.

Consider, for instance, the stereotyped statement of the author’s decision to write. This is, according to Alexander, an “almost universal” feature of technical literature.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, the decision to write is typically the main verb of the preface’s first sentence. Moreover, it usually

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<sup>64</sup> Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel*.

<sup>65</sup> Loveday Alexander, “Luke’s Preface in the Context of Greek Preface-Writing,” *Novum Testamentum; Leiden* 28 (1986): 53; Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel*, 13.

<sup>66</sup> Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel*, 70.

follows a subordinate clause that indicates the subject or content of the work with a nod to literary predecessors.<sup>67</sup> I present below a sampling of Alexander's cataloged *comparanda* with special attention to the first and second century authors I discussed above.<sup>68</sup>

Hero, *Dioptrics* 1<sup>69</sup>

Since the matter (πραγματείας) of dioptrics offers many essential uses and many have discussed it, **I consider it worthwhile to write** about both those things omitted by those before me which (as already mentioned) serve a useful purpose and to clarify the things written obscurely.

Hero, *Pneumatics* 1.Proem<sup>70</sup>

Since the matter (πραγματείας) of pneumatics were judged worthy of attention to the ancient philosopher and mechanists [...] **we decided to arrange** into order what was handed down by the ancients, and also to insert what we have discovered.

Aelian, *Tactical Theory* Proem<sup>71</sup>

The tactical theory among the Greeks reaching back to the time of Homer —Trajan, Caesar Augustus, Son of God, many wrote before us although not having, we believe, the skill in mathematics that we have. **And convincing myself of this, I was compelled to compose** (συντάξαι) this theory so that those after us will prefer our composition to its predecessors.

Galen, *On Types*

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<sup>67</sup> Alexander, 71.

<sup>68</sup> For more examples, see Alexander, 70 fn. 5–6. Alexander does not list Aelian's *Tactical Theory* but I present it here given its importance to the argument above. It contains a slight variation on the typical scientific preface in that the opening subordinate clause is a syntactically independent sentence.

<sup>69</sup> Τῆς διοπτρικῆς πραγματείας πολλὰς καὶ ἀναγκαίας παρεχομένης χρείας καὶ πολλῶν περὶ αὐτῆς λελεχότων ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι νομίζω τὰ τε ὑπὸ τῶν πρὸ ἐμοῦ παραλειφθέντα καὶ, ὡς προείρηται, χρεῖαν παρέχοντα γραφῆς ἀξιῶσαι, τὰ δὲ δυσχερῶς εἰρημένα εἰς εὐχέριαν μεταγαγεῖν, τὰ δὲ ψευδῶς εἰρημένα εἰς διόρθωσιν προᾶξει. Hermann Schöne, *Heronis Alexandrini opera quae supersunt omnia.*, vol. 3 (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1903), 188.

<sup>70</sup> Τῆς πνευματικῆς πραγματείας σπουδῆς ἠξιωμένης πρὸς τῶν παλαιῶν φιλοσόφων τε καὶ μηχανικῶν, τῶν μὲν λογικῶς τὴν δύναμιν αὐτῆς ἀποδεδοκότων, τῶν δὲ καὶ δι' αὐτῆς τῆς τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἐνεργείας, ἀναγκαῖον ὑπάρχειν νομίζομεν καὶ αὐτοὶ τὰ παραδοθέντα ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχαίων εἰς τάξιν ἀγαγεῖν, καὶ ἃ ἡμεῖς δὲ προσευρήκαμεν εἰσθέσθαι. Schmidt, *Heros von Alexandria Druckwerke und Automatentheater*, 2.

<sup>71</sup> Τὴν παρὰ τοῖς Ἑλλήσι τακτικὴν θεωρίαν ἀπὸ τῶν Ὀμήρου χρόνων τὴν ἀρχὴν λαβοῦσαν, αὐτόκρατορ Καῖσαρ υἱὲ θεοῦ Τραϊανὲ σεβαστέ, πολλοὶ τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν συνέγραψαν οὐκ ἔχοντες, ἦν ἡμεῖς ἐν τοῖς μαθήμασιν ἐπιστεύθημεν ἔξιν ἔχειν. ἐμαυτὸν δὲ πείθων ἠβουλήθη ταύτην συντάξαι τὴν θεωρίαν, ὅτι τοῖς ἡμετέροις οἱ μεθ' ἡμᾶς πρὸ τῶν ἀρχαιοτέρων προσέξουσι συγγράμμασιν. Köchly and Rüstow, *Asclepiodotos' Taktik. Aelianos' Theorie Der Taktik*, 236.

Since many have concerned themselves (πεπραγματευμένων) at length with the theory of types, **I consider** it necessary to go back over these things with more definition and according to limitations [...] <sup>72</sup>

Evident in all these examples is the first-person statement of the author’s decision to write (printed in bold). Although not uniform, technical prefaces are highly conventional. They all preface that decision statement with an indication of the work’s content and an acknowledgement of literary predecessors. Most refer to their subject matter as *πράγματα*.

The same characteristics in the same arrangement appear in the third gospel.

Since many have attempted to arrange an account of the matters (πραγμάτων) which took place among us [...] **it seems right to me also** —having followed everything thoroughly and accurately— to write for you in an orderly manner, most excellent Theophilus, in order that [...] <sup>73</sup>

It is not necessary to rehearse all nineteen of Alexander’s characteristics in the same way. Instead, I present below the Lukan preface in parallel with the preface to Hero’s *Pneumatics* — a technical treatise, I argued above, that reproduces its source material in a manner similar to the synoptics. The parallel structure and content of the prefaces is readily apparent.

*The Gospel of Luke* 1:1-4

Hero, *Pneumatics* 1.Proem

Since many have attempted to arrange an account of the matters which took place among us just as those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning and ministers of the message handed down to us

Since the matter of pneumatics were judged worthy of attention to the ancient philosopher and mechanists, the former deducing them theoretically, the latter from the action of sensible bodies,

it seems right to me also, having followed everything

we also have thought proper to arrange in order what has

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<sup>72</sup> Πολλῶν πλατυτέρω ὑπὲρ τῆς περὶ τύπων θεωρίας πεπραγματευμένων, ἀναγκαῖον ἡγησάμην αὐτὸς ὀριστικώτερον καὶ κατὰ περιγραφὴν ἐπιδραμεῖν ταῦτα, [...]. (Kühn 7.463).

<sup>73</sup> On the translation of ἄνωθεν as “thoroughly,” see Alexander, *The Preface to Luke’s Gospel*, 130.

thoroughly and accurately, to write for you in an orderly manner, most excellent Theophilus,

in order that you might know with certainty about the things which you have been taught.

been handed down by former writers, and to add thereto our own discoveries:

a task from which much advantage will result to those who shall hereafter devote themselves to the study of mathematics. We are further led to write this work from the consideration that it is fitting that the treatment of this subject should correspond with the method given by us in our treatise, [description of earlier work]

It should be noted that most technical literature has no prefatory material at all. Hero's *Mechanics*, Asclepiodotus' *Tactical Arts*, and Galen's *On Semen*, for instance, begin by presenting a problem, a project, or an initial piece of information without preamble. Others, like Galen's *On Bones for Beginners*, simply state the subject. It is no objection to the relevance of technical literature for understanding synoptic-type gospels, therefore, that *Matthew* and *Tatian's* gospel lack a preface. Rather, it is highly suggestive that the first author who appended a preface to a synoptic-type gospel did so according to the conventions of technical literature.

### 3.4.2 The Reception of Alexander

The reception of Alexander's study has been overwhelmingly positive.<sup>74</sup> The classicist Albrecht Dihle, for instance, called the analysis, "entirely convincing."<sup>75</sup> Studies of technical

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<sup>74</sup> For a catalog of positive reviews, see David E. Aune, "Luke 1.14: Historical or Scientific Prooimion," in *Paul, Luke and the Graeco-Roman World: Essays in Honour of Alexander J.M. Wedderburn*, ed. Alf Christophersen et al., 1st edition (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 139.

<sup>75</sup> Albrecht Dihle, review of *Review of The Preface to Luke's Gospel. Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1-4 and Acts 1.1*, by Loveday Alexander, *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 1, no. 3 (1995): 126.

literature without reference to the third gospel cite Alexander as the authoritative treatment of technical prefaces.<sup>76</sup> It will be worthwhile, nevertheless, to review a few critiques of Alexander's thesis. Indeed, a consideration of her most prominent critics will demonstrate the force of her conclusion.

In 2006, Sean Adams published an article-length critique of Alexander's study.<sup>77</sup> Alexander, according to Adams, overstates the difference between historical prefaces and the Lukan preface. Adams' first and most significant argument is that Alexander treated Thucydides as "typical" of historical writing, thereby exaggerating the difference in length between historical and scientific prefaces.<sup>78</sup> It is undeniable that Thucydides' 3,490-word preface is exceptionally long. Alexander would, therefore, be guilty of "misrepresenting the typical preface length for a Greek historian" if she had, indeed, treated Thucydides as representative of historical preface writing.<sup>79</sup>

Alexander's exhaustive collection of primary data, careful analysis, and measured conclusions are mischaracterized by Adams. Adams represents Alexander as treating the length of Thucydides' preface as typical of historical writing but, in fact, Alexander mentions Thucydides precisely in order to note that his preface is uncharacteristically long.<sup>80</sup> Alexander does not treat Thucydides' preface as representative of historical writing (as Adam's suggests) but, rather, flags it as an outlier.

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<sup>76</sup> Roby, *Technical Ekphrasis in Greek and Roman Science and Literature*, 235 fn. 164; Grillo, "Hero of Alexandria's Automata: A Critical Edition and Translation, Including a Commentary on Book One.," 112.

<sup>77</sup> Sean A Adams, "Luke's Preface and Its Relationship to Greek Historiography: A Response to Loveday Alexander," *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism*, 2006, 15.

<sup>78</sup> Adams, 181–83. Adams' other arguments consist of the observation that historical writings sometimes also evince features that Alexander has demonstrated are typical of technical literature but not common in history writing.

<sup>79</sup> Adams, 182.

<sup>80</sup> Carl Griffin, "Cyrillona's On Zacchaeus," n.d., 30.

Adams not only claims that Alexander treated Thucydides as representative but, by his silence, implies that Thucydides was Alexander's only case study for determining the typical length of historical prefaces. Adams tells the reader that Alexander compared scientific prefaces with Thucydides history in order to conclude that the Lukan preface resembles the former. In reality, however, Alexander reviews the prefaces of Herodotus, Polybius, Diodorus, Dionysius of Halicarnasus, Josephus, Arrian, Appian, Herodian, Procopius, and Agathias.<sup>81</sup>

A more complete picture does not serve Adam's critique. Thucydides' 3,490-word preface may be exceptionally long, but Appian's 2,372 word preface, Dionysius Halicarnassus' 2,215 word preface, and Diodorus' 1,652 word preface hardly resemble *Luke's* forty-two word preface. In contrast, the preface to Galen's *On Types* is forty-nine words, Diocles' *Prophylactic Letter* is fifty-five words, (ps-)Hero's *Definitions* is sixty words, and Hero's *Pneumatics* is 120 words long. These technical prefaces (as outlined above) resemble the Lukan preface in structure and content as well as length. There are longer technical prefaces, like the 280-word preface of Hero's *Belopoeica* and shorter historical prefaces, like the 429-word preface of Polybius' *The Histories*.<sup>82</sup> But even these outliers do not blur the distinction between scientific and historical prefaces. The difference between the conventions of history and technical writing are clearly reflected in the different structures, content, and lengths of their prefaces. In these respects, the third gospel resembles technical literature over and against history.

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<sup>81</sup> Adams, "Luke's Preface and Its Relationship to Greek Historiography: A Response to Loveday Alexander," 30.

<sup>82</sup> E. W. Marsden, *Greek and Roman Artillery: Technical Treatises* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 18–19. There is some ambiguity about the extent of this preface. It is probably most meaningful to restrict that designation to the conventional material in the first two paragraphs and regard the subsequent outlines and definitions as the first section of the book.

Adams obscures the disanalogy between *Luke*'s preface and historical writing by proposing a different metric for comparison. Instead of using absolute numbers, Adams compares the length of prefaces as a percentage of the complete work. So, for instance, the forty-two-word preface to *Luke* represents 0.215% of the 19,518-word length of the complete work. Adams then calculates this figure for several historical prefaces. It should be noted that — without any justification— Adams omits Dionysius Halicarnassus and Appian from his count. It is probably not a coincidence that these are the two longest historical prefaces (other than Thucydides) adduced by Alexander. Adams infers from his handpicked sample that historical prefaces range from 0.126% to 0.338% of the length of the complete work. Since the relative length of the Lukan preface lies near the center of this range, Adams concludes that *Luke* 1:1-4 is typical of historical writing.

Before evaluating this argument from Adams, it is worth pausing to reflect on the nature of genre criticism. 'Genre' is a classification of social conventions for the fusion of form and substance in communicative actions.<sup>83</sup> Readers and writers alike depend on such conventions to communicate. Everything from cognizance of a lexeme's typical use(s) in a linguistic community to the expectations engendered by the formal characteristics of a written work are occasioned by patterns of behavior. "Genre" has no reality outside of the conventions invoked by authors and recognized (consciously or otherwise) by readers. What is called 'genre criticism' typically focuses on communicative conventions at a particular level of abstraction — namely,

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<sup>83</sup> This account of 'genre' is indebted to Carolyn R. Miller, "Genre as Social Action," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70, no. 2 (1984): 151–67. A substantially similar approach to 'genre' is set-out in Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "Form and Genre in Rhetorical Criticism: An Introduction," in *Form and Genre: Shaping Rhetorical Action*, ed. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson (Falls Church, VA: Speech Communication Association, 1978), 5–28.

those concerned with formal characteristics, style, content, and paratexts. The critic reasons from analogous communicative acts to identify the conventions invoked by the author and/or perceived by particular readers.

On Adams' reasoning, the third evangelist's single sentence-long preface should prompt a reader response similar to the six-page preface of Josephus' *Antiquities* because both prefaces represent a similar proportion of the total number of words in their respective work. It seems that Adams' ideal ancient reader begins by scrolling forward through each book to estimate its total length in order to interpret its preface with appropriately adjusted expectations. This, I think, is improbable. The fact that most historical works are so much longer than *Luke* does not make the evangelist's single sentence-long preface any more similar to their prefaces. Adams' alternative metric is easily attainable with computer technology but meaningless for identifying what generic conventions the third evangelist drew upon (consciously or unconsciously) in composing the Lukan preface.<sup>84</sup>

In the end, Adams does not present a compelling critique of Alexander's thesis. This review of his critique has, however, been useful for highlighting the important differences between the kinds of prefaces that are typical of historical writing and the prefaces found in technical literature. The third gospel clearly resembles the latter instead of the former.

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<sup>84</sup> Indeed, Alexander's attention to the length of prefaces does not presume that ancient readers were counting words, much less analyzing that figure as a proportion of the complete work. Word counts are a tool we can use to identify in a transparent and consistent way the general impressions of length ancient readers must have had. Moreover, word counts are an effective proxy for the vastly different content, styles, and structures that typify the prefaces of different kinds of books.

David Aune's measured criticism of Alexander's thesis, published in a *Festschrift* for Alexander J. M. Wedderburn, provides a fascinating addendum to her study.<sup>85</sup> Aune notes that one of Plutarch's moral essays, *The Symposium of Seven Sages*, features a preface strikingly similar to *Luke* 1:1-4. Plutarch's work, notes Aune, is not a scientific or technical treatise.<sup>86</sup> As such, claims Aune, the similarity of the two prefaces blunts the force of Alexander's analysis. I print them in synopsis below.

*The Gospel according to Luke*

Since many have attempted to arrange an account (διήγησιν) of the matters (πραγμάτων) which took place among us just as those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς) and ministers of the message (τοῦ λόγου) handed down to us it seems right to me also, having followed everything thoroughly and accurately, to write for you in an orderly manner, most excellent Theophilus, in order that you might know with certainty about the things which you have been taught.

*The Symposium of Seven Sages*<sup>87</sup>

Surely the advance of time, oh Nikarchos, will obscure the matters (πράγμασι) and make everything uncertain, if false narratives composed so recently and soon after events have gained credence. For the symposium was not only seven people, as you have heard, but more than twice that (including also myself, since I am a friend of Periander on account of my art (τέχνη) and Thales' host for he lodged with my by Periander's order). Whoever narrated it to you did not recall the conversations rightly. He was, so it seems, not among those present. But since there is plenty of free time and old age cannot be trusted enough for me to delay telling my story (τοῦ λόγου), I will narrate it (διηγήσομαι) all from the beginning (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἅπαντα) to you who are eager [to hear].

<sup>85</sup> Aune, "Luke 1.14: Historical or Scientific Prooimion."

<sup>86</sup> Aune 144

<sup>87</sup> Ἡ που προῖὸν ὁ χρόνος, ὃ Νίκαρχε, πολὺ σκότος ἐπάξει τοῖς πράγμασι καὶ πᾶσαν ἀσάφειαν, εἰ νῦν ἐπὶ προσφάτοις οὕτω καὶ νεαροῖς λόγοι ψευδεῖς συντεθέντες ἔχουσι πίστιν. οὔτε γὰρ μόνων, ὡς ὑμεῖς ἀκηκόατε, τῶν ἐπὶ γέγονε τὸ συμπόσιον, ἀλλὰ πλειόνων ἢ δις τοσοῦτων (ἐν οἷς καὶ αὐτὸς ἤμην, συνήθης μὲν ὢν Περιάνδρῳ διὰ τὴν τέχνην, ξένος δὲ Θάλεω· παρ' ἐμοὶ γὰρ κατέλυσεν ὁ ἀνὴρ Περιάνδρου κελεύσαντος), οὔτε τοὺς λόγους ὀρθῶς ἀπεμνημόνευσεν ὅστις ἦν ὑμῖν ὁ διηγούμενος· ἦν δ' ὡς ἔοικεν οὐδεὶς τῶν παραγεγονότων. ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ σχολή τε πάρεστι πολλή καὶ τὸ γῆρας οὐκ ἀξιόπιστον ἐγγυήσασθαι τὴν ἀναβολὴν τοῦ λόγου, προθυμουμένοις ὑμῖν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἅπαντα διηγήσομαι. Frank Cole Babbitt, *Plutarch. Moralia, Volume II: How to Profit by One's Enemies. On Having Many Friends. Chance. Virtue and Vice. Letter of Condolence to Apollonius. Advice About Keeping Well. Advice to Bride and Groom. The Dinner of the Seven Wise Men. Superstition.* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928), 348.

Plutarch's 105-word preface shares stylistic, verbal, and conceptual features with *Luke* 1:1-4. Both works speak in the first person with a second person addressee. Indeed, both authors name a dedicatee. Both prefaces refer to the content of the work as an account or narrative (διήγησις), matters (πρᾶγματα), and a message or story (λόγος). Lastly, both works share a concern for eyewitnesses and for knowing a story from its beginning (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς). Although not quite as close as the examples of technical prefaces above, the resemblance between *Luke* and Plutarch's preface is undeniable

Aune's critique of Alexander does not purport to rehabilitate the traditional interpretation of the Lukan preface as historiographic. Aune agrees with Alexander that *Luke* 1:1-4 does not resemble the prefaces of historical or biographical works. Neither, of course, does Plutarch's preface. More importantly, Plutarch's *Symposium of Seven Sages* is neither a work of history nor a biography. It is, rather, a fictional dialog in the tradition of Plato and Xenophon.<sup>88</sup> It even has, we shall see, a fictional author. The similarities between the preface to Plutarch's *Symposium of Seven Sages* and the Lukan preface cannot, therefore, be explained by the conventions of contemporary historiography.

What, then, accounts for the parallels between *Luke* and Plutarch's dialog? The latter preface is not typical of Plutarch's work or, indeed, other *Symposia*. Rather, the preface to *The Symposium of Seven Sages* has certain affinities to the prefaces found in technical literature. Like most technical prefaces, Plutarch's is relatively short, written in the first person, addresses a

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<sup>88</sup> Lawrence Kim, "Historical Fiction, Brachylogy, and Plutarch's Banquet of the Seven Sages," in *Symposion and Philanthropia in Plutarch*, by José Ribeiro Ferreira et al. (Centro de Estudos Clássicos e Humanísticos, 2009), 481–95.

named individual in the second person, and is detachable. It lacks, however, some of the subtler syntactic and structural characteristics, such as the decision statement that is usually the main verb of the first sentence. Likewise, Plutarch's preface lacks the antecedent causal clause hinting at the nature of the material (see the discussion above). Plutarch's preface, therefore, reflects some of the obvious features of technical literature while lacking some of the more subtle characteristics shared by *Luke* and most technical prefaces.

The explanation of these similarities, I propose, lies in Plutarch's authorial fiction. The preface to *The Symposium of Seven Sages* contains an interlude, not present in *Luke* or similar prefaces. This interlude breaks with conventional prefaces to introduce a particular piece of information about the fictional author. Plutarch does not name this author-character in the preface or tell us anything about him except that he was present at the symposium because of his "art" (τέχνη). It is, evidently, important to Plutarch that we read this work as if it were written by someone who belongs to the world of technical literature. This detail becomes significant to the narrative in a subsequent passage where the author is presented with a *prodigium* — namely, a new-born centaur (149c). It is here that Plutarch reveals the author-character's name alongside his chosen art. The fictional author is Diocles, an expert in divination (149D). Diocles' technical expertise, then, serves as a foil for the skeptical and irreverent Thales.

Divination, as Plutarch notes, was regarded as an "art" (τέχνη) (146C). A *mantis* (μάντις), like Diocles, was an independent expert whose authority depended on their own perceived skill and erudition.<sup>89</sup> As discussed at length below, the mantic subdisciplines —like augury,

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<sup>89</sup> John Dillery, "Chresmologues and Manteis: Independent Diviners and the Problem of Authority," in *Mantikê: Studies in Ancient Divination* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2005), 167–232. On the broader category of "independent religious experts" see the discussion of Heidi Wendt's work below.

oneiromancy, astrology, and haruspicy— belong to the Greek sciences; and the manuals produced by their practitioners were technical in nature.<sup>90</sup> Plutarch’s emulation of technical prefaces is, therefore, comprehensible as part of his work’s fictional framework. Plutarch adopted the most obvious characteristics of technical prefaces in order to make his work seem like the composition of such an expert.

Aune adduces Plutarch’s *Symposium of Seven Sages* as a counterexample to Alexander’s claim that the Lukan preface is a conventionally technical preface. In fact, Plutarch’s preface corroborates Alexander’s thesis. In the *Symposium of Seven Sages*, Plutarch introduces a traditional narrative with a preface resembling technical literature as part of his authorial fiction. Unsurprisingly, the resulting preface is strikingly similar to the first four verses of *Luke*.

In sum, the Lukan preface reflects the conventions of technical literature. That is, the earliest gospel author to comment on the tradition of gospel writing (as opposed to *Mark* and *Matthew*’s subject-matter incipit) does so in a distinctly technical mode. At least this evangelist understood (although perhaps only implicitly) his re-writing of the gospel as a participation in a literary sub-culture populated with technical literature. The subject matter of the third gospel does not resemble the technical works of Hero or Aelian but the treatment of its source material does. The Lukan preface corroborates the argument above that the synoptic-type evangelists

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<sup>90</sup> The astrological literature is well-known (e.g. Claudius Ptolemy’s *Tetrabiblos*, Vettius Valen’s *Anthology*). Oneiromantic literature (with the exception of Artemidorus) is more obscure. The impressive catalog of evidence by Ido Israelowich, however, shows that manuals on dream interpretation are well-attested for our period. Ido Israelowich, *Society, Medicine and Religion in the Sacred Tales of Aelius Aristides*, *Society, Medicine and Religion in the Sacred Tales of Aelius Aristides* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012), 159 n. 149. On similar literature, see Duncan MacRae, *Legible Religion: Books, Gods, and Rituals in Roman Culture* (Harvard University Press, 2016).

were influenced by the compositional conventions of technical writing. I turn now to offer an account of why.

### **3.5 Gospels, Technical Literature, and Independent Religious Experts**

What has tactics to do with theology, automata with angels, or medicine with the messiah? The synoptic gospels do not provide instruction in the Greek arts (τέχναι). They are, rather, biographies of Jesus, imitations of Jewish scripture, and mythic histories of a movement's foundational figures. Some account is needed to explain why so many evangelists should re-write the gospel *hypothesis* according to the conventions of technical literature.

The answer, I propose, is that the synoptic-type evangelists were self-authorized, independent religious experts who competed with teachers of technical subjects in the urban marketplace of students and teachers. Not only did early Christians vie with physicians, magicians, and other kinds of philosophers for an audience, but the lack of disciplinary boundaries and the ubiquity of super-human agents in the Roman imagination meant that many Christian teachers understood the content of their teaching as itself opposed to Greek arts and sciences. Such teachers, I argue, composed some of the earliest Christian books in a social, intellectual, and literary milieu otherwise constituted by experts in the technical disciplines. The conservative approach to re-writing allowed teachers to demonstrate their command of what counted as *knowledge* within their discipline while, simultaneously, revising this intellectual tradition by their own lights.

#### **3.5.1 Medicine and the Gods**

This chapter began with Alexander of Abonoteichus — a physician, prophet, and philosopher. The modern reader may be tempted to view Alexander's medical practice and

prophetic activities as separate parts of his identity. But this would be a mistake. Interaction with the gods was a regular part of Hellenistic and Roman medicine.<sup>91</sup>

Medicine as described in the Hippocratic *On Regimen*, for instance, combines ritual and mantic expertise with anatomical, dietary, and other therapeutic knowledge.<sup>92</sup> The Hippocratic author argues that medical prognosis and the mantic art (μαντική τέχνη) not only function similarly but are both made possible by the gods (1.11-12). Indeed, the entire fourth book of *On Regimen* contains instructions for the diagnostic use of dreams. This doctor prescribes prayer to specific deities alongside dietary and other therapeutic regimens. Communication with the gods, according to the Hippocratic *On Regimen*, is part of the physician's art.

Galen of Pergamum, likewise, describes himself as a servant of the god (*On my Own Books* 2).<sup>93</sup> His medical books, Galen claims, were written as “a true hymn to our creator” (*On the Use of Parts* 3.20).<sup>94</sup> Galen began his study of medicine in response to his father's dreams, learned from a dream how to cure his own chronic condition, and cited a dream as justification for refusing an imperial request (*On the Order of my Books* 4, *On Prognosis* 2.12, *On Treatment by Bloodletting* 23). Oneiromancy also figured in Galen's public practice of medicine.<sup>95</sup> The god

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<sup>91</sup> P. J. van der Eijk, “Divination, Prognosis and Prophylaxis: The Hippocratic Work ‘On Dreams’ (De Victu 4) and Its Near Eastern Background,” in *Magic and Rationality in Ancient Near Eastern and Graeco-Roman Medicine* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004), 187–218; Vivian Nutton, “Medicine and the Religions of the Roman Empire,” in *Ancient Medicine* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012), 280; Philip van der Eijk, “Galen and Early Christians on the Role of the Divine in the Causation and Treatment of Health and Disease,” *Early Christianity* 5, no. 3 (2014): 337–70; Peter van Nuffelen, “Galen, Divination and the Status of Medicine,” *Classical Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (May 2014): 337–52.

<sup>92</sup> On this treatise, see Althoff 55-56 and Eijk,

<sup>93</sup> [...] οὗ [τὸν πάτριον θεὸν Ἀσκληπιόν] καὶ θεραπευτὴν ἀπέφαινον ἑμαυτόν, ἐξ ὅτου με θανατικὴν διάθεσιν ἀποστήματος ἔχοντα διέσωσε, [...]. Kühn 19.18-19.

<sup>94</sup> οἱ σωφρονοῦντες ὀρθῶς ἂν μοι μέμφοιντο καὶ μιαινὲν φαῖεν ἱερὸν λόγον, ὃν ἐγὼ τοῦ δημιουργήσαντος ἡμᾶς ὕμνον ἀληθινὸν συντίθημι. Kühn 3.237.

<sup>95</sup> I limit this review to those dreams to which Galen apparently assigned supernatural causes. Galen also gave naturalistic explanations of dreams, as outlined in Steven M. Oberhelman, “Galen, On Diagnosis from Dreams,” *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 38, no. 1 (1983): 36–47.

used dreams to prescribe drugs and send patients to Galen (*An Outline of Empiricism* 10). Dreams taught Galen a new method of bloodletting to be used on patients (*On Treatment by Bloodletting* 23) and guided his study of anatomy (*On the Use of Parts* 10.12). Galen even wrote a lost treatise on the mantic arts that dealt with dreams, augury, astrology, and other omens (*Natural Faculties* 1.2). We can infer the tenor of this lost work from Galen's argument elsewhere that the usefulness of these divinatory methods furnishes evidence that the gods really do exist (*On my own Opinions* 2).

In his writings, Galen sought to distinguish prognosis and medical treatment from the work of seers and magicians (e.g. *On the Powers of Simple Drugs* 6.Prolog; *On Prognosis* 5.5-6), but his own anecdotes reveal that Galen's audience often did not recognize the distinction.<sup>96</sup> "Pythian Apollo," proclaimed one of Galen's patients, "has willed to prophesy (θεσπίζειν) to the sick through Galen's mouth. (*On Prognosis* 3.17)."<sup>97</sup> Galen did not demur. Indeed, Galen elsewhere refers to his diagnosis as an "oracle" (μάντευμα) (7.9), and other stories feature Galen's companions "praising [his] divinatory ability" (*On Prognosis* 7.13).<sup>98</sup> In another anecdote, Galen acknowledges his reputation as both "wonder-worker" (παραδοξοποιόν) and "wonder-speaker" (παραδοξολόγον) (8.1).<sup>99</sup> Less flatteringly, Galen was known as a "wizard"

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<sup>96</sup> R. Flemming, 'Galen's imperial order of knowledge' in J. König and T. Whitmarsh (edd.), *Ordering Knowledge in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge, 2007), 241-76.

<sup>97</sup> κεκραγός δὲ πρὸς ἅπαντας ἡμᾶς τοὺς εἰσιόντας φίλους, ὡς ὁ Πύθιος Ἀπόλλων, διὰ τοῦ Γαλιηνοῦ στόματος, ἐβουλήθη θεσπίζειν τοῖς νοσοῦσι μετὰ τοῦ θεραπεύειν αὐτούς, Vivian Nutton, *Galen, On Prognosis, Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*, V, 8, 1 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1979), 88.

<sup>98</sup> Nutton, 106. [...] καὶ τὴν μαντικὴν ἐπαινοῦντες [...] Nutton, 108.

<sup>99</sup> Nutton, *Galen, On Prognosis*, 110.

(γοητής) and “diviner” (μάντις) (10.16).<sup>100</sup> At least in popular opinion, Galen could see the future and work miracles.

A philosopher named Glaucen, Galen recalls, was wary of the doctor because he had heard that Galen’s practice was “more like divination than medicine” (*On the Affected Parts* 5).<sup>101</sup> Galen diagnoses Glaucen’s condition by means of inference from a series of normal observations. By his own account, however, Galen concealed his method and line of reasoning from the skeptical philosopher. Instead, Galen characterizes the diagnosis as “a prophecy” (5). By a stroke of luck, Galen is even able to guess Glaucen’s self-diagnosis. He represents this ostensible act of mind-reading as prophecy as well. All these stories suggest that Galen encouraged the popular conception of his diagnostic abilities as supernatural. Given his personal history with Asclepius and his own claims to divine inspiration, Galen might have believed it.

“Medicine in antiquity,” observes Vivian Nutton, “was always a public art.”<sup>102</sup> Doctors attracted crowds at lectures and medical demonstrations in order to market their expertise as worthy of respect, patronage, and further study.<sup>103</sup> References to such performances not only pervade Galen’s corpus but contemporaries, like Dio Chrysostom (*Oration* 33.6-7), criticize medical experts for their ostentation. Whether in a patient’s home or the Roman forum, Galen performed his diagnoses, prognostications, and prescriptions before an audience.

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<sup>100</sup> Nutton, 124. Notably, Galen responds by acknowledging that there are doctors who sully the medical profession by integrating divination, magic, and medicine.

<sup>101</sup> και προγνώσεις πεποιήσθαι σε μαντικής μάλλον ἢ ἰατρικῆς ἐχομένας [...]. Kühn 8.363.

<sup>102</sup> Vivian Nutton, *Galen: A Thinking Doctor in Imperial Rome*, 1st edition (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2020), 35.

<sup>103</sup> Vivian Nutton, “Healers in the Medical Market Place towards a Social History of Graeco-Roman Medicine,” in *Medicine in Society: Historical Essays*, ed. Andrew Wear (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 15–58.

In the popular imagination, Alexander of Abonoteichus is remembered as a charlatan and Galen of Pergamum as a rational scientist but the difference between their behavior is a matter of degree, not kind.<sup>104</sup> They were showmen who promoted their art (as only they practiced it) with spectacle, demonstrations of expertise, and claims of super-human ability.

### 3.5.2 Technical Disciplines, Religion, and Philosophy

Medicine is not the only technical discipline entangled with matters we might deem “religious.”<sup>105</sup> Galen describes “medicine, geometry, rhetoric, mathematics, music, and all such *technai*” as concerned with “knowledge (επιστήμη) of divine and human matters” (*On the Therapeutic Method* 1.2).<sup>106</sup> Galen’s *Exhortation to the Study of Medicine* contains further reflection on the relationship between *technē* and the gods.<sup>107</sup> It is the *technai*, according to Galen, that set humanity apart from animals. Although some arts (e.g. weaving, sculpture)

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<sup>104</sup> See Véronique Boudon-Millot, “Aux marges de la médecine rationnelle : médecins et charlatans à Rome au temps de Galien (IIe s. de notre ère),” *Revue des Études Grecques* 116, no. 1 (2003): 109–31.

<sup>105</sup> The application of the term ‘religion’ to phenomena in antiquity has been criticized by a number of scholars, most notably (for scholars of early Christianity) Brent Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015). Nongbri successfully critiques the use of ‘religion’ as an analytic category according to an implausibly narrow lexical definition. His critique, however, has little purchase on what contemporary historians are doing when they use the word ‘religion.’ Nongbri stipulates a Lockean definition that restricts ‘religion’ to individual and cognitive matters. Southern Baptists, Hasidic Jews, and Unitarian Universalists, however, use the language of ‘religion’ every day to refer to civic, social, and material concerns. When a translator uses ‘religion’ to render *religio* as applied to a public, state-sponsored sacrifice, they are not invoking Locke’s stipulated use. They are, rather, appealing to an equally conventional associations of the term ‘religion’ with ritual and the supernatural. Nongbri’s primary argument fails because effective translation does not demand a perfect correspondence of semantic range between target and source languages. Nongbri repeatedly castigates scholars for assuming “the universality of religion” (13). But Nongbri himself insists that ‘religion’ is only a word and that concepts can only be investigated as words (22–24). What sense is there, then, of asking about the “universality of [a word]” (13)? Or to ask whether a word is “timeless” (15), “natural and neutral” (130), or an “extralinguistic thing” (23)? Nongbri accuses ancient historians of assuming what is self-evident non-sense. Consequently, leading scholars have objected to Nongbri’s characterization in surprisingly harsh terms. David T. M. Frankfurter, “Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept by Brent Nongbri (Review),” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 23, no. 4 (2015): 632–34; Robert A. Segal, “Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept, Written by Brent Nongbri,” *Religion and Theology* 23, no. 3–4 (January 1, 2016): 423–27.

<sup>106</sup> αὐτὴν μὲν γὰρ τὴν πρώτην καὶ ὄντως σοφίαν, ἐπιστήμην οὖσαν θεῶν τε καὶ ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων, οὐδ’ εἶναι νομίζουσι τὸ παράπαν· ἰατρικὴν δὲ καὶ γεωμετρίαν καὶ ῥητορικὴν ἀριθμητικὴν τε καὶ μουσικὴν ἀπάσας τε τὰς τοιαύτας τέχνας εἶναι μὲν ὑπολαμβάνουσιν, [...]. (Kühn 10.1.5-9)

<sup>107</sup> This is probably Galen’s own title, as reflected in his *On My Own Books*. The manuscript tradition, instead, attests *Exhortation to Study the Arts*.

resemble the behavior of beasts, the “divine arts” (θεῖαι τέχναι) are gifts from the gods. These include, according to Galen, medicine, archery, music, divination (μαντική), geometry, astronomy, and more (1; see also 5). They are humanity’s “communion with the gods” (2) and to study these arts is to “attend to the god with obedience to his commands (5).”<sup>108</sup> Expertise in the arts was understood as a divine gift as well as an act of devotion.

Authors of technical literature also represented their arts as rivals to the traditional schools of philosophy. Jacqueline Feke argues that Hero of Alexandria and Claudius Ptolemy advocated for their own arts by portraying technical disciplines as “both within *and* in opposition to philosophy.”<sup>109</sup> That is, these two technical experts claim to teach philosophy properly-so-called while simultaneously elevating their own arts above what has traditionally been deemed philosophy. Studying technical disciplines, according to these authors, can provide answers to classic philosophical problems. Military arts, according to Hero’s *Belopoeica*, succeeds where philosophical regimens fail at producing “tranquility” (ἀταραξιά) (*Belopoeica* 71.1-72.9). Geometry, according to Hero’s *Metrica*, succeeds where political philosophy fails at establishing justice (*Metrica* 140.5-142.2). Mechanics, according to Hero’s *Pneumatica*, succeeds where philosophical discourses fail at providing knowledge of the natural world (*Pneumatica* 16.16-26). Ptolemy, likewise, claims that secure knowledge is the prerogative of mathematics as exemplified in his study of astrology (*Almagest* 1.1.6-7; *Tetrabiblos* 1.1.3-4).<sup>110</sup> These first and

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<sup>108</sup> πάντες δὲ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀποβλέπουσι κοινῶ τῷ παρ’ αὐτοῦ προστάγματι πειθόμενοι (5). Ernst Wenkebach, “Galens Protreptikosfragment,” in *Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Naturwissenschaften und der Medizin*, 4.3 (Berlin: Verlag von Julius Springer, 1935), 90–120.

<sup>109</sup> Jacqueline Feke, “Meta-Mathematical Rhetoric: Hero and Ptolemy against the Philosophers,” *Historia Mathematica* 41, no. 3 (August 1, 2014): 263. Emphasis added.

<sup>110</sup> Feke, 267–70.

second century technical authors would have their readers believe that the technical disciplines accomplish philosophical objectives where conventional philosophers have failed.

Contemporary philosophers reciprocated the agonistic rhetoric. In the 52<sup>nd</sup> letter ascribed to Apollonius of Tyana, the following question is posed: what might a person gain from associating (συγγένηται) with a Pythagorean? Apollonius answers, “statesmanship, geometry, astronomy, mathematics, harmonics, music, medicine, and every divine mantic art.”<sup>111</sup> This philosophical school promised expertise in each of the classical *technai* as well as the prophetic arts. No need, therefore, to study with any kind of teacher other than a Pythagorean.

My claim is not that first century authors failed to distinguish between philosophy and *technai*. On the contrary, the identification of distinctive compositional conventions within technical literature (as argued at length above) is premised on the recognition of the *technai* as their own domains of expertise.<sup>112</sup> Rather, I contend that technical authors and philosophical teachers competed with each other for patrons, disciples, and the attention of otherwise interested audiences. This competition led both sides to adopt aspects of each other’s rhetoric and praxis.

Similarly, ancient philosophical schools did not merely offer metaphysical or epistemological propositions but a way of life — a comprehensive account of how to comport oneself with respect to other people, worldly affairs, and the gods.<sup>113</sup> In the first and second

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<sup>111</sup> νομοθετικὴν, γεωμετρίαν, ἀστρονομίαν, ἀριθμητικὴν, ἄρμονικὴν, μουσικὴν, ἰατρικὴν, πᾶσαν θεῖαν μαντικὴν, [...]. Christopher Jones, *Philostratus, Apollonius of Tyana, Volume III*, Loeb Classical Library 458 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 44.

<sup>112</sup> The distinction between philosophy and *technai* was widely recognized and, nevertheless, frequently blurred. The author of the *Refutation of All Heresies*, for instance, says Aristotle reduced philosophy to an art, simultaneously recognizing a conventional distinction and eliding it (1.17).

<sup>113</sup> The classic articulation of this observation is Pierre Hadot, *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Etudes augustiniennes, 1987). For a more recent comparison between the totalizing claims of Christianity and contemporary philosophy, see J. B. Rives, “Christian Expansion and Christian Ideology,” in *The*

century, therefore, many Christians understood Christian piety and allegiance to traditional philosophical schools to be mutually exclusive (e.g. Tatian, *Oration 25; Refutation of All Heresies* 1.Proem). By claiming to offer tranquility, justice, and knowledge, technical authors positioned their discipline(s) as a superior alternative to the study of philosophy. Hero's *Metrica* may not itself contain ethical instruction but studying *technai*, Hero would have his reader believe, inculcates virtue. As we will see below it, this framing of instruction in the arts is partially responsible for setting Christian teachers and technical experts at loggerheads.

### 3.5.3 Independent Religious Experts and their Books

The preceding sub-sections argued that the traditional technical disciplines —everything from medicine to mechanics— were entangled with the gods and philosophy in ways that would engender competition between the teachers of such arts and the earliest Christians. But there is a yet more obvious class of evidence for the rivalry between Christian teachers and contemporary technical experts. In her 2016 monograph, *At the Temple Gates*, Heidi Wendt proposes the category “independent religious experts” to describe persons who “operated independently of existing institutions to offer skills, teachings, and other practices that involved the direct participation of divine beings”<sup>114</sup> The first century CE, Wendt argues, witnessed a proliferation of teachers with expertise in divination, ritual, wonder-working, the interpretation of texts and traditions, and other means of interacting with super-human forces.

There is a wealth of evidence that the subject matters characteristic of Wendt's “independent religious experts” were, indeed, regarded as ‘arts.’ Already in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE,

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*Spread of Christianity in the First Four Centuries: Essays in Explanation*, ed. William Vernon Harris (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 15–42.

<sup>114</sup> Wendt, *At the Temple Gates*, 12.

Aeschylus refers to the “arts (τέχναι) of Calchas” (*Agamemnon* 249). Calchas was known from the Homeric epics as a prophet of Apollo skilled in augury, haruspicy, and the interpretation of omens. The lists of *technai* in classical Athenian literature seldom include these species of divination but first and second century CE authors increasingly include bodies of knowledge related to communication with the gods. The list from Apollonius’ *52<sup>nd</sup> Letter* considered above is strikingly similar to Xenophon and Plato’s examples of *technai* with the notable addition of divination (θεία μαντική).<sup>115</sup> Likewise, Galen includes “divination” (μαντική) as an exemplary “art” alongside medicine, architecture, music, astronomy and geometry (*Exhortation to the Study of Medicine* 1).<sup>116</sup> A Roman law preserved in an epitome of Julius Paulus’ *Opinions* (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> cent. CE) specifies punishments for those practicing the “magic art” (*magicae artis*) or possessing “books of the magic art” (*libri artis magicae*) (5.23.17-18).<sup>117</sup> These testimonia probably reflect the theorization and systematization of divinatory or certain “magical” practices during the Roman principate

Juvenal, a late first century satirist of Roman society, provides further evidence that a broad array of religious phenomena were understood as technical disciplines. His third *Satire* (c. 110 CE) is a speech by a certain Umbricius lamenting the influence of independent Greek experts in the city of Rome.<sup>118</sup> “There is no place in the city for honest arts” complains

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<sup>115</sup> Jones, *Philostratus, Apollonius of Tyana, Volume III*, 44.

<sup>116</sup> ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν θεῶν τεχνῶν οὐκ ἀπολείπεται, ζηλῶν μὲν τὴν Ἀσκληπιοῦ τέχνην ἰατρικὴν, ζηλῶν δ’ Ἀπόλλωνος αὐτὴν τε ταύτην καὶ τὰς ἄλλας ἀπάσας ἃς ἔχει, τοξικὴν μουσικὴν μαντικὴν, ἔτι τε τῶν Μουσῶν τὴν ἑκάστης ἰδίαν. οὐδὲ γὰρ γεωμετρίας οὐδ’ ἀστρονομίας ἀφίσταται, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ τῆς γῆς νέρθεν καὶ τὰ ὑπερθε τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κατὰ Πίνδαρον ἐπισκοπεῖ. ἐξεπορίσατο δ’ ὑπὸ φιλοπονίας καὶ τὸ μέγιστον τῶν θεῶν ἀγαθῶν φιλοσοφίαν (1). Wenkebach, “Galens Protreptikosfragment.”

<sup>117</sup> On the origins of this passage, see James B. Rives, “Magic in Roman Law: The Reconstruction of a Crime,” *Classical Antiquity* 22, no. 2 (October 2003): 328–36. For text and translation, see Rives, 329.

<sup>118</sup> See a helpful treatment of Juvenal at Wendt, *At the Temple Gates*, 114–15.

Umbricius (21-22).<sup>119</sup> Indeed, Umbricius says he found himself unemployed since, unlike Greek teachers, he would not stoop to praising bad books, practicing astronomy, making predictions, haruspicy, meddling in love affairs, or theft (41-50). Such Greeks, Umbricius complains, fill every role: “*grammaticus*, orator, geometer, painter, masseur, *augur*, rope-dancer, doctor, and magician (76-8).”<sup>120</sup> In Juvencus’ list of invasive Greek *technai*, therefore, the *medicus* and *magus* stand side-by-side as dishonest arts.

Strabo (1<sup>st</sup> cent. CE) furnishes another valuable case study for the conceptualization of religious phenomena as an art. In his *Geography*, Strabo claims that the figural language of myth points humanity toward practical skills, like astronomy, metallurgy, and hunting as well as divination (ἀγυρτικός) and wizardry (γοητεία). “So it is,” he says, “with the love-of-art (φιλότεχνος), especially the Dionysiac and Orphic arts (τεχνάϊ)” (10.3).<sup>121</sup> Strabo thus categorizes divination and wizardry as ‘arts’ on analogy with astronomy and metallurgy. Even more relevant to our argument is Strabo’s reference to expertise in cultic and mythic traditions as a *technē*. As we will see, this anticipates Justin’s characterization of Christianity as a *technē*, comparable to military arts and medicine. For the present argument, however, Strabo provides evidence from the first century CE that different kinds of instruction and practice concerned with the interaction of gods and humanity were understood as arts.

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<sup>119</sup> “*Hic tunc Umbricius ‘quando artibus’ inquit ‘honestis nullus in urbe locus, [...]’*” Susanna Morton Braund, *Juvenal and Persius*, Loeb Classical Library 91 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 168.

<sup>120</sup> [...] *grammaticus, rhetor, geometres, pictor, aliptes, augur, schoenobates, medicus, magus, omnia novit Graeculus esuriens: in caelum iusseris ibit.* Braund, 172.

<sup>121</sup> οἷον τὰς ὀρειβασίας τῶν περὶ τὸ θεῖον σπουδαζόντων καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν θεῶν καὶ τοὺς ἐνθουσιασμοὺς εἰκότως μυθεύουσι κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν αἰτίαν καθ’ ἣν καὶ οὐρανίους νομίζουσι τοὺς θεοὺς καὶ προνοητικοὺς τῶν τε ἄλλων καὶ τῶν προσημασιῶν· τῇ μὲν οὖν ὀρειβασίᾳ τὸ μεταλλευτικὸν καὶ τὸ θηρευτικὸν [καὶ] ζητητικὸν τῶν πρὸς τὸν βίον χρησίμων ἐφάνη συγγενές, τῶν δ’ ἐνθουσιασμῶν καὶ θρησκείας καὶ μαντικῆς τὸ ἀγυρτικὸν καὶ γοητεία ἐγγύς. τοιοῦτον δὲ καὶ τὸ φιλότεχνον μάλιστα τὸ περὶ τὰς Διονυσιακὰς τέχνας καὶ τὰς Ὀρφικάς. Horace Leonard Jones, *Geography, Volume V: Books 10-12*, Loeb Classical Library 211 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928), 118–20.

The status of these religious disciplines as *technai* was, unsurprisingly, contested. The first book of Cicero's *On Divination* is an apology for divination in all its species. Cicero's interlocutor, Quintus repeatedly reminds him that astrology, augury, oneiromancy, haruspicy, oracles, lots, and the interpretation of portents have been regarded as arts throughout history and across different cultures. He selects paradigmatic *technē*, like medicine (7), navigation (24), and statesmanship (24), as disciplines analogous to divination. Quintus, Cicero's spokesperson for popular opinion, accepts divination as a legitimate *technē*.

As an aside, it is worth noting that Cicero's Quintus understands the efficacy of divination and the existence of the gods as inextricably interlinked (5). If divination works, Quintus reasons, the gods must exist. And if the gods exist, they must surely have bestowed divinatory arts on humankind. Cicero objects to the interdependence of these propositions (6) but the passage from Galen considered above (*On my own Opinions* 2) suggests that this, indeed, reflects a popular conception of divination.

In the second book, however, Cicero expresses his skepticism. There is no place in the arts for divination (4). There is a kind of art in divination, says Cicero, but it is a technique for deception (70-71) and superstitious doctrines (35, 72). Cicero (as he represents himself in the dialog) denies the efficacy of divination for prognostication and concludes that divination should only be practiced as a tradition — i.e. without belief in its usefulness.<sup>122</sup> While the position advocated by Cicero is nuanced, it amounts to denying divination the status of a *technē* as that

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<sup>122</sup> On the question of whether this, in fact, represent Cicero's own views, see Malcolm Schofield, "Cicero for and against Divination," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 76 (1986): 47–65.

term was used by Quintus or defined by Sextus (see above). Even as he expresses skepticism, Cicero attests to the popular conception of divinatory practices as real *technai*.

Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius* provides further insight into the contested relationship of divination to the arts. In his defense before the Emperor Diocletian, Apollonius is concerned to differentiate his wonder-working and soothsaying activities from wizardry. All *technai*, Apollonius admits, are directed toward financial gain (8.9). “Wizards” (γόητες), however, employ a “pseudo-learning” (ψευδόσοφοι) concerned only with making money (8.10). And Apollonius, claims Apollonius, is not wealthy.

In the course of this argument, Apollonius carefully distinguishes “divination” (μαντική) from the work of wizards.

There are, oh King, pseudo-learners (ψευδόσοφοί) and charlatans (ἀγείροντες) who should not be confused with divination (μαντική), for that is more worthy if it should be truthful. And whether [divination] is an art (τέχνη), I do not yet know. But wizards I call pseudo-learners because [...]<sup>123</sup>

Apollonius thus criticizes self-proclaimed experts in communication with super-human powers but makes an exception for “divination” (μαντική). Divination done rightly, according to Apollonius, is worthwhile. Despite this, Apollonius remains unsure whether divination qualifies as an “art.” Unfortunately, he offers no further explanation.

This caveat attributed to Apollonius reveals two important things about divination and the arts. First, it presupposes that *technē* was a category with conventional boundaries such that it made sense to ask whether a practice did or did not belong. Given his acknowledgement that

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<sup>123</sup> ἔστι τι, ὃ βασιλεῦ, ψευδόσοφοί τε καὶ ἀγείροντες, ὃ μὴ μαντικὴν ὑπολάβης, πολλοῦ μὲν γὰρ ἀξία, ἣν ἀληθεύη, εἰ δ' ἔστι τέχνη, οὐπω οἶδα, ἀλλὰ τοὺς γόητας ψευδοσόφους φημί· τὰ γὰρ [...]. Jones, *Philostratus, Apollonius of Tyana, Volume III*, 334.

divination is effective, Apollonius’ uncertainty about categorizing divination as an ‘art’ was not a question of whether this practice was mere chicanery (as argued by Cicero). Instead, Philostratus’ notion of the arts had some content to distinguish these disciplines from other effective practices — perhaps, something like Sextus’ definition (see above).

Second, Apollonius’ caveat reflects the marginal status of divination (μαντική) with respect to the arts. Divination does not often appear in the classical, Athenian discussions of *technē* but (as shown above) regularly appears alongside medicine and mechanics in first and second century treatments. Apollonius’ uncertainty about the status of divination suggests that Philostratus was aware both that divination was widely accepted by his contemporaries as a technical discipline and that this was a relatively novel reconceptualization of the practice.

These religious arts, like other *technē*, produced technical literature. Unfortunately, much of this is lost. Artemidorus (2<sup>nd</sup> cent. CE) attests to the wealth of books on oneiromancy extant in his day (1.Pref.1).

And there is no book on dream-interpretation which I did not procure, laboring with much zeal to this end.<sup>124</sup>

Artemidorus’ claim that his bibliography was comprehensive suggests a multitude of literary predecessors. In the same passage, he characterizes these predecessors as follows:

For most of our recent predecessors wishing to gain literary fame and supposing they might become famous by means of this alone, [namely,] if they left behind treatises about dream-interpretation, have made copies of each other — whether interpreting badly what was said well by older authors or adding much that is untrue to some of the older materials (1.Pref.1).<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> ἐγὼ δὲ τοῦτο μὲν οὐκ ἔστιν ὅ τι βιβλίον οὐκ ἐκτησάμην ὄνειροκριτικὸν πολλὴν εἰς τοῦτο φιλοτιμίαν ἔχων, [...]. Daniel E. Harris-McCoy, *Artemidorus’ Oneirocritica: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012., 2012), 44.

<sup>125</sup> σχεδὸν γὰρ οἱ μικρὸν ἡμῶν πρεσβύτεροι δόξαν συγγραφικὴν ἀπενέγκασθαι βουλόμενοι καὶ διὰ τούτου ἡγούμενοι μόνου ἔνδοξοι ἔσεσθαι, εἰ συγγράμματα καταλίποιν ὄνειροκριτικά, ἀντίγραφα ἀλλήλων πεποιήνται ἢ τὰ

Artemidorus' description tells us very little about what these books contained. What he does tell us is that oneiromantic literature was characterized by the same compositional conservatism that is distinctive in technical literature. The books of independent religious experts were evidently produced in the same literary sub-culture described by Galen, Hero, and the others.

#### 3.5.4 Christianity as a Technical Expertise

Given the entanglement of religion, philosophy, and the theorization of technical expertise, it should be no surprise that Christian teachers saw technical experts as rivals.<sup>126</sup> In *Against Celsus*, Origen quotes an account of this rivalry from a lost second century work (3.75).

And after these things, [Celsus] says that the teacher of Christianity behaves like someone who offers to make bodies healthy, dissuading people from heeding knowledgeable doctors by whom the teacher's ignorance would be exposed.<sup>127</sup>

Here, Origen preserves the charge of Celsus against Christianity. Celsus claims that Christian teachers pretend to be doctors and deter people from listening to medical experts. Further on, Origen indicates that Celsus attributed to a Christian teacher the claim that “I alone will save you” and “Doctors really corrupt those whom they promise to heal.”<sup>128</sup> Christian teachers, according to Celsus, offer a message of salvation incompatible with the benefits promised by medical experts.

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καλῶς εἰρημένα ὑπὸ τῶν παλαιῶν κακῶς ἐξηγησάμενοι ἢ καὶ ὀλίγοις τῶν παλαιῶν πολλὰ προσθέντες οὐκ ἀληθῆ. Harris-McCoy, 44.

<sup>126</sup> There is meaningful overlap here with Wendt's discussion of Christian participation in competition with independent religious experts. Wendt, *At the Temple Gates*, 193–97.

<sup>127</sup> Ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα παραπλήσιόν φησι ποιεῖν τὸν τὰ χριστιανισμοῦ διδάσκοντα τῷ ὑπισχνουμένῳ μὲν ὑγιῆ ποιεῖν τὰ σώματα, ἀποτρέποντι δὲ τοῦ προσέχειν τοῖς ἐπιστήμοσιν ἰατροῖς τῷ ἐλέγχεσθαι <ἄν> ὑπ' αὐτῶν τὴν ιδιωτείαν αὐτοῦ, [...]. Miroslav Marcovich, ed., *Origenes Contra Celsum: Libri VIII*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 54 (Leiden; Boston; Köln: Brill, 2001), 211.

<sup>128</sup> Οὐδεὶς δ' ἡμῶν οὕτως ἐστὶν ἀλαζών, ἢν' ὅπερ Κέλσος περιέθηκε τῷ τοῦ διδάσκοντος προσώπῳ εἶποι πρὸς τοὺς γνωρίμους, τὸ ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς σώσω μόνος. Ὅρα οὖν, πόσα ἡμῶν καταψεύδεται. Ἄλλ' οὐδέ φαμεν ὅτι οἱ ἀληθῶς ἰατροὶ φθειροῦσιν οὐς ἐπαγγέλλονται θεραπεύειν. Marcovich, 212.

Furthermore, in the passage quoted above, Celsus assumes that Christian doctrine would be exposed as non-sense by medical experts. It is for this reason, claims Celsus, that Christian teachers dissuade their followers from consulting doctors. Celsus (*apud* Origen) exhibits broad familiarity with Christian teaching and literature. It is telling, therefore, that Celsus' argument assumes that Christianity and ancient medical theory had sufficient disciplinary overlap to produce mutual hostility.

Origen responds by demanding that Celsus identify which doctors were opposed by Christian teachers. Origen, then, anticipates Celsus' reply:

He, now, will not answer since he cannot name the doctors. Or he will have to appeal to those ignorant [doctors] who clamor slavishly about many gods and whatever else ignorant people might talk about. In any case, it will be proved that it was vain for him to bring up the illustration of someone dissuading [others] from knowledgeable doctors.<sup>129</sup>

Origen expects that Celsus will either demur or point to polytheists as examples of doctors whom Christian teachers oppose. Origen assumes that the latter is something Celsus would not want to admit. From Origen's perspective, polytheism is an adequate reason to distrust a medical expert. Needless to say, this would have included most doctors in the urban landscape of the second century. Beliefs about the gods, Origen assumes, vitiate the expertise of doctors.

Finally, Origen admits that Christian teachers do, in fact, dissuade their followers from heeding Epicurean doctors, Peripatetic doctors, Stoic doctors, and Platonic doctors (3.75). As with polytheists, Origen believes that false ideas about God, providence, the soul, and

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<sup>129</sup> Ἦτοι οὖν οὐκ ἀποκρίνεται μὴ ἔχων λέγειν τοὺς ἰατρούς, ἢ ἀνάγκη αὐτὸν καταφεύγειν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἰδιώτας, οἳ καὶ αὐτοὶ περιηχοῦσιν ἀνδραποδωδῶς τὰ περὶ πολλῶν θεῶν καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα λέγοιεν ἂν ἰδιῶται. Ἐκατέρως οὖν ἐλεγχθήσεται μάτην παραλαβὼν ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τὸν ἀποτρέποντα τῶν ἐπιστημόνων ἰατρῶν. Marcovich, 211.

eschatology undermine medical expertise. Christian teachers oppose medicine as practiced by all polytheists as well as all the wrong kinds of monotheists.

Celsus provides evidence from the second century that outsiders understood Christian teachers as espousing something like a technical discipline. Christian teaching and medical expertise were, according to Celsus, mutually exclusive. Origen objects that Christians are not opposed to knowledge *qua* knowledge but that false ideas about divinity, humanity and nature espoused by doctors made even their practice of medicine dangerous.

The career of Tatian is such powerful corroboration of this chapter's thesis that it merits its own chapter (see chapter 7). A former expert in "the sciences of the Greeks" (τὰ Ἑλλήνων μαθήματα) (EH 4.16.7), Tatian was an independent teacher in Rome, and polemicized in his *Oration to the Greeks* against astrologers, diviners, geographers, pharmacists, doctors, and grammarians.<sup>130</sup> Most importantly, Tatian re-wrote the synoptic gospels according to the conventions of technical literature.

For present purposes, however, two remarks from the *Oration* are especially pertinent. First, Tatian says that "[pharmacists], by means of their *technē*, turn people away from piety (θεοσεβεία), causing them to trust in herbs and roots (17.1-4).<sup>131</sup> In this passage, a second century teacher blames a technical discipline for undermining proper piety. Second, Tatian claims that the medical performances carried out by doctors are made possible by the help of

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<sup>130</sup> ἄνῆρ τὸν πρῶτον αὐτοῦ βίον σοφιστεύσας ἐν τοῖς Ἑλλήνων μαθήμασι καὶ δόξαν οὐ σμικρὰν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀπενηνεγμένος Gustave Bardy, *Eusébe de Césarée. Histoire ecclésiastique. Livres I-IV* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1952), 192.

<sup>131</sup> τέχνη γὰρ τῆς θεοσεβείας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους παρατρέπουσι, πόαις αὐτοὺς καὶ ρίζαις πείθεσθαι παρασκευάζοντες. Molly Whittaker, ed., *Tatian Oratio Ad Graecos and Fragments*, 1 edition (Oxford : New York: Clarendon Press, 1982), 33–37.

demons (18.2).<sup>132</sup> Tatian, this passage makes clear, understood the medical art as a transaction with demonic powers. Both passages reflect a rivalry between a teacher-turned-evangelist and technical experts that was premised on a belief in the exclusivity of Christian *paideia*.

There is plenty of additional evidence for Christian animosity toward the technical disciplines in the first and second centuries. The *Didache* warns that certain *technai* will lead to idolatry (3.4). Christians, according to this teacher, should not become experts in divination (οἰωνοσκόπος) or incantation (ἐπαιιδός), astrologers (μαθηματικός), or healers (περικαθαίρων).<sup>133</sup> Ignatius tells Polycarp to preach against “evil arts” (κακοτεχνίας) (*Polycarp* 5.1).<sup>134</sup> Justin claims that Christians are successful healers while those who rely on “incantations and drugs” are not (*2 Apology* 6).<sup>135</sup> Clement of Alexandria says that fallen angels taught humanity “astronomy, divination, and the other *technai*” (*Prophetic Eclogues* 53.4).<sup>136</sup> Tertullian, while arguing that Christians are productive members of society, admits that they are a threat to druggists (*venenarii*), magicians (*magi*), diviners (*haruspices*), seers (*harioli*), astrologers (*mathematici*), and other disreputable professions (*Apology* 43.1).<sup>137</sup> The world of

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<sup>132</sup> On the Enochic background to this claim, see Matthew R. Crawford, “‘The Hostile Devices of the Demented Demons’: Tatian on Astrology and Pharmacology,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 29, no. 1 (2021): 31–60.

<sup>133</sup> Τέκνον μου, μὴ γίνου οἰωνοσκόπος, ἐπειδὴ ὀδηγεῖ εἰς τὴν εἰδωλολατρίαν· μηδὲ ἐπαιιδός μηδὲ μαθηματικός μηδὲ περικαθαίρων, μηδὲ θέλε αὐτὰ βλέπειν μηδὲ ἀκούειν· ἐκ γὰρ τούτων ἀπάντων εἰδωλολατρία γεννᾶται. Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, Apostolic Fathers (Early Christian Collection). English & Greek. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2007), 348. WL Knox argues that περικαθαίρων refers to traveling healers who employed rituals and drugs to treat disease. WL Knox, “ΠΕΡΙΚΑΘΑΙΡΩΝ (*Didache* Iii 4),” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 40, no. 2 (1939): 146–49. Photius’ lexicon glosses the term as ἀναλύων τὸν πεφαρμακευμένον· ἢ τὸν γεγοητευμένον.

<sup>134</sup> Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 266.

<sup>135</sup> Justin also criticizes astrology and divination (e.g. *2 Apology* 6).

<sup>136</sup> ἤδη δὲ καὶ Ἐνόχ φησιν τοὺς παραβάντας ἀγγέλους διδάξαι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀστρονομίαν καὶ μαντικὴν καὶ τὰς ἄλλας τέχνας. Otto Stählin, *Clemens Alexandrinus. Dritter Band*, 2nd ed., vol. 3 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1909), 152.

<sup>137</sup> *Plane confitebor, quinam, si forte, vere de sterilitate Christianorum conqueri possint. Primi erunt lenones perductores aquarioli, tum sicarii venenarii magi, item haruspices harioli mathematici.* T.R. Glover and Gerald H. Rendall, *Tertullian, Minucius Felix. Apology. De Spectaculis. Minucius Felix: Octavius.*, Loeb Classical Library 250

independent technical experts was itself competitive, but the totalizing claims of Christianity inspired a special hostility between some Jesus followers and the teachers of arts.<sup>138</sup>

Finally, Justin makes the point explicitly. Recounting his conversion in the *Dialog with Trypho* (3.5), Justin says that a Christian teacher posed the following question to him:

Is not ‘science’ (ἐπιστήμη) the common name of various subject matters? For in all arts (τέχναις), the one knowledgeable in these matters is called an expert (ἐπιστήμων) — as in military tactics (στρατηγικῆ), navigation (κυβερνητικῆ), and medicine (ιατρικῆ). Not so for divine and human matters. Is there some science (ἐπιστήμη) which offers understanding (γνώσιν) of human and divine matters; then, knowledge (ἐπίγνωσιν) of their divinity and righteousness?<sup>139</sup>

Justin answers his questions in the affirmative. There is, according to Justin (and his teacher), a science of human and divine matters akin to other technical disciplines. Just as one might study the body of knowledge concerned with tactics, navigation, and medicine, argues Justin, human and divine matters can be learned.

The teacher goes on to persuade Justin (against his initial protestation) that this science can be learned the same way that the other sciences are learned. God, the old man argues, cannot be studied by observation (4). And contemporary teachers to whom a student might look are deluded (5-6). Rather, this body of knowledge, Justin’s teacher argues, must be learned from books (7). The relevant books, according to Justin, are the writings of the prophets and “the

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(Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 192. See also Augustine, *Contra Faustum* 21.1 on the relationship of a *venenarius* and a *medicus*. Thanks to Nathan Tilley for brining my attention to this passage.

<sup>138</sup> There is, of course, plenty of evidence for a diverse array of responses to the arts by early Christians. Julius Africanus and Bardaisan, for instance, engaged in technical disciplines as Christians. On totalization as a more-or-less distinctive feature of Christian ideology, see Rives, “Christian Expansion and Christian Ideology.”

<sup>139</sup> Ἐπιστήμη οὐκ ἔστι κοινὸν ὄνομα διαφορῶν πραγμάτων; ἔν τε γὰρ ταῖς τέχναις ἀπάσαις ὁ ἐπιστάμενος τούτων τινὰ ἐπιστήμων καλεῖται, ἔν τε στρατηγικῆ καὶ κυβερνητικῆ καὶ ἰατρικῆ ὁμοίως. ἔν τε τοῖς θείοις καὶ ἀνθρωπέοις οὐχ οὕτως ἔχει. ἐπιστήμη τίς ἐστίν ἢ παρέχουσα αὐτῶν τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων καὶ τῶν θείων γνώσιν, ἔπειτα τῆς τούτων θειότητος καὶ δικαιοσύνης ἐπίγνωσιν; [...]. Philippe Bobichon, *Justin Martyr, Dialogue Avec Tryphon: Édition Critique: Introduction, Texte Grec, Traduction*, Paradosis: Études de Littérature et de Théologie Anciennes (Fribourg: Academic Press Fribourg, 2003), 192.

friends of Christ” (Χριστοῦ φίλοι) (8.1). Justin urges his ostensibly pagan readers, therefore, to read “the words of the savior” (8.2).<sup>140</sup> The books that teach the art concerned with human and divine matters, according to Justin’s teacher, are gospels.

Christianity, according to Justin, is a domain of expertise that can be learned from books. That is, the gospels contain instruction in the divine art just as the *Cnidian Sentences* contain instruction in the medical art and Aelian’s *Tactical Theory* in the tactical art. No doubt Justin too recognized the significant differences between the writings of Galen and the gospels, but in the intellectual environment of the second century it made sense for Justin to describe the gospels as a kind of technical literature, teaching a science of ultimate importance.

### 3.6 Conclusion

This chapter proposed a solution to the *other* synoptic problem laid out in chapter two. The conservatism of the synoptic evangelists does not resemble anything found in Greek history or biography. There is, however, a widely attested convention of extensive verbatim reproduction of source material in the composition of technical literature on an established *hypothesis*. In their treatment of written sources, the synoptic-type gospels more closely resemble this kind of technical writing than any contemporary, Greek literature.

Loveday Alexander’s study of the Lukan preface showed that the first synoptic evangelist to explicitly reflect on their use of written sources did so according to the conventions of “scientific” literature. David Aune’s detection of a parallel in Plutarch’s *Moral Essays* supplied evidence that contemporary authors recognized the formal characteristics of technical prefaces

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<sup>140</sup> [...] μὴ ἀφίστασθαι τῶν τοῦ σωτῆρος λόγων· [...]. Bobichon, 205.

and could imitate these to rhetorical effect. The Lukan preface, therefore, is direct evidence that the conventions of technical writing influenced the composition of the gospels.

Gospels are not technical literature. The synoptic gospels are Greek biographies of Jesus with meaningful similarities to the histories of Jewish scripture and contemporary Roman novels. The similar treatment of source material in technical literature and the synoptic tradition cannot be explained in terms of genre so long as 'genre' is understood as a categorization of the entire work according to broad categories like 'biography.' Instead, the compositional procedure evinced in the synoptic-type gospels resembles technical literature because of a shared cultural and literary milieu. Early Christian teachers presented the life and teachings of Jesus as a kind of technical book worthy of study in *lieu* of the arts. Accordingly, these teachers adopted a convention of literary composition employed by rival teachers to demonstrate their command of a discipline.

In some respects, this conclusion agrees with a traditional conception of the evangelists. *Luke*, after all, has long been attributed to a physician. I have no reason to believe that this ascription is true, but the conclusion of this chapter suggests that the synoptic-type evangelists were, indeed, persons familiar with the kind of books used to teach the technical arts. The attribution of the synoptic gospels to individual, creative authors (rather than communities or compilers) will be the subject of the next chapter.

In other respects, the conclusion of this chapter differs from traditional conceptions of gospel writing. At least since Irenaeus, the evangelists have been imagined as recording the preaching of aging apostles (*AH* 3.11.8). Gospels were, therefore, composed as sermons for the church. This chapter argues, instead, that the synoptic evangelists should be understood as independent religious experts, competing with astrologers, physicians, and grammarians in an

urban marketplace of teachers. The production of a new gospel according to technical literary conventions would function as evidence of the teacher's claimed expertise and permit an improvement of the tradition. The gospels are probably not records of apostolic sermons, but books intended to display a teacher's command of Christianity's core tenets by offering a new and improved account of Jesus' life and teaching.

## Chapter 4

### What is an Evangelist?: Form, Redaction, Genre, and Textual Criticism

#### 4.1 Introduction

This study has been premised on certain assumptions about the composition of gospels. To ask why the author of *Matthew* behaved as he did toward *Mark* is to assume that a specific person (or persons) was responsible for the content and shape of the gospel. To propose that the synoptic-type evangelists participated in the literary conventions of technical writing is to assume that the synoptic-type gospels were composed in a specific time and place. There are, indeed, books composed in other ways.<sup>1</sup> A community charter, for instance, may be drafted in committee and amended over time to such a degree that responsibility for all but the smallest units of language cannot be attributed to any specific individual. There is an old controversy, lately revived, as to what kind of books the gospels are.

The form critics denied that the synoptics were the sort of books that had authors. I begin this chapter by reviewing the conception of gospel literature in the writings of Karl Ludwig Schmidt, Martin Dibelius, and Rudolf Bultmann and its warrants. The form critical view of the gospels gradually retreated before the advance of redaction and genre criticisms. These approaches to reading the synoptics, I argue, still provide good reason to suppose a creative individual responsible for each work.

More recently, several scholars have argued that the text tradition and early testimonia to the gospels offer new warrants for understanding the synoptics as authorless compilations of

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<sup>1</sup> For a working definition of authorship, see the Theoretical Postscript in my appendix.

Jesus traditions. While there is much to be gained from an approach to New Testament studies informed by “Material” or “New Philology,” an incautious appropriation of these methods can distort the evidence for the early history of gospel literature by assimilating their text tradition(s) to the medieval corpora these methods were developed to study. The earliest reception of gospel literature, I argue, indicates that gospels were understood as discrete and integral works of an identifiable author. A more representative sample and appropriate contextualization of the synoptic text traditions point in the same direction.

#### **4.2 Evangelist as Collector: The Form Critics**

Hermann Gunkel developed *Gattungsgeschichte* (i.e. form criticism) as a method for reconstructing the prehistory of narrative and poetic units in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>2</sup> Gunkel claims that patterns in storytelling reflect the occasion (*Sitz im Leben*) for the composition of each traditional unit. Deviations from that pattern, according to Gunkel, allow the critic to outline that unit’s transmission history. This enables the historian to reconstruct those practices of Israelite piety for which the story was composed, revised, and rehearsed. Martin Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann applied Gunkel’s method to the synoptic gospels in order to reconstruct the cultic and catechetical occasions for the formulation and transmission of Jesus traditions. By identifying how and why early Christians used traditions about Jesus, these scholars believed they could sift the historical wheat in the gospels from the ecclesiastical chaff.

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<sup>2</sup> Hermann Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis: The Biblical Saga and History*, trans. William Herbert Carruth (New York: Schocken Books, 1964); Hermann Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction* (Fortress Press, 1967).

What concerns us here is neither the attempt to reconstruct the transmission history of oral traditions nor the quest of the historical Jesus.<sup>3</sup> We are, rather, interested in the assumptions about the nature of gospel literature that made the application of form criticism to the synoptic gospels conceivable. The classification of narrative units according to the occasion of their composition requires written sources that preserve relatively undigested oral traditions in discrete, identifiable units. Gunkel developed form criticism to study the origin and evolution of national myths and folk traditions as collected in books like *Genesis* and *Psalms*. He understood these books not as narratives or coherent compositions but, rather, compilations of countless, independent traditions. Each narrative or poetic unit, according to Gunkel, circulated individually and, therefore, had its own compositional occasion and history of pre-literary transmission. The application of this method to traditions about Jesus required a substantially similar view of gospel literature.

Karl Ludwig Schmidt furnished the form critics with just such a perspective. Schmidt advanced a view of gospel literature as unliterary compilations of oral tradition in two influential studies. First, in *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu*, Schmidt sets out to demonstrate that the sequence and settings of narrative units in the synoptic gospels are not historical.<sup>4</sup> Traditions about Jesus, Schmidt argues, originally circulated as individual stories (*Einzelgeschichten*) without any chronological or topographical context.<sup>5</sup> In these early stages of oral transmission, stories about Jesus were told without any concern for order or connection. Over time, however,

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<sup>3</sup> The methods of the form critics have been critiqued to devastating effect in E. P. Sanders, *The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition*, Society for New Testament Studies. Monograph Series, 9 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

<sup>4</sup> Karl Ludwig Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu: literarkritische Untersuchungen zur ältesten Jesusüberlieferung* (Berlin: Trowitzsch, 1919).

<sup>5</sup> Schmidt, 317.

multi-story “complexes” developed in oral and written forms.<sup>6</sup> The composition of a gospel book, then, consisted primarily of stringing together these individual stories and readymade complexes with simple introductory, transition, and summary statements. Schmidt is emphatic that (with the partial exception of *Luke*) the compilation of stories into a written gospel evinces no literary ambition.<sup>7</sup> That is, the evangelists produced “kein fortlaufender Bericht, sondern eine Fülle von Einzelgeschichten.”<sup>8</sup>

Whereas *Der Rahmen* concerned the character of pre-literary Jesus traditions, Schmidt treats the gospels themselves in *Die Stellung der Evangelien in der allgemeinen Literaturgeschichte*.<sup>9</sup> In this essay, Schmidt follows the influential work of Franz Overbeck in arguing that gospels are popular (*Kleinliteratur*), not works of high literature (*Hochliteratur*).<sup>10</sup> The gospel-as-work does not, therefore, belong to any literary genre from antiquity. Rather, gospels are a compilation of folk traditions, comparable to collections of German folk tales or legends about the lives of saints. As such, gospels are “not the product of an individual author,” but the collected oral traditions of a community.<sup>11</sup> This act of collection, according to Schmidt, should not be confused with the compilation of *chreiai* (or other source materials) typical of the composition of ancient biography. Biographers are literary authors who re-work the material

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<sup>6</sup> Schmidt, 19–20.

<sup>7</sup> Schmidt, 317. Schmidt goes back and forth on Luke’s gospel. See, on one hand, Schmidt, 316. And, on the other, Karl Ludwig Schmidt, *The Place of the Gospels in the General History of Literature* (Univ of South Carolina Press, 2002), 27, 84–85.

<sup>8</sup> Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu*, 317.

<sup>9</sup> Karl Ludwig Schmidt, *Die Stellung der Evangelien in der allgemeinen Literaturgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1923).

<sup>10</sup> Franz Overbeck, “Über die Umfänge der patristischen Literatur,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 48, no. 12 (1882): 417–72.

<sup>11</sup> Schmidt, *The Place of the Gospels in the General History of Literature*, 27.

they appropriate and, in doing so, leave an imprint of themselves upon it.<sup>12</sup> Not so with the evangelists. According to Schmidt, a people – not a person – is responsible for gospel literature.

The reasoning behind these claims is difficult to characterize because, as David Hall observed, Schmidt’s study of the gospels is fundamentally an “argument from presuppositions.”<sup>13</sup> That is, Schmidt does not really offer an argument for viewing gospels as collections of intact folk traditions but, instead, an exposition of the synoptics from his point of view. Nevertheless, in his pericope-by-pericope analysis of the synoptics in *Der Rahmen*, Schmidt claims that certain patterns of evidence support his reconstruction of gospel origins. The most important of these is the episodic character of gospel literature (outside the passion narratives). The absence of detailed settings for each story and the variations in setting for the same story between gospels suggest to Schmidt that the story by itself—without setting or sequence— was the fundamental unit of Jesus tradition. It was in this form that the stories of Jesus were first told and transmitted by the earliest Christians. Likewise, the lack of inter-connection between stories recommends to Schmidt a view of gospel writing as a collection of independent stories rather than a coherent narrative composition. To these lines of evidence, Schmidt adds minor inconsistencies between setting and story as well as textual variation in introductory and transitional material. These observations, according to Schmidt, require us to imagine the Jesus tradition taking shape on the lips of innumerable storytellers before an artless and haphazard collection into a gospel.

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<sup>12</sup> Schmidt, 34–36.

<sup>13</sup> David R. Hall, *The Gospel Framework: Fiction or Fact?* (Paternoster Press, 1998), 4. Although Hall’s critique of Schmidt is undermined by a thoroughgoing credulity toward the gospels, Hall correctly diagnoses Schmidt’s method as pervasively presuppositional.

Martin Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann’s application of Gunkel’s method to the Jesus tradition was premised on the view of the gospels articulated by Schmidt. Dibelius, in *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums*, classifies narrative units in the gospels according to their use in the life and *cultus* of the primitive church. This operation requires Dibelius to assume that the gospels preserve un-assimilated oral traditions in discrete narrative units. It follows from this view, according to Dibelius, that “[t]he authors of the Gospels, at least of the synoptics, are not ‘authors’ in the literary sense, but collectors.”<sup>14</sup> Rather, individual units of Jesus tradition collected in the synoptics were composed by innumerable individuals, working “without [...] any ‘literary’ intent.”<sup>15</sup> On Dibelius’ vision of gospel composition —not significantly different from Schmidt’s— the gospel-as-work is unauthored.<sup>16</sup>

While Dibelius’ project was taxonomic, Bultmann was concerned to reconstruct the transmission history of individual narrative traditions. In his monumental *Die Geschichte der Synoptischen Tradition*, Bultmann agreed with Schmidt that Jesus traditions originated as individual narrative or apophthegmatic units in the cultic, apologetic, and other practices of the Christian community.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, Bultmann followed Gunkel in assigning deviations from the ideal form of a narrative or saying to ecclesiological and/or Hellenistic redaction. The

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<sup>14</sup> Martin Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel* (New York: Scribner, 1965), 59. Elsewhere, Dibelius characterizes the evangelists as “only to the smallest extent authors.” Dibelius, 3–4.

<sup>15</sup> Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*, 1.

<sup>16</sup> Dibelius allows that gospels fall along a spectrum of literary sophistication. Mark is a mere collection of discrete traditions while John is the composition of a creative author. Although he situates Matthew and Luke somewhere between these poles, all three synoptics, according to Dibelius, were compilations of popular and diverse pre-literary traditions. Although Dibelius differentiates the literary quality of *Luke* from *Matthew* and *Mark* already in *Die Formgeschichte* (e.g. Dibelius, 231.), he dedicated an entire section of a later article to the difference between the four gospels. Martin Dibelius, “The Structure and Literary Character of the Gospels,” *The Harvard Theological Review* 20, no. 3 (1927): 151–70.

<sup>17</sup> Schmidt appears frequently in Bultmann’s footnotes, but see especially the appeal to *Der Rahmen* at Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. John Marsh, Revised edition (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub, 1994), 338.

formulation and development of Jesus traditions, on Bultmann's account, takes place primarily in the pre-literary, oral transmission of each narrative. There is comparatively little leftover, therefore, for which the evangelist was responsible.

Bultmann —under the influence of William Wrede among others— assigns significantly more creativity to the evangelists than other form critics. Bultmann attributes ideologically motivated and literarily conscious redaction of traditional material to the author of *Mark*.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, Bultmann characterizes *Mark* as most constrained by tradition and its author, therefore, as something less than master of his material.<sup>19</sup> *Matthew* too preserves discrete, relatively undigested products of oral transmission. But, even more than *Mark*, the author of *Matthew* reworked the Jesus tradition to reflect his theological commitments and Jewish scribal background.<sup>20</sup> Finally, *Luke*, according to Bultmann, evinces a literary self-consciousness unprecedented in the Jesus tradition. Although the shape of the third gospel, according to Bultmann, reflects the origin of Jesus traditions as independent pericopes produced in service of the Christian community, the third evangelist refashioned synoptic material in order to impress a cultured, Hellenistic readership.<sup>21</sup> Even in the case of *Luke*, however, Bultmann is persuaded that its “theological tendencies” are attributable to the evangelist’s circle and age but not the evangelist’s own “dogmatic conceptions.”<sup>22</sup> On Bultmann’s view, gospels are irreducibly communal compositions.

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<sup>18</sup> Bultmann, 338–51.

<sup>19</sup> Bultmann, 350.

<sup>20</sup> Bultmann, 356–59.

<sup>21</sup> Bultmann, 359–67.

<sup>22</sup> Bultmann, 366.

Schmidt, Dibelius, and Bultmann, therefore, understood the synoptic gospels to be compilations of traditional stories composed (and even compiled into smaller collections) by communities, not individuals. Stories about Jesus developed across decades of oral transmission, not at the hands of creative authors. The evangelists, therefore, were primarily collectors and in this capacity exercised minimal selectivity or creativity in arrangement and reproduction of oral tradition. On the form critical view, the gospel-as-work is not the kind of book with an identifiable author or compositional occasion.

#### **4.3 Evangelist as Author: Redaction and Genre Criticism**

There were always dissenting voices: In 1947, Morton S. Enslin re-asserted the “artistry” evinced in *Mark*.<sup>23</sup> “He is not restricted to bits of material which he must recount or piece together [...],” but, rather, “shows a perfect freedom with the material he uses and rewrites and interprets as seems to him wise.”<sup>24</sup> Likewise, Austin Farrer objected to the conception of the third evangelist as “essentially an adapter and compiler,” rather than a creative author.<sup>25</sup>

It was the advance of redaction criticism, however, that troubled the form critical conception of gospel literature. And a renewed interest in genre criticism followed closely behind. Both approaches identify authorial choices most plausibly attributed to the evangelists. Further, they offer better explanations of the textual phenomena than those proffered by Schmidt and the Form Critics in support of their sub-literary view of the gospels.

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<sup>23</sup> Morton S. Enslin, “The Artistry of Mark,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 66, no. 4 (1947): 385–99.

<sup>24</sup> Enslin, 389.

<sup>25</sup> Austin Farrer, “On Dispensing with Q,” in *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot*, ed. D.E. Nineham (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), 66.

A history of these interpretive methods would be out of place here. As, indeed, would a comprehensive exposition of *Matthew* and *Luke*. I offer, instead, a selection of the most defensible insights furnished by redaction and genre criticism in support of understanding the synoptic gospels as the products of authors rather than compilations of communal traditions. The best explanation for ideologically coherent redaction and comportment to generic literary conventions, I contend, is that the synoptic gospels are not mere collections of tradition but the creative expression of an author.

#### 4.3.1 William Wrede

William Wrede paved the way for redaction criticism and his key insight remains valuable for understanding the composition of gospel literature. In *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien*, Wrede demonstrates that an historically implausible motif of secrecy had been imposed on traditional material across several pericopes in the *Gospel according to Mark*.<sup>26</sup> From the demoniac in *Mark*'s first chapter to Bartimaeus in the passion narrative, nearly everyone who witnesses a miracle or possesses insight into Jesus' identity is silenced.<sup>27</sup> This is a curious feature, Wrede argues, given the portrayal of Jesus in *Mark* (not to mention the other gospels) as a public miracle worker.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, some of Jesus' injunctions to silence make little sense as descriptions of the activity of an historical person. Jairus, for instance, is enjoined to secrecy about his daughter's resurrection in the middle of her funeral rites (Mk 5:21-43).<sup>29</sup> The community has already gathered to grieve. How can Jairus be expected to conceal his daughter's

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<sup>26</sup> D.W. Wrede, *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien: zugleich ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Markusevangeliums* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901).

<sup>27</sup> The well-known exception is *Mark* 5:19-20.

<sup>28</sup> Wrede, *Das Messiasgeheimnis*, 17, 126-27. Jesus is a public miracle worker in the double tradition (e.g. Mt 11:4-5/Lk 7:22) and John (e.g. 2:23).

<sup>29</sup> Wrede, 50-51.

resuscitation? Similarly, *Mark's* explanation for Jesus' use of parables (4:11-12) does not describe the perspicuous parables in *Mark* (e.g. 3:23) or *Mark's* own account of their effect on his listeners (12:12). These and other examples suggest to Wrede that the actions and events which constitute *Mark's* messianic secret cannot be attributed to the historical Jesus.

The most important case study for Wrede's thesis is the deaf man in the Decapolis (7:31-37). First, Jesus removes the man from the crowd and heals him "in private" (κατ' ἰδίαν) (7:33). Immediately thereafter, Jesus enjoins a non-existent crowd to silence (7:36). Here, Wrede shows that the attempt to conceal Jesus' identity has been introduced into a story with no witnesses present for Jesus to silence.<sup>30</sup> This case study demonstrates not only the historical implausibility of the secrecy motif, but that the messianic secret must have been imposed secondarily onto already-formulated stories about Jesus.

This insight, however, did not lead Wrede to identify the evangelist as an author. "How would Mark," Wrede asks, "come to introduce such an idea into a tradition that knew nothing of it?"<sup>31</sup> The notion of an evangelist revising at will traditions about Jesus is simply incomprehensible to Wrede. He speaks, rather, of the evangelist as "quite naïve" and describes his "little ability" to construct plausible narratives.<sup>32</sup> Wrede apparently operated under the assumption shared by his contemporaries that Christians in the first century were insufficiently

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<sup>30</sup> William Wrede, *The Messianic Secret*, trans. JCG Greig (Cambridge and London: James Clarke & Co LTD, 1901), 133.

<sup>31</sup> Wrede, 145.

<sup>32</sup> „Für einen leidlich naiven Schriftsteller alter Zeit ist das freilich äusserst unwahrscheinlich.“ Wrede, *Das Messiasgeheimnis*, 132. „Es zeigt sich, dass dieser Schriftsteller nur eine geringe Fähigkeit hat, sich in die historische Situation zu versetzen, die er angiebt.“ Wrede, 132–33. See also the contrast of Mark's naivety with the literary character of John at Wrede, 144–45.

sophisticated to act as creative authors. Instead, Wrede attributes the evolution of Jesus traditions—including the imposed motif of secrecy—to a community rather than an individual.<sup>33</sup>

Even so, Wrede's insight undermines a key component of the model of gospel origins presupposed by the form critics. The distribution of the secrecy motif throughout the gospel means that each story cannot have developed into its Markan form independently. Rather, the imposition of a single motif across dozens of stories throughout the gospel suggests a literary unity.<sup>34</sup> Wrede's anticipation of redaction criticism rules against understanding synoptic pericopes as discrete and undigested units of oral tradition.

#### 4.3.2 Matthew's Redaction Profile

Günther Bornkamm's study of the Stilling of the Storm in *Matthew* is often regarded as the beginning of redaction criticism.<sup>35</sup> Bornkamm describes his method as inferring an evangelist's "*Motiven der Komposition*" and "*theologischer Absichten*" from the changes they made to their literary sources.<sup>36</sup> Bornkamm, however, receives altogether too much credit for this contribution. The motifs outlined below in *Matthew* and *Luke* were already identified on redactional critical grounds long before Bornkamm's essay. Moreover, Bornkamm's study was limited to slight differences between *Mark* and *Matthew* in a single pericope. Bornkamm's

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<sup>33</sup> Wrede, *Das Messiasgeheimnis*, 145–46.

<sup>34</sup> The exception at 5:19-20 probably reflects Mark's appropriation of the Pauline mission to the gentiles. Even allowing it as an exception, however, does little to undermine the coherence of the motif.

<sup>35</sup> Günther Bornkamm, "Die Sturmstillung im Matthäus-Evangelium," in *Überlieferung und Auslegung im Matthäusevangelium*, by Günther Bornkamm, Gerhard Barth, and Heinz Joachim Held (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1961), 48–53. Norman Perrin, *What Is Redaction Criticism?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 25.

<sup>36</sup> Bornkamm, "Die Sturmstillung im Matthäus-Evangelium," 53. Robert H. Stein acknowledges forerunners but credits Hans Conzelmann's *Die Mitte der Zeit* and Willi Marxsen's *Der Evangelist Markus* with starting „redaktionsgeschichte.“ Robert H. Stein, "What Is Redaktionsgeschichte?," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88, no. 1 (1969): 48.

examples are too subtle and too few to constitute a compelling case for the authorial character of the evangelist's activity.

For the present purposes, redaction criticism —comparing a work to its literary sources to identify differences— furnishes historians with a method for distinguishing the activity of the evangelist from received tradition with a reasonable degree of confidence. It does not follow, of course, that a redaction profile reflects the evangelist's only concerns or interests. Careful reproduction of source material might just as well reflect the author's enthusiasm for preserving the language of their literary predecessor.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, an evangelist (by definition) decided to write a new work instead of merely copying their source whole. Differences between the new work and its source material likely reflect the evangelist's impetus for composing a new book instead of reproducing the old. For the present argument, however, it matters only that redaction criticism of *Matthew* and *Luke* reveals thematically coherent revision of source material across pericopes.

A particularly compelling example of thematically coherent redaction across *Matthew* is the portrayal of Jesus as a “new Moses.” A few years before the publication of Bornkamm's essay, W.D. Davies argued that the evangelist's treatment of material from *Mark* and *Q* in the Matthean Transfiguration and Sermon on the Mount reflect an effort to assimilate Jesus to Moses.<sup>38</sup> Although Davies does not use the language of *Redaktionsgeschichte*, he employs the method. Decades later, Davies's analysis of this theme in *Matthew* inspired Dale Allison to write

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<sup>37</sup> This is a major theme of J. Andrew Doole, *What Was Mark for Matthew?: An Examination of Matthew's Relationship and Attitude to His Primary Source* (Mohr Siebeck, 2013).

<sup>38</sup> W.D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964). Davies also detects this motif (although to a lesser degree) in the Feeding of the Five Thousand. In fact, Davies' study is notable for its skepticism.

*The New Moses*.<sup>39</sup> This thoroughgoing study of a Matthean motif provides an especially compelling case for a coherent authorial project woven throughout the gospel. Supplemented with the relevant work by Raymond Brown and Ulrich Luz, I follow Allison's analysis below.

*Matthew*'s infancy narrative closely follows traditions about Moses' childhood.<sup>40</sup> A ruler made suspicious by religious experts (see Josephus, *Antiquities* 2.9.2), the slaughter of innocents, a warning in a dream (see *Antiquities* 2.9.3), the protagonist's flight to Egypt, and, finally, the demise of a hostile ruler as the catalyst for the protagonist's homecoming create a detailed parallel between Jesus and Moses.<sup>41</sup> All these elements, moreover, are unique to *Matthew*. Since *Mark* lacks an infancy narrative and *Luke* was written after (or independent of) *Matthew*, we cannot directly compare the Matthean infancy narrative to its literary source(s). Redaction criticism, nevertheless, furnishes good reason to attribute the Mosaic parallels in the first two chapters of *Matthew* to the evangelist's creative hand. Namely, the concentration of redactional features in the Matthean nativity suggests that these passages were formulated by the evangelist.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Dale C. Allison Jr., *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

<sup>40</sup> Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, n.d., 112–16; Allison Jr., *The New Moses*, 140–65; Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary, Hermeneia* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 92–93.

<sup>41</sup> The clearest extra-biblical parallels are Josephus' reports that a scribe made pharaoh aware of the birth of a prophesied Jewish leader (*Ant.* 2.9.2) and that Moses' father was warned of impending danger by a dream (*Ant.* 2.9.3). Brown and Allison notes further parallels in Rabbinic sources – including traditions of miraculous conception. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 115; Allison Jr., *The New Moses*, 143–51.

<sup>42</sup> Throughout the gospel, Matthew revises elements of the Markan narrative to comport with the purported prophesy. Even if the evangelist received some earlier tradition about Jesus' infancy, the correspondence between fulfillment formulae and Mosaic parallels suggests that the "New Moses" typology is a Matthean composition. Historians do not assume thoroughgoing dependence on written or oral sources for every unique narrative in *Joseph and Aseneth*, *The Protoevangelium of James*, or the *Life of Apollonius*. On the contrary, barring any specific evidence for a passage's dependence on another text or formalized oral tradition, the working presumption is fresh composition. In any case, the parallels with Moses introduced here by the evangelist corroborate the overarching program evinced in *Matthew*'s redaction of *Mark* elsewhere.

First, the redaction profile of *Matthew* must be established independent of the passage in question. So, for instance, the author of *Matthew* introduces a host of fulfillment citations into pericopes copied out of *Mark* (4:14-16, 8:17, 12:18-21, 13:14-15, 13:35, 21:4-5).<sup>43</sup> None of these are present in *Mark*. Rather, these are consistently added into Markan material in the narrator's voice. Such fulfillment citations, therefore, belong to the redaction profile of *Matthew*. That is, these fulfillment citations (outside the Matthean nativity) are the kind of thing that the evangelist writes.

The same sort of distinctively Matthean fulfillment citations provide the backbone of *Matthew's* infancy. There are five fulfilled prophecies in the first two chapters of *Matthew*. As the following table shows, each fulfilled prophecy (drawn from throughout the Hebrew Bible) constitutes a parallel with the life of Moses.<sup>44</sup>

<b><i>Matthew</i></b>	<b>Mosaic Parallel</b>	<b>Fulfillment Citation</b>
1:18-25	Father's Dream	Isaiah 7:14
2:1-12	Scribe Arouses Ruler's Suspicion	Micah 5:1
2:13-15	Flight to Egypt	Hosea 11:1
2:16-18	Slaughter of Innocents	Jeremiah 31:15
2:19-23	Death of Ruler and Return	Isaiah 4:3(?)

There is a neat parallelism between the infancy of Jesus and Moses in the first four scenes. In each case, distinctive events associated with Moses' infancy are attributed to Jesus. In

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<sup>43</sup> Scholars are virtually unanimous that the redactional character of these citations and their typically Matthean language indicate that the citation formulas are compositions of the evangelist. See especially the arguments in Martinus J J Menken, "The References to Jeremiah in the Gospel According to Matthew (Matt 2:17, 16:14, 27:9)," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 60, no. 1 (April 1984): 5–24. Luz agrees with Menken, citing "Matthean linguistic characteristics" and accommodation to Matthean contexts, but rejects out of hand the suggestion that the evangelist "simply invented it." Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 125–26.

<sup>44</sup> I adopt here Brown's first proposed division of the infancy narrative. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 51.

the fifth scene, however, the relevant parallel is an event from Moses' adult life (*Exodus* 4:19-20). It might seem to stretch credulity that the evangelist reached forward several chapters in the book of *Exodus* to a story about the adult Moses in his narration of Jesus' return to Judea but a verbal allusion to the Greek translation of *Exodus* makes the evangelist's assimilation of Jesus to Moses unambiguous.<sup>45</sup>

We probably will never know what traditions about Jesus' nativity pre-existed the composition of *Matthew*. But it is the Matthean fulfillment citations that assimilate Jesus to Moses. Redaction criticism reveals that the Mosaic elements of Jesus' nativity are covered in the evangelist's fingerprints.

This sort of Mosaic typology is hardly limited to *Matthew's* nativity. The same ideological program is evident throughout the evangelist's redaction of *Mark*. The evangelist assimilates *Mark's* temptation (Mt 4:2//Mk 1:13) to Moses' fast (Ex 24:18) and *Mark's* transfiguration (Mt 17:2//Mk 9:1) to Moses' transformation at Sinai (Ex 34:29, Philo; *Life of Moses* 2:70).<sup>46</sup> Uniquely Matthean material, including elements of Jesus' ministry (11:28-30) and The Great Commission (28:16-20), creates further parallels between Jesus and Moses.<sup>47</sup> From the beginning of the gospel to its end, those elements most plausibly attributable to the evangelist's pen assimilate Jesus to Moses.

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<sup>45</sup> Allison notes that the antecedent of the plural participle οἱ ζητοῦντες in Mt 2:20 is the singular Herod in verse 2:19. The evangelist has retained the verbiage of Greek *Exodus* "without perfect grammatical adjustment" to make the Mosaic parallel "unmistakable." Brown, 107; Allison Jr., *The New Moses*, 143.

<sup>46</sup> On the temptation, I follow Allison against Davies. Allison Jr., *The New Moses*, 165–69; Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*, 45–48. Allison and Davies agree on the Mosaic character of Matthean redaction in the Transfiguration. Allison Jr., *The New Moses*, 244; Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*, 50–56.

<sup>47</sup> Allison 218-233, 262-266

The heart of *Matthew*'s Mosaic portrait of Jesus is the Sermon on the Mount. Here Jesus mediates divine law atop a mountain. The conceptual parallel with Sinai is self-evident. The sermon is largely composed of non-Markan material (some of which is also found in *Luke*) but framed with re-written *Mark*. The evangelist begins the pericope by relocating and transforming *Mark* 3:13.

*Mark* 3:13

Καὶ ἀναβαίνει εἰς τὸ ὄρος καὶ προσκαλεῖται  
οὓς ἤθελεν αὐτός, καὶ ἀπῆλθον πρὸς αὐτόν.

And he went up into the mountain and summoned those he wished, and they went with him.

*Matthew* 5:1-2

Ἴδὼν δὲ τοὺς ὄχλους ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος· καὶ καθίσαντος αὐτοῦ προσῆλθαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ· καὶ ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ ἐδίδασκεν αὐτοὺς λέγων·

And seeing the crowds, he went up into the mountain and, when he sat, his disciples came to him and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying...

In both gospels, Jesus ascends a mountain and summons his followers. Indeed, the phrase ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος echoes the very language of Greek *Exodus* 19:3.

Greek *Exodus* 19:3a  
καὶ μωυσῆς ἀνέβη  
εἰς τὸ ὄρος τοῦ θεοῦ

*Matthew* 5:1  
Ἴδὼν δὲ τοὺς ὄχλους ἀνέβη  
εἰς τὸ ὄρος

More telling, however, is the description of Jesus seated, teaching his disciples. Allison notes that Philo (*Sacr.* 8), Ezekiel the Tragedian (*apud* Eusebius, *PE* 9.29.4-6), 4 *Ezra* 14, and several Rabbinic sources attest a widespread tradition that Moses delivered the law while seated atop Sinai.<sup>48</sup> Probably, therefore, the participial phrase καθίσαντος αὐτοῦ assimilates Jesus in the

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<sup>48</sup> Allison 175-179.

Sermon on the Mount to a popular image of Moses on Mount Sinai. Jesus' subsequent action, teaching (ἐδίδασκεν), certainly does. Both are Matthean redaction of *Mark*.

The author of *Matthew* also concludes the sermon with a plausible allusion to Moses on Sinai. Jesus proceeds in *Matthew* from the Sermon on the Mount to the Cleansing of the Leper. As expected, the author of *Matthew* draws this pericope from *Mark*. The Matthean version of the story, however, begins with a reference back to the Sermon on Mount, echoing Moses' descent from Sinai.<sup>49</sup>

*Mark* 1:40

Καὶ ἔρχεται πρὸς αὐτὸν λεπρὸς παρακαλῶν αὐτὸν καὶ γονυπετῶν λέγων αὐτῷ ὅτι Ἐὰν θέλῃς δύνασαι με καθαρίσαι.

And a leper came to him petitioning him and falling to a knee, saying to him, "If you wish, you are able to heal me."

*Matthew* 8:1-2

Καταβάντος δὲ αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄρους ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ ὄχλοι πολλοί καὶ ἰδοὺ λεπρὸς προσελθὼν προσεκύνει αὐτῷ λέγων· Κύριε, ἐὰν θέλῃς δύνασαι με καθαρίσαι.

And when he descended from the mountain, many crowds followed him and behold, when a leper came, he worshiped him, saying, "Lord, if you wish, you are able to heal me."

Greek *Exodus* 34:29ab (A)<sup>50</sup>

ὡς δὲ κατέβαινε μωυσῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄρους καὶ αἱ δύο πλάκες ἐπὶ τῶν χειρῶν μωυσῆ καταβαίνοντος δὲ αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄρους μωυσῆς οὐκ ἤδει ὅτι [...]

And when Moses descended from the mountain and the two tablets in Moses' hands — and when he descended from the mountain, Moses did not see that [...]

The allusion to *Exodus* is subtle but a few considerations commend it. First, the redactional reference to the crowds (ὄχλοι) in Jesus' descent recalls the crowds (τοὺς ὄχλους) introduced by *Matthew* as an allusion to Moses' ascent at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount (5:1). Second, as Allison notes, the precise phrasing shared by *Matthew* and the

<sup>49</sup> Allison Jr., *The New Moses*, 179–80.

<sup>50</sup> Codex Vaticanus gives ἐκ instead of ἀπὸ in both instances. Alexandrinus has many more allies in the second instance.

manuscripts of Greek *Exodus* is found nowhere else in the Jewish Scriptures.<sup>51</sup> The author of *Matthew*, therefore, reworked *Mark* in order to frame Jesus' sermon with Mosaic imagery.

In the foregoing survey of redaction in *Matthew*, I restricted myself to a single ideological program across the gospel. This is a worthwhile exercise because, like Wrede's study of secrecy in *Mark*, an ideologically coherent redaction profile undermines the form critical conception of the evangelist as a mere collector of individual, undigested oral traditions. A coherent theme running through pericopes and motivating the sequence of their presentation demands another explanation. The evangelist left other fingerprints, but the assimilation of Jesus to Moses throughout *The Gospel according to Matthew* suggests that the evangelist was, indeed, an author.<sup>52</sup>

#### 4.3.3 Luke's Redaction Profile

Perhaps owing to *Luke's* preface or comparably elevated style, scholars are most ready to recognize the third synoptic gospel as the product of a creative author. I treat *Luke*, therefore, more succinctly. Decades before Bornkamm's study, Henry Cadbury wrote *The Style and Literary Method of Luke*, a study of Lukan vocabulary, stylistics, and compositional method employing what Cadbury calls "the study of redactional method."<sup>53</sup> The image that emerges from Cadbury's study of Lukan revisions to *Mark* reveal an author with consistent stylistic tendencies.

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<sup>51</sup> Allison Jr., *The New Moses*, 180.

<sup>52</sup> Especially notable are the anachronistic use of ἐκκλησία in Matthean redaction of *Mark*, the introduction of earthquakes into Markan pericopes, animal pairs, and directives premised on the continued observance of Mosaic law. Michael D. Goulder, "Is Q a Juggernaut?," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115, no. 4 (1996): 667–81; Joel Marcus, "Did Matthew Believe His Myths?," in *An Early Reader of Mark and Q*, ed. Jozef Verheyden and Gilbert van Belle, *Biblical Tools and Studies* 21 (Leuven: Peeters, 2016), 217–49. On redactional vocabulary in *Matthew*, see the table at Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 25–40.

<sup>53</sup> Henry J. Cadbury, *The Style and Literary Method of Luke*, *Harvard Theological Studies*, 6 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1920), 73.

Throughout the third gospel, the words “great” (μέγας) and “many” (πολύς) are removed from Markan material, while the terms “all” (πᾶς) and “each” (ἕκαστος) are frequently added.<sup>54</sup> Likewise, Cadbury notes an aversion to “barbarous words and names.”<sup>55</sup> There is little sense in looking for some ideological program here; these (and the other tendencies noted by Cadbury) are the kinds of changes one expects to find in an author’s reworking of received material.

Scholars have an additional analytic tool in studying the third gospel: *The Acts of the Apostles*. This second work by the same hand furnishes another methodological control – alongside redaction criticism – for identifying the thematic interests of the third evangelist. The appearance of themes from *Acts* in the redaction profile of *Luke* constitutes an especially strong case for the evangelist’s creativity.

Relying on these tools, the theme most easily recognized in the third evangelist’s revision of traditional material is an emphasis on Jerusalem. The year before Bornkamm’s essay, John Knox argued that the third evangelist reoriented the lives of Jesus and Paul around the holy city.<sup>56</sup> Knox assigns this to the evangelist’s effort to present Christianity as continuous with “authentic Judaism.”<sup>57</sup> Whatever the evangelist’s motive, however, a comparison of *Luke* with *Mark*, and *Acts* with *Galatians* renders this authorial agenda unmistakable.

The book of *Acts* portrays Paul residing in Jerusalem persecuting Christians (7:58; 8:1-3; 9:1-2, 26) until he encounters Jesus on an excursion to Damascus (9:1-3). This cannot be reconciled with Paul’s own account of his itinerary in *Galatians*. There, Paul reports that, after

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<sup>54</sup> Cadbury, 115, 118–19.

<sup>55</sup> Cadbury, 154–58.

<sup>56</sup> John Knox, *Chapters in a Life of Paul* (New York; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1950), 25–27.

<sup>57</sup> Knox, 25.

his revelatory encounter with Jesus and an excursion to Arabia, he “returned to Damascus” (1:17). The verb ὑπέστρεψα implies that Damascus —not Jerusalem— was Paul’s point of origin. Further, Paul says that he was unknown “by appearance” (τῷ προσώπῳ) to the churches in Judea (1:22-23) and proceeds to describe two short visits to the city (1:18; 2:1). These passages suggest that Jerusalem was not, in fact, Paul’s base of operation. This contrasts starkly with the portrayal of Paul in *Acts* persecuting Christians in Jerusalem (8:1-2), setting out from Jerusalem to persecute Christians in Damascus (9:1-3), and subsequently returning to Jerusalem where the local Christians, through the intervention of Barnabas, accepted him (9:26-29a). The author of *Acts* evidently relocated Paul’s persecuting activities and earliest days as a Jesus follower to Jerusalem.

The third evangelist not only re-writes Paul’s itinerary to feature Jerusalem but amplifies the holy city in Paul’s pedigree. The author of *Acts* portrays Paul as educated in Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel (22:3). Such biographical details are more difficult to evaluate than Paul’s itinerary. The epistolary Paul might have mentioned his famous teacher when boasting of his qualifications in *Galatians* and *Philippians*.<sup>58</sup> Paul’s silence is admittedly weak evidence, but it engenders suspicion. What we do know of Paul’s pre-commission practices, however, confirms this suspicion: Paul’s persecution of deviant co-religionists (1 Cor 15:9; Galatians 1:13) align him with the school of Shammai against Hillel.<sup>59</sup> Gamaliel was the grandson of Hillel and a

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<sup>58</sup> Knox, 34–35.

<sup>59</sup> Morton S. Enslin, “Paul and Gamaliel,” *The Journal of Religion* 7, no. 4 (1927): 360–75; N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 26–34; Paula Fredriksen, *Paul: The Pagans’ Apostle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 61–62.

member of this school. Paul, therefore, did not teach or behave like a student of Gamaliel. Probably this also belongs to the evangelist's effort to situate Paul in Jerusalem.

The *Gospel according to Luke* reflects the same authorial program. This is most clearly seen moving backwards through the third gospel. The resurrected Jesus appears to his disciples in Galilee according to *Mark* (14:28; 16:7) and *Matthew* (26:23; 28:7, 10, 16). The third evangelist, however, relocates these events to Jerusalem (24:33, 52-53). Indeed, Jesus in *Luke* instructs his disciples to remain in Jerusalem (24:49) — where they will be found throughout the book of *Acts*. The author of *Luke* re-wrote *Mark* (and *Matthew*) to highlight Jerusalem in the resurrection narrative.

In a similar way, the evangelist re-writes Jesus' ministry in the body of the gospel. With the important exception of Jesus' rejection at Nazareth (see the discussion in chapter five), the first nine chapters of *Luke* closely follow the sequence of the first nine chapters of *Mark*. The third evangelist, however, breaks from the Markan sequence to introduce an extended journey to Jerusalem.<sup>60</sup> Nearly, half of Jesus' ministry in *Luke* will take place on this path to the holy city. The shift in sequence is marked at 9:51 with the programmatic "and he set his face to go to Jerusalem." Just before this, the evangelist introduces into the Transfiguration a statement foreshadowing Jesus' journey. As Mark Goodacre observes, this statement is Lukan redaction of *Mark*.<sup>61</sup> The evangelist, thereafter, repeatedly reminds the reader of Jesus' agenda (9:53, 57; 10:38; 11:53; 13:22, 33; 17:11). None of these reminders are found in *Matthew* or *Mark*. The

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<sup>60</sup> Mark Goodacre argues that the author of *Luke-Acts* expands upon *Mark*'s appropriation of the Isaianic "Way of the Lord." Mark Goodacre, "Re-Walking the Way of the Lord," in *Luke's Literary Creativity*, by Mogens Müller and Jesper Tang Nielsen (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016), 26–43. I restrict myself to Knox's more modest inference about the third evangelist's agenda.

<sup>61</sup> Goodacre, 37.

third evangelist thus restructured and re-wrote the ministry of Jesus to emphasize Jesus' Jerusalem-orientated destiny.

Lastly, the Lukan infancy fits the established pattern. The second chapter narrates two visits to Jerusalem. Jesus travels from Bethlehem as an infant (2:22-28) and then again as a twelve-year-old (2:41-51). Verse 41, furthermore, suggests that Jesus visited the temple each year. All these are traditions without parallel in *Mark* or *Matthew*. Like the Paul of *Acts* (as opposed to the historical Paul), the Jesus of *Luke* begins and ends his ministry in Jerusalem.

The emphasis on Jerusalem in *Luke*—like the Messianic Secret in *Mark* and Mosaic typology in *Matthew*—is only one unifying theme in the redaction profile of the third evangelist. It is felicitous that the treatment of Paul's biography in *Acts* mirrors this authorial program in the gospel. Voluntary poverty and the rejection of the gospel by Israel are equally prominent themes in Lukan redaction of *Mark*.<sup>62</sup> Indeed, these themes are also corroborated by the *Acts of the Apostles*.<sup>63</sup> The point is clear: the third evangelist's rewriting of *Mark* evinces a thematic and ideological coherence not only across the gospel but with the book of *Acts*.<sup>64</sup>

“Redaction criticism,” says Norman Perrin, “taught us to see the synoptic evangelists as authors.”<sup>65</sup> It is, of course, only one strategy for distinguishing the activity of the evangelist from

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<sup>62</sup> Goodacre observes that the disciples total renunciation is Lukan redaction at Mt 4:22/Mk 1:20/Lk 5:11 and Mt 9:9/Mk 2:14/Lk 5:28. Mark Goodacre, *The Case Against Q: Studies in Markan Priority and the Synoptic Problem* (Harrisburg, Pa: Trinity Press International, 2002), 141. The motif also appears in the Lukan double tradition (but not the Matthean version) at Mt 5:3/Lk 6:10 and Mt 10:38/Lk 14:33 as well as special material at Lk 1:53, 12:13-21, and 16:19-31.

<sup>63</sup> In these cases, however, Paul's letters furnish no methodological control.

<sup>64</sup> Although I furnish other reasons for rejecting the priority of Marcion's gospel to *Luke*, the thematic and ideological unity of material shared between *Luke* and Marcion's gospel, the first chapters of *Luke*, and *Acts* is strong evidence for common authorship (and Marcionite posteriority).

<sup>65</sup> Norman Perrin, “Evangelist as Author: Reflections on Method in the Study and Interpretation of the Synoptic Gospels and Acts,” *Biblical Research* 17 (1972): 14–15.

received tradition, but its advent brought to light the creative compositional behavior entailed in re-writing a synoptic gospel. The preceding sections outlined some of the most defensible results of this analytic tool. The identification of such ideologically coherent redaction profiles in the synoptic gospels precludes characterizing the evangelists as mere compilers. Rather, this is clear evidence of creativity expressed across the whole gospel. Redaction criticism provides good justification for understanding each gospel-as-work as the product of an author.

#### 4.3.4 Genre Criticism

The redaction critic's rediscovery of the evangelist-as-author prompted scholars to consider the gospel-as-work within a wider Roman literary context.<sup>66</sup> Since the form critics understood the synoptics as mere collections of discrete pericope-length units of oral tradition, the evangelist's participation in the generic conventions of Greek literary culture was unimaginable.<sup>67</sup> However, if the gospel-as-work is authored, the evangelist might have composed according to contemporary literary conventions. In the history of the sub-field, the most popular generic *comparanda* have been Greco-Roman biographies.<sup>68</sup> At the same time, the previous chapter argued that *Matthew* and *Luke* were composed according to the conventions of technical literature. The Lukan prologue, Loveday Alexander showed, reflects further engagement with this literary sub-culture. A recent study by Robyn Walsh, building on Glen Bowersock's

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<sup>66</sup> Norman R. Petersen, *Literary Criticism for New Testament Critics* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1957), 17–18; Richard A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?: A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 70 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 13–16; Helen K. Bond, *The First Biography of Jesus: Genre and Meaning in Mark's Gospel* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2020), 24–25.

<sup>67</sup> Schmidt dedicated an entire treatise to this subject, discussed above. As also noted above, the third gospel sometimes represented a partial exception.

<sup>68</sup> This is mostly due to Richard Burridge's influential study. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?: A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*.

neglected proposal, identifies important features shared between gospels and the Greek novel.<sup>69</sup> Lastly, the imitation of Jewish Scripture in the synoptics is well established.<sup>70</sup> Genre analysis of the gospels has been fruitful indeed.

To choose among genre classifications would be folly.<sup>71</sup> John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* contains Biblical allegory, history, fiction, and memoir. At different points in his novel, Steinbeck participates in the literary conventions of each of these genres and others. Nothing is gained and much is lost by insisting that the entire work be categorized according to a single genre label. So too with gospels. The historian is better served by identifying the evangelist's participation in literary conventions wherever these can be seen.

The relevant insight of genre criticism for the present argument is that the episodic shape of the synoptic gospels reflects a contemporary literary convention rather than being an artefact of the compilation of independently circulating units of oral tradition. As noted above, it was the episodic arrangement of material in the synoptics that provided the primary justification for the form critical theories of gospel composition. Schmidt, for instance, appealed to the serialized structure of the synoptics to argue that gospels were collections of individual pericopes without setting or sequence. If this arrangement of material is explicable in terms of literary convention,

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<sup>69</sup> Glen Warren Bowersock, *Fiction as History: Nero to Julian* (University of California Press, 1997); Robyn Faith Walsh, *The Origins of Early Christian Literature: Contextualizing the New Testament within Greco-Roman Literary Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

<sup>70</sup> See, for instance, the critique of Burridge's study in Adela Yarbro Collins, "Genre and the Gospels," *The Journal of Religion* 75, no. 2 (1995): 239–46.

<sup>71</sup> I understand 'genre' as a classification for social conventions at the intersection of form and substance of communicative actions. See Carolyn R. Miller, "Genre as Social Action," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70, no. 2 (1984): 151–67. A substantially similar approach to 'genre' is set-out in Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "Form and Genre in Rhetorical Criticism: An Introduction," in *Form and Genre: Shaping Rhetorical Action*, ed. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson (Falls Church, VA: Speech Communication Association, 1978), 5–28.

however, the premiere justification for viewing the gospels as anthologies of preexistent oral traditions (rather than creative compositions) is undermined.

“[T]here is no shortage of material,” observes Loveday Alexander, “from the cultural worlds of the gospels, both Jewish and Greek, to provide generic analogues to the anecdotal gospel tradition.”<sup>72</sup> Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*, for instance, is composed of anecdotes about Socrates without setting or sequence.<sup>73</sup> Likewise, Lucian’s *Demonax* is a series of *chreia* with brief opening and concluding narratives.<sup>74</sup> Neither Xenophon nor Lucian relied on long traditions of oral transmission. They were not gathering individual pericopes with independent transmission histories. Rather, both authors were contemporaries of their subjects. They could, therefore, have composed their work in any shape they pleased. Both authors, nevertheless, wrote books about their teacher as a collection of short, discrete, decontextualized stories. Does the same literary structure in the gospels justify form critical speculations about oral prehistory?

The evangelist’s participation in a literary convention is a simpler explanation for the serialized shape of the synoptics. Although Xenophon died a half millennium before the evangelists, the *Memorabilia* (ἀπομνημονεύματα) inspired a tradition of memoirs for famous teachers. Already Plato, according to Diogenes Laertius, was asked if he would get his own *Memorabilia* (3.38). Gabriella Aragione gathers testimonia to additional *Memorabilia* written by Zeno of Citium (3<sup>rd</sup> cent. BCE), Persaeus of Citium (3<sup>rd</sup> cent. CE), Ariston of Chios (3<sup>rd</sup> cent. BCE), Pedanius Dioscourides (1<sup>st</sup> cent. CE), Favorinus of Arles (1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> cent. CE), Meragenes

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<sup>72</sup> Loveday Alexander, “What Is a Gospel?,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Gospels*, ed. Stephen C. Barton, Cambridge Companions to Religion (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 25.

<sup>73</sup> This was first noted, with reference to the arguments of the form critics, in T. F. Glasson, “The Place of the Anecdote,” *Journal of Theological Studies; London* 32 (January 1, 1981): 142–50.

<sup>74</sup> Helen Bond calls *Demonax* “[p]robably the closest analogy” to the gospel of Mark. Bond, *The First Biography of Jesus*, 101.

(*TAQ* 3<sup>rd</sup> cent. CE), and an otherwise unknown Empedocles.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, Aelius Theon, writing in the late first century, holds up Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* as exemplifying a sub-genre of history distinct from biography (*Progymnasmata* 12).<sup>76</sup> Clearly, *Memorabilia* was an established category of literature in the first and second century CE.

Justin Martyr invokes Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* (or the literary tradition it inspired) to describe gospel literature.<sup>77</sup> He refers to the synoptic gospels as *Memorabilia of the Apostles* (ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἀποστόλων) throughout his *First Apology* (66.3; 67.3) and the *Dialog with Trypho* (100.4; 101.3; 102.5; 103.6, 8; 104.1; 105.1, 5, 6; 106.1, 4; 107.1).<sup>78</sup> Richard Herd and Radka Fialová object that Justin’s use of *genitivus auctoris* “of the Apostles” is a disanalogy with Xenophon’s Socratic histories.<sup>79</sup> Socrates, after all, is not the author of Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* but its subject. This argument is premised, however, on the assumption that

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<sup>75</sup> Gabriella Aragione, “Justin ‘Philosophe’ Cretien et Les Memoires Des Apotre,” *Apocrypha*, 2004, 48–50. These are Zeno’s Ἀπομνημονεύματα Κράτητος (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.4), Persaeus’ Ἀπομνημονεύματα (7.36), Ariston’s Ἀπομνημονεύματα in three books (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.163), Dioscurides’ Ἀπομνημονεύματα cited for a saying of Solon (1.63) and Plato (*Deipnosophists* 11.116), Favorinus’ Ἀπομνημονεύματα cited for its treatment of a speech against Socrates (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 2.39) and Plato’s trial in Sicily (3.20), Meragenes’ τὰ γεγραμμένα [...] τῶν Ἀπολλωνίου τοῦ Τυανέως μάγου καὶ φιλοσόφου ἀπομνημονευμάτων (Origen, *Contra Celsum* 6.41), and Empedocles’ Ἀπομνημονεύματα cited for the practice of Zeno (*Deipnosophists* 9.9).

<sup>76</sup> This passage is only extant in Classical Armenian. George Alexander Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Atlanta: Leiden, 2003), 68. Elsewhere, Theon reveals that he knows Xenophon’s work by the title Ἀπομνημονεύματα (12.252). Most curious are his earlier treatment of the conventional form of a ἀπομνημόνευμα (*Progymnasmata* 3.96–106). Theon says the ἀπομνημόνευμα is distinguished from χρεία and γνώμη for its relative length and for its usefulness over and against any association with an important figure. The final detail makes unclear the relationship of this conventional form to the generic title ἀπομνημονεύματα.

<sup>77</sup> Aragione demonstrates, against Helmut Koester’s claim to the contrary, that ἀπομνημονεύματα was a conventional title for Xenophon’s work in the first and second century. Aragione, “Justin ‘Philosophe’ Cretien et Les Memoires Des Apotre,” 47–48. Larsen’s claim that Justin employed ἀπομνημονεύματα to refer to unfinished notes (which Larsen identifies with ὑπομνήματα) is treated below.

<sup>78</sup> Justin identifies these books by their conventional title “gospels” at *First Apology* 66.3. He refers to τοῖς ἀπομνημονεύμασιν αὐτοῦ at *Dialog* 106.3 with Peter as the clear referent of αὐτοῦ. Justin’s use of the plural *Memorabilia* to refer to a single specific gospel supports my contention that this is a literary term of art. For more on the authorship of the gospels according to Justin, see below.

<sup>79</sup> Radka Fialová, “‘Scripture’ and the ‘Memoirs of the Apostles’: Justin Martyr and His Bible,” in *The Process of Authority: The Dynamics in Transmission and Reception of Canonical Texts*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016, p. 165–178., ed. Jan Roskovec and Jan Dušek (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 169.

Xenophon's *Memorabilia* was already known as the *Memorabilia of Socrates*, employing an expegetical genitive to refer to the work's subject. This objection fails to consider the evidence for the reception of Xenophon's work in the first and second century. The title *Memorabilia of Socrates* (with the expegetical genitive) for Xenophon's work was not yet conventional. Rather, the title Ἀπομνημονεύματα most often appears in ancient citations without any genitive modifier. Where a genitive does appear alongside this title, the authorial genitive (Theon, *Progymnasmata* 2; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.2; Theodoret of Cyr, *Cure of Greek Maladies* 4.30; Stobaeus, *Extracts* 1.1.36) is, in fact, more common than the expegetical (pseudo-Xenophon, *Epistles* 18.2; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.4).<sup>80</sup> Justin's authorial genitive "of the apostles," therefore, mirrors the more common designation for Xenophon's works. This suggests that Justin, indeed, invoked the generic tradition of *Memorabilia* established by Xenophon to describe gospel literature.

Justin's citation of Xenophon's *Memorabilia* in the *Second Apology* (11) —shortly after comparing Jesus to Socrates (10)— renders it *prima facie* plausible that Justin is, indeed, comparing the gospels to Xenophon's Socratic *Memorabilia*. The charges of atheism and introducing new divinities raised by Justin as points of comparison between Jesus and Socrates (*First Apology* 5-6) occur in both Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and Plato's *Apology*. Justin undeniably knew both corpora but chose the Xenophonic title *Memorabilia* to characterize the gospels.

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<sup>80</sup> The letter attributed to Xenophon is the 18<sup>th</sup> Socratic letter in R Hercher, *Epistolographi Graeci* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1873), 623.

Justin’s invocation of Xenophon’s Socratic *Memorabilia* to describe the gospels dovetails nicely with the argument of the previous chapter. In his *Dialogues with Trypho*, I argued, Justin characterized the gospels as the kind of books with which one learns an art (τέχνη) — that is, technical literature. It is more than a coincidence, then, that Xenophon portrays Socrates as a champion of the arts and, indeed, something of a technical expert himself. All those possessing arts (τέχναι), says Xenophon, found Socrates useful (*Memorabilia* 3.10.1). Xenophon’s Socrates is an apologist for the practical arts (2.7.7) — including divination (1.1.1), military tactics and generalship (3.1-4), cookery (3.14.5-6), statecraft (4.2.2, 11), and more. Xenophon’s *Economics*, likewise, is a Socratic dialog dedicated to civic and domestic arts. While Plato’s Socrates is a gadfly who confounds the pretentious and interrogates social mores, Xenophon’s Socrates instructs his followers in civic virtue and practical matters — including the arts.<sup>81</sup> Justin’s claim that gospel literature offers instruction in the divine and human art is not, therefore, in tension with his use of the designation “*Memorabilia*” for the gospels. Rather, both reflect Justin’s understanding of the gospels as books offering instruction in a manner analogous to the arts.

My claim is not that the evangelists themselves composed the gospels as *Memorabilia* in imitation of Xenophon. Rather, Justin portrayed the gospels as *Memorabilia* because both the gospels and Xenophon participated in a wider literary tradition of episodic or serialized story telling. Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* is only one prominent example of literature that employs this

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<sup>81</sup> Xenophon was himself “the formal founder of the military manual.” Conor Whately, “Military Manuals from Aeneas Tacticus to Maurice: Origins, Scholarship, Genre, Audience, and History,” in *Greek and Roman Military Manuals: Genre and History*, ed. James T. Chlup and Conor Whately, 1st edition (London New York: Routledge, 2020), 20. Consequently, Xenophon was remembered as a forerunner of technical literature (Columella, *On Agriculture* 1.Preface.7; Diogenes Laertius *Lives* 2.6.56). On Xenophon’s contribution to military writing, see Lucy Felmingham-Cockburn, “Xenophon’s On Horsemanship: the equestrian military manual,” in *Greek and Roman military manuals : genre and history*, ed. James T. Chlup and Conor Whately, Routledge monographs in classical studies (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge Press, 2021).

structure. The anecdote, according to Simon Goldhill, emerged as a popular form during the second sophistic.<sup>82</sup> Lucian's *Demonax*, as already mentioned, and the individual biographies of Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists* are biographies made up of anecdotes without narrative sequence. Many technical books—including some of the mechanical and tactical treatises discussed in the previous chapter—consist of discrete and movable sections with varying degrees of logical structure.<sup>83</sup> Memoirs, biographies, and technical literature contemporary with the gospels all evince an episodic organization.

The form critical description of gospel literature as “pearls on a string” applies equally to a number of influential works that were not collections of individual units of tradition with unique prehistories. Rather, the episodic structure evinced in the gospels was a creative choice that grew increasingly popular across various genres in the first and second centuries CE. The organization of Jesus' ministry into discrete pericopes, therefore, does not justify the form critical view of the gospels as compilations of independently circulating oral traditions. An approach to the gospels informed by genre criticism, rather, suggests that the evangelists were influenced by a contemporary literary convention in the structuring of their gospels. This insight furnished by genre criticism, therefore, undermines a key justification for the form critical view of gospels while also corroborating the redaction critical view of the gospel-as-work as the product of an author.

#### **4.4 Evangelist as Copyist: New Philology**

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<sup>82</sup> Simon Goldhill, “The Anecdote,” in *Ancient Literacies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 111–12.

<sup>83</sup> These include but are not limited to those works classified as “*Diskrete Texte*” (in distinction from “*Kontineirliche Texte*”) in Markus Asper, *Griechische Wissenschaftstexte : Formen, Funktionen, Differenzierungsgeschichten*, Philosophie der Antike 25 (Stuttgart: F. Steiner Verlag, 2007).

“New Philology,” as a self-consciously distinct approach to literature, can be traced to Bernard Cerquiglini’s essay *Éloge de la Variante*.<sup>84</sup> Cerquiglini argues compellingly that both Lachmannian critical editions and Bedierist diplomatic editions erase the path of literature through history. He points to “*l’etat de mouvance*” in manuscripts of courtly romances and the lives of saints as evidence that the medieval scribe was more of a “*remanieur*” than a “*copiste*.”<sup>85</sup> The creative and meaningful retellings of a narrative reflected in each individual manuscript, laments Cerquiglini, are relegated to the critical apparatus of the modern edition. Likewise, dialectic, diachronic, and other deviations from prescriptive linguistic standards are emended — and thereby erased — by modern editors.<sup>86</sup> This renders the primary data of descriptive linguistics, says Cerquiglini, unavailable to the student of literature.

Attempts to address these deficiencies of traditional philology have been variegated. The publication of multiple manuscripts (or critically reconstructed recensions) in parallel columns, for instance, furnishes the historian with significantly more information about transmission history than a Lachmannian critical edition. Cerquiglini himself expected that computer technology would provide a solution — namely, digital editions that display individual manuscripts alongside diplomatic and critical editions.<sup>87</sup> In general, however, the response to

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<sup>84</sup> Bernard Cerquiglini, “Éloge de La Variante,” *Langages*, no. 69 (1983): 25–35. Paul Zumthor’s *Essai de Poétique Médiévale* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972) might, instead, be credited with this development. Indeed, Alberto Varvaro objects that there is nothing new in “New Philology.” Alberto Varvaro, “The ‘New Philology’ from an Italian Perspective,” trans. Marcello Cherchi, *Text* 12 (1999): 49–58. This critique is well answered by MJ Driscoll, “The Words on the Page: Thoughts on Philology, Old and New,” in *Creating the Medieval Saga: Versions, Variability and Editorial Interpretations of Old Norse Saga Literature*, ed. Judy Quinn and Emily Lethbridge, Viking Collection v. 18 (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2010), 90–93. My language here is a compromise: even if all the elements of “new philology” have precedents, the conceptualization of them as a distinct approach to philology has generated a new enthusiasm for materiality, manuscript culture, and textual pluriformity.

<sup>85</sup> Cerquiglini, “Éloge de La Variante,” 30.

<sup>86</sup> Cerquiglini, 27, 31–32.

<sup>87</sup> Cerquiglini, 35.

Cerquiglini and the New Philology has been an increased attention to materiality, manuscript culture, and textual pluriformity.

New Testament studies ran along a parallel track. Eldon Epp's *The Theological Tendency of Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis*, Bart D. Ehrman's *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, Kim Haines-Eitzen's *The Guardians of Letters*, and Larry Hurtado's *The Earliest Christian Artifacts* evince a similar shift in focus away from a singular interest in reconstructing the original text and toward manuscript culture and the significance of variant readings. These major monographs, however, contain no evidence of interaction with medieval studies. Subsequent works by Eldon Epp and David Parker would engage with Cerquiglini and his forerunners but the "material turn" in New Testament studies seems to have happened largely independent of New Philology.<sup>88</sup>

This re-orientation of New Testament textual criticism gave rise to studies of tremendous value. David Parker's *Codex Bezae: An early Christian Manuscript and its Text*, for instance, is a history of a single manuscript of the gospels from its production until today.<sup>89</sup> Parker's study furnishes insights into the production and use of this gospel book across the centuries. Jennifer Knust's and Tommy Wasserman's *To Cast the First Stone: The Transmission of a Gospel Story*, takes a different approach, no less influenced by the material turn in New Testament studies.

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<sup>88</sup> Eldon Jay Epp, "It's All about Variants: A Variant-Conscious Approach to New Testament Textual Criticism," *Harvard Theological Review* 100, no. 3 (July 2007): 292–93; David Parker, "The Development of Textual Criticism Since B.H. Streeter," in *Manuscripts, Texts, Theology: Collected Papers 1977-2007* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 152–53. At various points, Parker also shows knowledge of Giorgio Pasquali's scholarship. D. C. Parker, *An Introduction to the New Testament Manuscripts and Their Texts*, Illustrated edition (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 154, 162. Pasquali anticipated much of what characterizes "New" or "Material Philology." The language of a "material turn" in New Testament studies is borrowed from Kim Haines-Eitzen, "The Social History of Early Christian Scribes," in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis*, ed. Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes, 2nd ed., New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents 42 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013), 486.

<sup>89</sup> D. C. Parker, *Codex Bezae: An Early Christian Manuscript and Its Text* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

Instead of studying the biography of a particular manuscript, they trace the transmission history of a single variant reading — namely, the *Pericope Adulterae*. These approaches to the study of the New Testament offer new perspectives on old texts, demand interdisciplinarity, and otherwise enrich our field of study.

The study of material artefacts and transmission history inspired some champions of this “material turn” and students of New Philology to develop new accounts of the origin and character of gospel literature. The emergence of radically different text forms in the transmission of courtly romances, poetry, and other medieval works engendered New Philology’s skepticism toward reconstructions of an authorial text. This skepticism produced a new emphasis on the users and producers of manuscripts. New Testament studies, however, progressed in the opposite direction. The fruitfulness of inquiry into the sociology of copyists and readers as evinced in the manuscripts of the New Testament inspired some scholars to assimilate the origins and text tradition of the gospels to the medieval corpora that inspired Cerquiglini and his colleagues. No less than the *Piers Plowman* or *The Song of Roland*, these scholars aver, the quantity and quality of differences between copies of the gospels justify regarding each manuscript as an authorial work. Such analyses, I argue below, are frustrated by the relatively inert text tradition of the gospels in comparison with comparatively freer, livelier, or more fluid texts.

New Testament scholarship should continue to learn from and contribute to New and Material Philologies. The shift in approach to our sources has furnished significant historical and interpretive insights. The questions and priorities of New Philology are clearly transferable from medieval sources to the gospels. It does not follow, however, that the answers to those questions will transfer. The synoptic gospels and *Piers Plowman* are products of different literary cultures and this is reflected in their very different text traditions.

#### 4.4.1 David Parker

In the *Living Text of the Gospels*, David Parker argues that the gospels are not the kind of books that have originals.<sup>90</sup> The fundamental mistake of New Testament text and source criticism is “separate[ing] the process of creating gospels and the process of copying them.”<sup>91</sup> We must collapse the distinction, according to Parker, between copyist and evangelist.<sup>92</sup> Parker proposes, instead, a model of gospel origins that “attempts to do away more thoroughly with the idea of published editions.”<sup>93</sup> The synoptic gospels are not three discrete works with three distinct text traditions but “all one text.”<sup>94</sup> Each manuscript is its own gospel, composed by its own evangelist.<sup>95</sup> Neither “the evangelists [n]or their successors,” says Parker, believed that a “definitive form” of the Gospel existed.<sup>96</sup> Every variant reading belonged to its own original.

Parker describes his model of gospel origins as resting on two kinds of evidence. The first he characterizes as “the general evidence of antiquity.”<sup>97</sup> Parker spends little time explaining this line of reasoning, pointing instead (with a footnote) to Harry Gamble’s analysis of publication in antiquity and two studies of textual variation in manuscripts of the New Testament. It seems that Parker takes the well-established fact that books were usually released from authorial control

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<sup>90</sup> D. C. Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 7.

<sup>91</sup> Parker, 117.

<sup>92</sup> Parker, 205, see also 45-6, 117.

<sup>93</sup> Parker, 119.

<sup>94</sup> Parker, 47. As with many of Parker’s positive claims (see also fn. 89), this is posed as a rhetorical question. The force of his arguments *ad locum* suggests an answer in the affirmative. Then, in a subsequent chapter, he assumes an affirmative answer to the same question. Parker, 71–72, 120.

<sup>95</sup> Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels*, 207–13.

<sup>96</sup> Parker, 91.

<sup>97</sup> Parker, 119.

through informal interactions along social channels as evidence that authors and readers had no conception of an authorial text of any given work.<sup>98</sup>

Parker characterizes his second line of evidence as “the nature of the synoptic texts.”<sup>99</sup> By this, Parker refers to the intentional changes in the text tradition as well as the efforts to harmonize the synoptic gospels to one another. Copyists, according to Parker, rewrote the gospels “with the same degree of freedom as Matthew and Luke had used Mark.”<sup>100</sup> Adducing the several endings of *Mark*, significant variations in the ending of *Luke*, and the extensive harmonization present in copies of *Luke* 6, Parker concludes that the gospels were not regarded as “archives of tradition but living texts.”<sup>101</sup>

There is no distinction, according to Parker, between copyist and evangelist. Every synoptic manuscript is a unique gospel belonging to a common text tradition. The authorial text of *Matthew* and *Luke* is a phantasm.<sup>102</sup> The synoptic manuscript tradition, rather, constitutes one

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<sup>98</sup> Raymond J. Starr, “The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World,” *The Classical Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (1987): 213–23; Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven, Conn., and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 82–143. The indefinite article ‘an’ before ‘authorial’ is indispensable. The historian is under no obligation to identify any one authorial text of a work as the ‘definitive’ or ‘authentic’ text. I avoid using Parker’s adjective “definitive” given its ambiguity (and frequent equivocal use) in *The Living Text of the Gospels*. Parker sometimes employs “definitive” interchangeably with “authoritative,” “authentic,” “original,” and other polyvalent, often normative terms. Parker frequently elides these normative judgements with the descriptive, historical projects of textual and source criticism. There is no sense of predicating an adjective like “authoritative” to something without specifying *for* whom. But surely Parker does not mean to deny that certain texts of the gospels have been regarded as “authoritative” by certain historical actors.

<sup>99</sup> Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels*, 119.

<sup>100</sup> Parker, 205; see also 117.

<sup>101</sup> Parker, 119.

<sup>102</sup> Parker makes a few concessions with respect to *Mark*. These are, however, inconsistent with his own analysis. Parker admits “the substantial reality of Mark,” distinguishable from *Matthew* and *Luke* on the basis of “his style.” Parker, 121. Parker goes on to concede that “the emergence (to use a colourless word) of Mark came before that of Matthew and Luke and they both initially made use of it.” Parker, 122. This suggests that even here Parker does not consider *Mark* the catalyst of the singular synoptic tradition but, rather, one recognizable node. Parker does not explain how this coheres with his earlier claim that it is not possible to determine the priority of one gospel to another given the non-existence of a definitive text for any gospel. Parker, 91. Whatever one makes of Parker’s caveats, my argument is concerned with the origin of *Matthew* and *Luke* (not *Mark*).

great “manuscript continuum” or a “continuum of reinterpretation” shaping and shaped by oral tradition.<sup>103</sup> Source and redaction criticism, says Parker, should be abandoned in favor of “a three-dimensional diagram” that does not restrict the interaction of texts to an authorial moment but, rather, involves countless revisions of the gospel in light of one another across time.<sup>104</sup> Efforts to identify sources and editorial tendencies should be abandoned.<sup>105</sup> Like the effectively unauthored legal codes or charters considered at the opening of this chapter, Parker’s model renders the gospel-as-book unauthored. The questions posed by my study, *ex hypothesi*, cannot be answered.

#### 4.4.2 Matthew Larsen

In *Gospels before the Book*, Matthew Larsen further develops Parker’s thesis.<sup>106</sup> Larsen is not only influenced by the material turn in New Testament scholarship but explicitly represents himself as participating in “New” and/or “Material Philology.”<sup>107</sup> Following Parker, Larsen argues that gospels are not distinct books with different authors but “a fluid, unfinished, and relatively open constellation of textual objects.”<sup>108</sup> *Matthew* and *Mark*, says Larsen, “should not be viewed as different books” but as belonging to “the same unfinished textual tradition of ‘the gospel’.”<sup>109</sup> Gospel manuscripts were regarded as raw, unfinished notes. Such notes (i.e. each manuscript of a gospel) are, of course, written but not authored.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels*, 90–93, 203–7.

<sup>104</sup> Parker, 121.

<sup>105</sup> Parker, 122.

<sup>106</sup> Matthew Larsen, *Gospels before the Book* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018).

<sup>107</sup> Larsen, 23, 59, 116.

<sup>108</sup> Larsen, 85.

<sup>109</sup> Larsen, 114.

<sup>110</sup> Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels*, 81, 11–36.

On Larsen's model of gospel origins, the redaction profile of (the manuscripts of) *Matthew* is attributed to a text tradition rather than an author.<sup>111</sup> Stories from *Mark* are said to “drop out as the textual tradition of the gospel grew.”<sup>112</sup> Likewise, “[Matthean] additions begin to conform the textual tradition we now call the Gospel according to Mark to [the expectations of the biographic genre].”<sup>113</sup> Larsen does not speak of evangelists but of “overlapping textual traditions”<sup>114</sup> What New Testament scholarship has understood as differences between the synoptics, Larsen understands as “not the difference in perspectives of different books by different authors, but the cultural history of individual communities and how users made, remade, and coped with their world through stories.”<sup>115</sup> Larsen, like Parker, describes a gradualistic model of gospel origins where a “tradition” or a “community” rather than a person is responsible for transforming (manuscripts of) *Mark* into (manuscripts of) *Matthew*.

In support of this model, Larsen provides three lines of argumentation. First, Larsen claims that “there is no evidence for the idea of gospel as a gospel book with an author” until Irenaeus.<sup>116</sup> Instead, Larsen claims, early interpreters regarded gospel writings as “unfinished, unpolished textual raw material.”<sup>117</sup> Manuscripts associated today with *Matthew* and *Mark* were not recognized as witnesses to distinct books with different authors but, rather, the same open-ended, unfinished, and living work.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Larsen, *Gospels before the Book*, 105–14, esp. 108–9, 114.

<sup>112</sup> Larsen, 108.

<sup>113</sup> Larsen, 108.

<sup>114</sup> Larsen, 111.

<sup>115</sup> Larsen, 153.

<sup>116</sup> Larsen, 1–2, 82.

<sup>117</sup> Larsen, 98. Larsen uses this language *ad locum* about *Mark* but applies his model (and claims about literary culture) to all first and second century gospels. See, for instance, Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels*, 1–9, 79–80.

<sup>118</sup> Larsen, *Gospels before the Book*, 4.

Second, Larsen argues that *Mark*'s earliest readers understood the second gospel as belonging to a recognizable class of sub-literary textual objects, called *hypomnēmata*. In contrast to the language of book and author, describing the gospels as unfinished notes is “native” to the first and second centuries.<sup>119</sup> I criticized this aspect of Larsen’s argument at length in chapter one and will not revisit it here. There is no evidence for the compositional practice envisioned by Larsen and, more importantly, no testimonia to the reception of gospels as *hypomnēmata*.

Third, Larsen recapitulates a version of Parker’s argument from textual fluidity. The text traditions of the gospels, claims Larsen, “are far too unbounded and messy to conflate with concepts like book, author, and publication.”<sup>120</sup> The gospels, as open and unauthored texts, invited revision, correction, augmentation, continuation, and improvement.<sup>121</sup> Larsen adduces no new evidence of textual instability but, rather, points to Parker’s study and revisits the multiple endings of *Mark*.<sup>122</sup>

Larsen, like Parker, regards his model of gospel origins as a repudiation of textual criticism, source criticism, and redaction criticism.<sup>123</sup> There is, *ex hypothesi*, no original text to reconstruct. Without an author, there is no compositional context. There is only a “tradition” or “community” of transmission constituted by readers who were collectively responsible for the fluidity of the gospel text.

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<sup>119</sup> Larsen, 79.

<sup>120</sup> Larsen, 2.

<sup>121</sup> Larsen, 76, 120.

<sup>122</sup> Larsen, 4 fn. 16. For more discussion of Larsen’s debt to and differences with Parker, see Matthew D.C. Larsen, “Accidental Publication, Unfinished Texts and the Traditional Goals of New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 39, no. 4 (June 1, 2017): 362–87.

<sup>123</sup> Larsen, *Gospels before the Book*, 4, 6–7, 49–50, 100–114. This is even more clearly expressed in Larsen, “Accidental Publication, Unfinished Texts and the Traditional Goals of New Testament Textual Criticism.”

#### 4.4.3 Form Criticism *Redivivus*?

David Parker, Matthew Larsen, and the scholars persuaded by their proposals do not acknowledge any meaningful similarity between their account of gospel literature and that propounded by the form critics.<sup>124</sup> And, indeed, there are significant differences. Many of the form critics, for instance, were motivated by a quest for the historical Jesus and an interest in reconstructing the *kerygma* of the earliest Christians. Parker and Larsen, in contrast, show little interest in either of these projects. Likewise, the form critics sought to reconstruct the transmission history of individual traditions. Parker and Larsen are skeptical of all such reconstructions.

These otherwise very different scholars are, however, united in one important respect. Parker, Larsen, and the form critics all understand the gospels to be unauthored collections of communal tradition. Gospels are not, according to all these scholars, integral compositions of first and second century authors. Rather, they gradually emerged in the course of the transmission of Jesus traditions. Parker, Larsen, and the form critics understand the gospel as basically the same kind of books.

This is significant in the context of the present analysis because Parker and Larsen do not address the challenges raised against this conception of gospel literature by redaction and genre criticism. Parker and Larsen, instead, advance new arguments for this perspective from ancient publication practices, the early reception of gospel literature, and the synoptic text tradition(s). These arguments, of course, need to be evaluated in their own right. It is, nevertheless, worth

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<sup>124</sup> For another account of gospel literature shaped by Parker's argument, see Edwin K. Broadhead, *The Gospel of Matthew on the Landscape of Antiquity* (Mohr Siebeck, 2017).

pausing to remember that an ideologically coherent re-working of *Mark* is evident in the redaction profile of *Matthew* and *Luke*. The Mosaic parallels in the Matthean nativity, for instance, are present in every single manuscript of a gospel titled “according to Matthew.” They do not appear in a single manuscript with any other title (e.g. “according to Mark”). Likewise, Jesus’ Jerusalem-centric infancy, road trip to Jerusalem, and the relocation of Jesus’ resurrection to Jerusalem are present in every single manuscript titled “according to Luke.” Not a single manuscript of a gospel attributed to “Mark” or “Matthew” contains any of these redactional details.

As outlined above, these observations restored the evangelist —although no longer identified with the traditional figure— to their role as author, rather than compiler. Models of the kind proposed by Parker and Larsen must, of course, be evaluated on their own merits. At the same time, the thematic and ideological coherence of the redaction profile of manuscript clusters corresponding to the distinct text traditions of each synoptic gospel (as designated by received titles) presents a significant challenge to this revived form critical view of the gospels. Parker and Larsen do not explain how their understanding of the synoptic gospels as one gradually evolving, continuum of indistinct manuscripts can account for this pattern of evidence.

#### **4.5 Ancient Publication and Open Texts**

Parker, as we have seen, argues that “the general evidence of antiquity” concerning the publication and circulation of books is evidence that gospels were fluid, living, unauthored texts. This conclusion, I will argue, does not follow from Parker’s premises. It is uncontroversial that authors in antiquity (as well as today) could issue *corrigenda* or circulate multiple editions of the same work. Cicero, for instance, asks his publisher to alter the text of books already in circulation (*Letters to Atticus* 13.13.1; see also 13.21.4). Likewise, Galen published two different

versions of his *On Anatomical Procedures* (1.1).<sup>125</sup> It was socially acceptable for authors to modify their own texts however they saw fit. Whenever relevant, we should, therefore, speak of ‘an’ (rather than ‘the’) authorial text. But none of this evidence corroborates Parker’s claim of a widespread sense of freedom to alter other author’s texts.

In chapter two, I laid out the substantial evidence for proprietary conceptions of literature in the first and second centuries. This included a taboo against the alteration of other authors’ work.<sup>126</sup> To this treatment, could be added the abundant evidence that authors and readers in Roman antiquity shared an interest in establishing and preserving authorial texts.<sup>127</sup> Some authors, for instance, employed professional publisher-bookdealers (*bibliopola*, *librarius*) to ensure their work was disseminated with minimal variation (e.g. Cicero and Atticus, Martial/Quintilian and Tryphon).<sup>128</sup> Others pleaded with readers not to add or subtract anything (Artemidorus, *Oneirocritica* 2.168). Still others threatened copyists with curses to inspire greater fidelity (*Aristeas* 311).

Readers, as well as authors, scrutinized works for non-authorial variation. Pliny the Younger, Martial, and Galen all attest to the widespread practice of sending copies of a work to its author for correction (Pliny, *Ep.* 4.2.26.1; Martial *Epigrams* 7.11, 17; Galen, *On my Own Books*, Proem, 1). Contemporary Stoics, Epicureans, and Peripatetics scrutinized textual

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<sup>125</sup> Notably, Galen does not use ‘*hypothesis*’ language here to characterize his preparation of a new edition of the same book. Perhaps these two editions of the same book were too intimately related to each other for *hypothesis* language to suggest itself.

<sup>126</sup> For more evidence, see Katharina de la Durantaye, “The Origins of the Protection of Literary Authorship in Ancient Rome,” *Boston University International Law Journal* 25.37 (2008): 37–111.

<sup>127</sup> The indefinite article ‘an’ here is indispensable. The historian is under no obligation to identify any one authorial text of a work as the ‘definitive,’ ‘authentic,’ or ‘authoritative [for the historian or reader]’ text. Parker’s rhetoric frequently elides these normative judgements with the descriptive historical projects of textual criticism.

<sup>128</sup> de la Durantaye, “The Origins of the Protection of Literary Authorship in Ancient Rome,” 47–52, 73–76.

variation with an eye to recovering a teacher's precise wording.<sup>129</sup> The possibility that copies of the *Georgics* and *Aeneid* may have belonged to Virgil bolsters their authority in the eyes of Aulus Gellius as a witness to Virgil's own language at a point of variation (*Attic Nights* 1.21, 2.3.5).<sup>130</sup> Josephus boasts that the scriptures were preserved without interpolation, omission, or variation (*Against Apion* 42). The fact that Josephus is wrong about this does not undermine its significance as testimony to the norms of textual transmission. As outlined in the next chapter, Greek and Latin scholars in the first and second centuries adopted and adapted a complex critical apparatus for textual criticism (διόρθωσις) developed by the Alexandrian librarians. The evangelists' contemporaries applied these sigla to all variety of poets, dramatists, philosophical works, technical literature, and even personal correspondence.<sup>131</sup>

There is reason to believe that early Christians were unexceptional with regard to their interest in the preservation of authorial texts. It was the object of chapters one and three to show that the authors and early readers of gospel literature were at home in wider Grecophone literary culture(s). It bolsters that argument that we do, indeed, find considerable evidence that early Grecophone Christians shared with their neighbors an investment in preserving authorial texts. Already in the first century, the *Apocalypse of John* reflects a concern for accurate textual transmission (22:18-19). The *Epistula Apostolorum* (in both the Coptic and Ethiopic recensions)

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<sup>129</sup> H. Gregory Snyder, *Teachers and Texts in the Ancient World: Philosophers, Jews and Christians* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000). Enzo Puglia, "La Filologia Degli Epicurei," *Cronache Ercolanesi*, 1982.

<sup>130</sup> *sed tamen ipse Caesar habet peracre iudicium, et, ut Servius, frater tuus, quem litteratissimum fuisse iudico, facile diceret: 'hic versus Plauti non est, hic est, [...]*. D.R. Shackleton Bailey, *Cicero. Letters to Friends, Volume II: Letters 114-280*, vol. 216, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 198.

<sup>131</sup> I follow Bonner in identifying the disputed *historici* with playwrights. S. F. Bonner, "Anecdoton Parisinum," *Hermes* 88, no. 3 (1960): 354–60; H. D. Jocelyn, "The Annotations of M. Valerius Probus (II) [The Annotations of M. Valerius Probus (II)]," *The Classical Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (1985): 149–61. Cicero describes the use of an *obelus* to mark a suspected interpolation in a bill of sale (*Ad. Fam.* 9.10).

condemns tampering with the written teachings of Jesus (29.1).<sup>132</sup> Marcion's accusation that Christian opponents falsified scripture is premised on the same interest in preserving authentic texts (Tert. *AM* 4.4.3). Ptolemy accuses Israel's elders of interpolating the Hebrew Bible (Epiph. *Pan.* 33.4.1). The *Shepherd* assures its reader that Hermas copied carefully (*Vision* 2.1.3). Justin charges contemporary Jews with falsifying passages in the Septuagint (*Dialog* 1.73). Finally, Dionysius of Corinth accuses his opponents of interpolating a written gospel as well as his own letters (Eus, *EH* 23.12). All these authors wrote before Irenaeus. While examples could be multiplied from the works of Irenaeus, Clement, Tertullian, and others, these are sufficient to show that Christians cared to preserve authorial texts of their literature — including gospels.

#### 4.6 The Earliest Reception of the Gospels

What evidence do we have to evaluate Parker's claim that the "successors" of the evangelists did not believe they could create, preserve, or recover a "definitive form" of the gospel?<sup>133</sup> Is it true, as Larsen claims, that no one before Irenaeus characterized a gospel as "a specific, stable book" or associated a gospel "with a named author figure"?<sup>134</sup> These arguments assume rightly that the reception of the gospels in the late first and early second century is important evidence for reconstructing the literary culture in which the gospels were produced, transmitted, and read. A survey of this material, however, reveals overwhelming evidence that gospels were understood in precisely those "bookish" categories denied by Parker and Larsen.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Francis Watson, *An Apostolic Gospel: The "Epistula Apostolorum" in Literary Context* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 61–62. I argue below that the author of the *Epistula* thought of Jesus' teachings as transmitted in written form by the apostles.

<sup>133</sup> Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels*, 91.

<sup>134</sup> Larsen, *Gospels before the Book*, 82.

<sup>135</sup> Larsen, 1.

#### 4.6.1 The Synoptics

In *The Gospel as Manuscript*, Chris Keith argues that the synoptic gospels themselves display a “textual self-consciousness.”<sup>136</sup> *Mark* and *Matthew*, for instance, interrupt one of Jesus’ apocalyptic portents (Mk 13:14; Mt 24:15) to address “the reader” (ὁ ἀναγινώσκων).<sup>137</sup> In a subsequent chapter, Keith argues that these authorial interjections reflect the author’s expectation that *Matthew* and *Mark* would be the subject of public reading events.<sup>138</sup> Keith’s interpretation is persuasive but whether or not one accepts this aspect of his thesis, the authorial comment in *Matthew* and *Mark* explicitly reflects an assumption of wider-readership. Likewise, the dedication to Theophilus, understood according to the conventions of technical literature, suggests that the third evangelist understood *Luke* as a public-facing work.<sup>139</sup> Lastly, the author of *Matthew* refers to his gospel as a βιβλος (1:1) and the author of *Luke* describes his own behavior as “writing” (γράφειν) (1:4).<sup>140</sup> Thus the synoptic gospels themselves reflect their own authors’ conception of gospel literature as public-facing books.

#### 4.6.2 John and the Johannine Epilogue

The author of the *Gospel according to John* re-wrote the life of Jesus according to different compositional conventions. Nevertheless, this fourth evangelist wrote a gospel. And,

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<sup>136</sup> Chris Keith, *The Gospel as Manuscript: An Early History of the Jesus Tradition as Material Artifact* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020), 100–130. I am wary of figurative language that attributes any kind of mental activity to material artifacts or the abstractions (like ‘texts’) derived therefrom. It is more accurate (if less artful) to say that the synoptic evangelists represent their work as textual. I do not take this to be a material disagreement with Keith’s claim.

<sup>137</sup> Keith, 111–12, 115.

<sup>138</sup> Keith, 176–81.

<sup>139</sup> Loveday Alexander, *The Preface to Luke’s Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1-4 and Acts 1.1*, Society for New Testament Studies 78 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 187–200.

<sup>140</sup> Keith, *The Gospel as Manuscript*, 115–21, 124–29.

probably, this author worked with knowledge of the synoptics.<sup>141</sup> It is notable, therefore, that the fourth evangelist refers to *John* as a book and, potentially, one book among others.

John 20:30

Therefore, Jesus did many and diverse signs in the presence of the disciples which have not been written in this book.<sup>142</sup>

The fourth gospel, moreover, identifies the beloved disciple as its author using the illeism typical of historical literature.<sup>143</sup>

John 19:35

And the one who saw has testified, and his testimony is true; and that one knows that he speaks truth in order that you too might believe.<sup>144</sup>

The Johannine epilogue corroborates this interpretation. The author of the twenty-first chapter of *John* quotes this verse from chapter 19 in order to identify the beloved disciple as the gospel's author.

John 21:24

This is the disciple who testified to these things and wrote them — and we know that his testimony is true.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Richard Bauckham, “John for Readers of Mark,” in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 147–72; James Barker, *John's Use of Matthew* (Fortress Press, 2015).

<sup>142</sup> Πολλὰ μὲν οὖν καὶ ἄλλα σημεῖα ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐνώπιον τῶν μαθητῶν, ἃ οὐκ ἔστιν γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ.

<sup>143</sup> Howard M. Jackson, “Ancient Self-Referential Conventions and Their Implications for the Authorship and Integrity of the Gospel of John,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 50, no. 1 (April 1, 1999): 25–31. For more on the beloved disciple as author, see Richard Bauckham, “The Beloved Disciple as Ideal Author,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 49 (1993): 21–44.

<sup>144</sup> καὶ ὁ ἐωρακὸς μεμαρτύρηκεν, καὶ ἀληθινὴ αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία, καὶ ἐκεῖνος οἶδεν ὅτι ἀληθῆ λέγει, ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς πιστεύητε.

<sup>145</sup> Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ μαθητὴς ὁ μαρτυρῶν περὶ τούτων καὶ ὁ γράψας ταῦτα, καὶ οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἀληθῆς αὐτοῦ ἡ μαρτυρία ἐστίν.

The Johannine epilogue, as Julia Lindenlaub has recently argued, makes explicit the fourth gospel's own construction of the beloved disciple as an ideal author.<sup>146</sup> The author of the fourth gospel (as well as its epilogue) understood the life of Jesus to be a matter of books and authors.

#### 4.6.3 Papias

Papias (*apud* Eusebius) describes the composition of *Mark* by “Mark, an interpreter of Peter” (*EH* 3.39). Mark, says Papias, did not attempt to put Jesus' life in order but recorded stories (λόγια) as he remembered them. As such, according to Papias, *Mark* lacks a proper narrative sequence. Larsen argues that this use of the verb “to remember” (ἀπομνημονεύω) and description of *Mark*'s deficient sequence reflects Papias' conception of gospels as *hypomnēmata*. I argued in chapter two that this is not a plausible reading of Papias. But even apart from that disagreement, the excerpts from Papias present a severe problem for Larsen's account.

Larsen cites Papias' account of *Mark* to support his claim that no one before Irenaeus described gospels as discrete, authored books. Let us, for the sake of argument, grant Larsen's interpretation of Papias with respect to *Mark*. The quasi-scribal role assigned to Mark and the lack of sequence, *ex hypothesi*, reflect *Mark*'s sub-literary status. What, then, of Papias' contrasting description of *Matthew*?<sup>147</sup>

Matthew, therefore, arranged the stories (τὰ λόγια) in the Hebraic dialect — and each person interpreted these as they were able.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Julia D. Lindenlaub, “The Gospel of John as Model for Literate Authors and Their Texts in Epistula Apostolorum and Apocryphon of James (NHC I,2),” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 43, no. 1 (2020): 3–27.

<sup>147</sup> Although there is no reason to doubt that this refers to the only *Matthew* known from any direct text tradition, this identity is unimportant for my argument about the early reception of gospel literature.

<sup>148</sup> Ματθαίος μὲν οὖν Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ τὰ λόγια συνετάξατο, ἡρμήνευσε δ' αὐτὰ ὡς ἦν δυνατὸς ἕκαστος. Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, Apostolic Fathers (Early Christian Collection). English & Greek. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2007), 740.

This description presents a series of problems for Larsen's account. According to Papias, the disciple Matthew "arranged" (συνετάξατο) the *logia* in his gospel.<sup>149</sup> Papias thus attributes to *Matthew* the very feature the absence of which indicated to Larsen that Papias considered *Mark* sub-literary. Consistency would require Larsen to recognize Papias' account of *Matthew* as a literary work. Likewise, Papias attributes this gospel to a specific author: the disciple Matthew. Papias, therefore, understood gospels to be the kind of books that had individual authors. Finally, Papias distinguishes two different gospels. The gospels attributed to Matthew and Mark are not described by Papias as different manuscripts of one fluid text but distinct works with their own compositional contexts. Thus, even granting Larsen's implausible interpretation of the description of *Mark*, Papias attests a discrete, authored gospel of *Matthew* at the beginning of the second century.

#### 4.6.4 The Epistle of the Apostles

The *Epistula Apostolorum* purports to be a letter written by the eleven apostles sometime after Jesus' resurrection.<sup>150</sup> It can be dated with confidence before Irenaeus since the author predicts Jesus' return after one-hundred and twenty years (17).<sup>151</sup> On the assumption that the second coming is dated forward from the fictional occasion of the letter's composition and not an earlier date (e.g. Jesus' birth), the year 150 CE must still be some time in the author's future.

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<sup>149</sup> Some scholars have interpreted the *λόγια* of Matthew as a reference to sayings and concluded that Papias here refers to a sayings gospel attributed to Matthew. But this is not how Papias uses the word *λόγια*. Papias, rather, characterizes *Mark* and his own work as composed of *logia*. Since both of these works included narratives, Papias must have used *λόγια* in a more expansive sense.

<sup>150</sup> For text and versification of the *Epistula Apostolorum*, I follow the reconstruction in Watson, *An Apostolic Gospel*.

<sup>151</sup> The Ethiopic text gives 150-years instead of 120, and the Latin text is lacunose. One popular explanation is that the Ethiopic number reflects an early emendation of the text following the disappointment of eschatological expectation. Alternatively, it may be that a much later (i.e. after the adoption of the current division of eras) marginal note which reflected the calculation of one-hundred and twenty years plus the thirty years of Jesus' life was subsequently incorporated into the text. Either way, the Coptic text probably preserves the earlier reading.

The *Epistula* is literarily dependent on *Matthew* and *Luke* and, indeed, points its readers to these gospels.<sup>152</sup> The opening lines (which survive only in Ethiopic) refer to “the word of the gospel” which the apostolic authors “have heard, kept, and written for the whole world (1.3-4).”<sup>153</sup> Later in the *Epistula*, Jesus introduces quotations from the *Gospel of John* as examples of “every word that I have spoken to you and that you write about me” (31.11).<sup>154</sup> Both of these passages attribute authorship of gospel books to the apostles. The author, moreover, polemicizes against those who would alter or add to the words of Jesus (29.1) — presumably referring to the teachings of Jesus as found in the aforementioned written gospel. The early second century author of the *Epistula*, therefore, conceived of gospel literature as the kind of book(s) with identifiable authors and authorial texts.

#### 4.6.5 Justin Martyr

Justin not only thinks of the gospels as discrete, authored books but, as argued in chapter three and above in chapter four, compares them to the technical and philosophical literature of his day. First and foremost, Justin knows of multiple written works called “gospels.”

For the apostles, in the *Memorabilia* created by them —which are called gospels (εὐαγγέλια)— pass on what Jesus thus commanded them, taking the bread [...] (*I Apology* 66.3)<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Darrell D. Hannah, “The Four-Gospel ‘Canon’ in the *Epistula Apostolorum*,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 59, no. 2 (October 1, 2008): 598–633. Hannah overreaches the evidence by claiming to find a canon of four gospels. The *Epistula* clearly depends on extra-canonical sources of Jesus tradition (4.1).

<sup>153</sup> I follow the interpretation advanced in Charles E. Hill, *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 370. This is less clear but not contradicted in Watson, *An Apostolic Gospel*, 44, 219.

<sup>154</sup> Watson, *An Apostolic Gospel*, 64. Hannah, “The Four-Gospel ‘Canon’ in the *Epistula Apostolorum*,” 608–10.

<sup>155</sup> οἱ γὰρ ἀπόστολοι ἐν τοῖς γενομένοις ὑπ’ αὐτῶν ἀπομνημονεύμασιν, ἃ καλεῖται εὐαγγέλια, οὕτως παρέδωκαν ἃ ἐντέταλται αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς λαβόντα ἄρτον, [...]. Denis Minns and Paul Parvis, eds., *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr: Apologies*, 1st edition (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 256.

And in the gospel it is written, saying: “All things have been handed over to me by my father, [...]” (*Dialog* 100.1).<sup>156</sup>

Thus, Justin can speak of a single “gospel” or multiple “gospels.” They are, therefore, distinct books for Justin. Moreover, the acknowledgement that these books “are called gospels” appears to be a concession to common usage. By the mid-second century, this usage must have been common enough to compel Justin to make this clarification. Justin himself prefers the term “Memorabilia” (ἀπομνημόνευματα) — typically with the *genitivus auctoris* “of the Apostles.” This, I argued above, invokes Xenophon’s Socratic *Memorabilia* and the tradition of philosophical *Memorabilia* inspired by Xenophon.<sup>157</sup>

Justin thinks of the gospels as authored books. The passage from the *First Apology* already considered credited “the apostles” with producing the gospels (66.3). Justin is even clearer on the authorship of the gospels in two other passages.

For in the *Memorabilia* which, —as I have said— were composed (συντετάχθαι) by his apostles and their followers, [it is written] that [...] (*Dialog* 103.8)<sup>158</sup>

And it is said that he changed one of the names of the apostles to Peter, and it is written in the *Memorabilia* of him that this happened [...] (*Dialog* 106.3)<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> καὶ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ δὲ γέγραπται εἰπών· Πάντα μοι παραδέδοται ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς [...]. Philippe Bobichon, *Justin Martyr, Dialogue Avec Tryphon: Édition Critique: Introduction, Texte Grec, Traduction*, Paradosis: Études de Littérature et de Théologie Anciennes (Fribourg: Academic Press Fribourg, 2003), 452–54.

<sup>157</sup> Likewise, I argued in the previous chapter that Justin’s teacher in the *Dialog* with Trypho argues that Christianity must be learned from reading the prophets and the gospels just as other arts and sciences are learned from books (3-8). This, I argue, is an extended comparison of the gospels to technical literature — perfectly in keeping with the preference for Xenophon’s portrayal of Socrates.

<sup>158</sup> ἐν γὰρ τοῖς ἀπομνημονεύμασιν, ἃ φημι ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν ἐκείνοις παρακολουθησάντων συντετάχθαι, <γέγραπται> ὅτι [...] Bobichon, *Justin Martyr, Dialogue Avec Tryphon: Édition Critique: Introduction, Texte Grec, Traduction*, 464.

<sup>159</sup> καὶ τὸ εἰπεῖν μετωνομακέναι αὐτὸν Πέτρον ἓνα τῶν ἀποστόλων, καὶ γεγράφθαι ἐν τοῖς ἀπομνημονεύμασιν αὐτοῦ γεγενημένον καὶ τοῦτο, [...] Bobichon, 470.

In these passages, Justin elucidates the genitive “of the apostles” that often accompanies the title “Memorabilia” (ἀπομνημόνευματα). The former clarifies that both apostles and their followers composed gospels. In the latter, Justin relates that a certain event is described in a particular gospel. This is the only place where Justin distinguishes among gospels. The re-naming of Peter, says Justin, is recorded in the “*Memorabilia* of him” — probably referring back to Peter. Here Justin reveals that the *Memorabilia* are not merely a nebulous constellation of texts that are vaguely attributable to the earliest followers of Jesus. Rather, Justin believes that specific gospels are attributable to specific figures.

It is also notable that Justin, in the latter passage, continues to use the plural ἀπομνημόνευματα even when referring to a single book. If Justin were using the term in a non-titular sense — meaning something like: books related to memory— we would expect Justin here to switch to the singular ἀπομνημόνευμα. His use of the plural *Memorabilia* for a single, specific gospel corroborates the argument that Justin is invoking Xenophon’s title.

#### 4.6.6 Other Authors

These are only the clearest examples of the reception of gospels before Irenaeus as discrete, authored books. There is a wealth of additional evidence that gospels were understood in the bookish categories of Hellenistic literature. The *Gospel of Peter*, for instance, is a re-working of the synoptic gospels which purports to be written by Peter (60).<sup>160</sup> This pseudepigraphic claim betrays a conception of gospels as the kind of books that are, indeed, authored. The same can be said for *Thomas* (Preface) and the *Protoevangelium of James* (24)

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<sup>160</sup> On Peter’s dependence on the synoptics, see Timothy P. Henderson, *The Gospel of Peter and Early Christian Apologetics: Rewriting the Story of Jesus’ Death, Burial, and Resurrection* (Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

which both purport to be written by eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus. The *Apocryphon of James* (NH 1.2), similarly, depicts the disciples as the authors of multiple books containing the teaching of Jesus (2.8-15). These texts are difficult to date with precision but are usually placed sometime in the second century.

The apostolic etiologies for the synoptic gospels are *post hoc* attributions, not memories of historical events. Like much of technical literature, the synoptics seem to have circulated initially without formal authorial ascriptions. At the same time, these gospels quickly attracted attributions. Contrary to the claims of Parker and Larsen, the earliest evidence of their reception indicates that gospels were understood as distinct books that ought to have credible authors. Just as formally anonymous medical tractates were (mis-)ascribed to Hippocrates or Galen, therefore, the anonymous gospels were assigned to Jesus' disciples and their companions.

This picture of the early reception of gospels as discrete, authored books is only corroborated by the extensive use of the term 'gospel' and 'gospels' throughout the second century to refer to books about Jesus. As argued in my first chapter, the *Didache* (8, 15), *Epistle of Barnabas* (5.9), *Second Clement* (8.5), and the *Treatise on the Resurrection* (1.48) refer to Jesus' words or deeds as "in the gospel". Ignatius lists "the gospel" among other textual authorities (*Phil.* 5.1-2, 9.1-2; *Smyr.* 5.1; 7.2; see also *Phil.* 8.2). Both the Greek and the Syriac recensions of the early second century *Apology of Aristides* treat "the gospel" as a written text (Greek 15; Syriac 2). The *Acts of Peter* refers to an individual scroll as "the gospel" (20). Marcion and Tatian (as discussed in subsequent chapters) named their respective works "Gospel." There is no reference to unfinishedness or intentionally open texts. Rather, these references are compatible with a wide-spread conception of gospels as distinct books on a common *hypothesis*.

Parker and Larsen claim that early readers of the gospels did not “conflate” gospel literature with “concepts like book, author, and publication.”<sup>161</sup> Although we have yet to consider the evidence of the text traditions itself, a survey of the earliest reception of gospels reveals an overwhelming catalog of contrary evidence. Whatever the circumstances of their composition, the synoptics were evidently understood as distinct books with (at least, theoretically) identifiable authors.

#### 4.7 The Viscosity of the Synoptic Text Traditions

“All works,” says John Bryant in his monograph *The Fluid Text*, “—because of the nature of texts and creativity— are fluid texts.”<sup>162</sup> If any difference between artefacts constitutes textual fluidity, then Bryant’s claim is true enough. The conclusions of Parker and Larsen about the origin of gospel literature do not, however, follow from such fluidity. Not all texts are living, purposefully open, unfinished, and authorless. Differences between the drafts, editions, and printings of *To the Lighthouse* do not prevent us from identifying Virginia Woolf as its author or reconstructing *an* authorial text (or authorial texts) of the work. Bryant himself traces the development of Herman Melville's thought across versions of his *Typee*. Obviously, the mere fact of variation in the text tradition of any work does not justify reconceiving works as living or open.

Larsen and Parker do not present “fluidity” as a simple binary but present a more nuanced argument from textual instability. The degree of variation in the text tradition(s) of the synoptics, they argue, substantiate their account of the origin and character of gospel literature.

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<sup>161</sup> Larsen, *Gospels before the Book*, 2.

<sup>162</sup> John Bryant, *The Fluid Text: A Theory of Revision and Editing for Book and Screen* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

Parker claims that the manuscripts of the synoptic gospels reveal that copyists who were engaged in harmonization “used” the gospels “with the same degree of freedom as Matthew and Luke had used Mark.”<sup>163</sup> He illustrates this by select manuscripts of the pericope of Jesus picking grain on the sabbath (*Mark 2:23-8//Luke 6:1-5*). Larsen, in turn, cites Parker as establishing that gospels are not the kind of texts that have originals.<sup>164</sup> “[T]he configurations of the textual tradition,” according to Larsen, “are far too unbounded and messy to conflate with concepts like book, author, and publication.”<sup>165</sup> In the text tradition, Parker and Larsen argue, the synoptics are so similar to one another and individual manuscripts of any one gospel are so different from each other that no meaningful distinction can be made between the work of an evangelist and a copyist.

But is this true? Are two manuscripts of *Matthew* as unlike each other as any given manuscript of *Matthew* and *Mark*? Do the same kinds of variation exist between manuscripts of the same gospel and manuscripts of different gospels? These questions can be answered unequivocally in the negative. If Parker has described living texts, the synoptic gospels must be dead. That is, the text traditions of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke* suggest that copyists understood these books as three discrete works.

This is not a critique of the idea of “open texts” itself. There is probably no better example of an open, unfinished, and living text from the literature of early Christianity than the *Apophthegmata Patrum*.<sup>166</sup> This is the title given by modern scholarship to the collections of sayings and stories from desert fathers. Manuscripts of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* can be

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<sup>163</sup> Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels*, 205.

<sup>164</sup> Larsen, *Gospels before the Book*, 4.

<sup>165</sup> Larsen, 2.

<sup>166</sup> Not coincidentally, Karl Ludwig Schmid and Martin Dibelius considered the *Apophthegmata* to be the closest analog to their conception of the gospels.

grouped into alphabetic and thematic collections based on the principle of their arrangement.<sup>167</sup>

But even within these groupings, according to Samuel Rubenson, “individual manuscripts [...] differ considerably in content and order.”<sup>168</sup> Viewed alongside such a genuinely dynamic, evolving, and unstable text tradition, the synoptics appear stagnant and lifeless.

The act of writing a synoptic gospel can be clearly distinguished from the act of copying one. As with every premodern work, there is variation in the text traditions of the synoptic gospels. Copyists undoubtedly altered their text.<sup>169</sup> Nevertheless, there are significant differences in the kinds and degrees of variation exhibited between manuscripts of one gospel and the kinds and degrees of variation between manuscripts of different (as identified by their traditional titles) gospels. Gospel writing and copying are qualitatively and quantitatively distinct behaviors.

A qualitative distinction between gospel writing and copying is the alteration of the sequence of pericopes.<sup>170</sup> The synoptic gospels tell the same stories in different orders. The author of *Matthew*, for instance, moved the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law from early in the Jesus’ ministry (*Mark* 1:29-31) shortly before the cleansing of the leper (1:40-45) to later in Jesus’ ministry (*Matthew* 8:14-15) after the cleansing of the leper (8:1-4). Likewise, the author of

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<sup>167</sup> J-C Guy, *Recherches Sur La Tradition Grecque Des Apophthegmata Patrum*, Subsidia Hagiographica 36 (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1962), 36–41; Samuel Rubenson, “The Formation and Re-Formations of the Sayings of the Desert Fathers,” *Studia Patristica*, no. 55 (2011): 14; Samuel Rubenson, “Textual Fluidity in Early Monasticism: Sayings, Sermons, and Stories,” in *Snapshots of Evolving Traditions: Jewish and Christian Manuscript Culture, Textual Fluidity, and New Philology* (Berlin: De Gruyter, Inc., 2017), 178–200.

<sup>168</sup> Rubenson, “The Formation and Re-Formations of the Sayings of the Desert Fathers,” 14.

<sup>169</sup> Ulrich Schmid offers a particularly useful model for the origin of meaningful text variants in Ulrich Schmid, “Scribes and Variants – Sociology and Typology,” in *Textual Variation: Theological and Social Tendencies?*, ed. David C. Parker (Piscataway, NJ, USA: Gorgias Press, 2008), 1–24; Ulrich Schmid, “Conceptualizing ‘Scribal’ Performances: Reader’s Notes,” in *The Textual History of the Greek New Testament*, ed. Klaus Wachtel and Michael W. Holmes, Text-Critical Studies 8 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 49–64.

<sup>170</sup> This is what Michael Holmes refers to as the “macrolevel stability” of the gospels. Michael W. Holmes, “From ‘Original Text’ to ‘Initial Text’: The Traditional Goal of New Testament Textual Criticism in Contemporary Discussion,” in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research*, ed. Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes (Brill, 2012), 637–88.

*Luke* relocated the anointing of Jesus from the beginning of Jesus' passion in *Mark* (14:3-9) to the middle of Jesus' Galilean ministry in *Luke* (7:36-50). In contrast, no manuscript of any synoptic gospel ever alters the sequence of a single episode. Every manuscript bearing the title "according to *Matthew*" places the healing of Peter's mother-in-law in its Matthean location. No manuscript of *Mark* ever relocates this episode to its Matthean location (or vice-versa). The sequence of stories varies from one gospel to another but not a single episode of any synoptic gospel ever shifts from manuscript to manuscript. The complete absence of inter-pericope variation between manuscripts is a qualitative difference between gospel composition and copying.

The difference in variation between gospels and manuscripts of the same gospel is also quantifiable. No two manuscripts of the same gospel differ more than two manuscripts of different gospels. Or, stated inversely, any two manuscripts of the same gospel are more alike than any two manuscripts of different gospels. This can be demonstrated with a simple word count. A word count is an almost comically blunt instrument. It is easy to imagine other works of similar length that could not be distinguished by simply counting words. The fact that manuscripts of the synoptic gospels fall so neatly into three distinct groupings that precisely correspond to their traditional titles on the basis of a mere word count reveals how straightforwardly the synoptic gospels can be distinguished from one another.

I present below the word-count (including corrections by the first hand) of every complete manuscript of the synoptic gospels from before the sixth century according to the transcriptions of Alan Bunning.<sup>171</sup> The inclusion of other complete witnesses —mostly

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<sup>171</sup> Transcriptions of all early manuscripts have been made available by Alan Bunning at <https://greekcntr.org/>.

Byzantine manuscripts— would only shrink the standard deviation, causing the synoptic text traditions to appear more and more stable.

<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Mark</i>	<i>Luke</i>
S 01 18,218	S 01 11,007	S 01 19,468
B 03 18,272	A 02 11,592	A 02 19,830
W 032 18,613	B 03 11,036	B 03 19,364
	D 05 11,224	D 05 19,264
		W 032 19,399

The largest standard deviation from this sampling of manuscripts is 233 words in the text tradition of *Mark*, while the smallest is 174 words from *Matthew*. The two closest manuscripts of different gospels are *Matthew* as found in Codex Washingtonianus (W 032) and *Luke* as found in Codex Bezae (D 05) with a difference of 651 words. This simplistic calculation, of course, takes no account of the fact that manuscripts of *Matthew* and *Luke* do not share anywhere near as many of the *same* words. Still, the mere tabulation of words in manuscripts of the gospels reveals a clear quantitative distinction between the kind of re-writing exhibited between any two manuscripts of different gospels and the copying exhibited between any two manuscripts of the same gospel. Copying and composing are easily distinguished on quantitative grounds.

Parker illustrates his characterization of the synoptic text tradition with the pericope of the controversy over picking grain on the sabbath. There are two specific manuscripts of *Luke*, Parker shows, with versions of this story *less* like one another than one of those Lukan manuscripts and a manuscript of *Mark*. Since Parker describes this example as “fundamental to some later chapters,” it is worth “zooming in” to ask whether the evidence proves more kind to Parker and Larsen’s claim within specific pericopes. That is, if we set aside the content of a work

and its sequence, do the individual narrative units exhibit the same degree of fluidity between copies of the same gospel that is typical between different gospels (in any one of its copies)?

This question can be answered by a sample of wordcounts for triple tradition pericopes as found in pre-6<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts. It is worth repeating that a mere wordcount would be too simplistic a tool to distinguish between extremely similar texts. The fact that a word count does so clearly distinguish manuscripts of different gospels from one another on a pericope-by-pericope level is only further evidence of how obvious are the differences between the synoptic gospels even accounting (as this method does) for the variation in the text tradition of each gospel.

Jesus' Baptism

Mt 3:13-17//Mk 1:9-11//Lk 3:21-22

	<b>Mt</b>	<b>Mk</b>	<b>Lk</b>
<b>S 01</b>	94	54	44
<b>A 02</b>	Lac.	53	44
<b>B 03</b>	93	53	43
<b>C 04</b>	99	Lac.	Lac.
<b>D 05</b>	Lac.	52	43
<b>W 32</b>	99	59	Lac.
<b>σ</b>	<b>2.77</b>	<b>2.48</b>	<b>.5</b>

Jesus' Temptation

Mt 4:1-11//Mk 1:12-13//Lk 4:1-13

	<b>Mt</b>	<b>Mk</b>	<b>Lk</b>
<b>S 01</b>	184	30	204
<b>A 02</b>	Lac.	29	219
<b>B 03</b>	183	30	202
<b>C 04</b>	185	Lac.	Lac.
<b>D 05</b>	185	33	210
<b>W 32</b>	185	31	206
<b>σ</b>	<b>.8</b>	<b>1.36</b>	<b>6.02</b>

Calming the Storm

Mt 8:23-27//Mk 4:35-41//Lk 8:22-25

	<b>Mt</b>	<b>Mk</b>	<b>Lk</b>
<b>S 01</b>	73	113	90
<b>A 02</b>	Lac.	119	94
<b>B 03</b>	72	118	91
<b>C 04</b>	Lac.	119	Lac.
<b>D 05</b>	Lac.	131	93
<b>W 32</b>	79	112	93
<b>σ</b>	<b>3.09</b>	<b>6.18</b>	<b>1.47</b>

Beelzebub Controversy<sup>1</sup>

Mt 12:22-32//Mk 3:20-32//Lk 11:14-28

	<b>Mt</b>	<b>Mk</b>	<b>Lk</b>
<b>S 01</b>	218	203	264
<b>A 02</b>	Lac.	207	267
<b>B 03</b>	219	205	260
<b>C 04</b>	221	205	266
<b>D 05</b>	220	213	257
<b>W 32</b>	222	197	254
<b>σ</b>	<b>1.41</b>	<b>4.76</b>	<b>4.75</b>

Parable of the Sower

Mt 13:1-23//Mk 4:1-20//Lk 8:4-15

	<b>Mt</b>	<b>Mk</b>	<b>Lk</b>
<b>S 01</b>	416	348	240
<b>A 02</b>	Lac.	352	236
<b>B 03</b>	415	349	233
<b>C 04</b>	416	347	Lac.
<b>D 05</b>	426	348	235
<b>W 32</b>	425	320	229
<b>σ</b>	<b>4.84</b>	<b>10.85</b>	<b>3.61</b>

Parable of the Mustard Seed

Mt 13:31-32//Mk 4:30-32//Lk 13:18-19

	<b>Mt</b>	<b>Mk</b>	<b>Lk</b>
<b>S 01</b>	52	60	40
<b>A 02</b>	Lac.	57	42
<b>B 03</b>	52	58	40
<b>C 04</b>	52	Lac.	Lac.
<b>D 05</b>	49	55	40
<b>W 32</b>	50	53	41
<b>σ</b>	<b>1.26</b>	<b>2.42</b>	<b>.8</b>

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<sup>1</sup> Part of a line from Leaf 117v of Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus is illegible. This probably contained three additional words.

This is a mere sampling of the synoptic text tradition(s) with an imprecise metric. A wordcount takes no account of vocabulary found in every manuscript of *Matthew* but not a single manuscript of *Luke* or *Mark*. And such distinctive vocabulary is plentiful for each gospel in almost every pericope. A more precise means of quantifying similarity—for instance, a modified Damerau–Levenshtein edit distance calculator—would account for such differences in wording.

Nevertheless, this imprecise metric yields unambiguous results. Even isolating a pericope, the manuscripts of each gospel are similar to every other manuscript of that gospel to a degree that distinguishes them from all the manuscripts of other gospels. That is, the manuscripts of each gospel form a tight cluster distinct from other gospels. Textual variation between manuscripts of different gospels is *quantitatively* (as well as qualitatively) distinct from the variation between manuscripts of the same gospel.

On a truly gradualist model, we would expect to see Matthean and Lukan forms of triple tradition stories appearing in manuscripts of *Mark*. Likewise, the double tradition pericopes ought to have progressively entered the Markan text tradition. The evidence plainly contradicts this. It might be supposed that this evolutionary development took place before our surviving evidence but, if this is how the gospels formed, there should be evidence of these intermediary forms in the extant tradition. There are, in fact, no transitional fossils. There are only manuscripts of *Matthew* with the uniquely Matthean sequence, uniquely Matthean pericopes, distinctively Matthean forms of shared pericopes, and the title *according to Matthew* (and so for *Mark* and *Luke*).

This is not a denial of meaningful variation in the text tradition of the synoptic gospels. All pre-modern texts were subject to the vicissitudes of reproduction by hand. Christian copyists,

moreover, made ideologically motivated changes to the text. Certain manuscripts show a willingness to paraphrase or elucidate. Even a few additional stories —like the Cambridge Pericope, the Endings of *Mark*, and the Freer Logion— were introduced into synoptic manuscripts. But there is no evidence to suggest that the gospel we recognize as *Matthew* was produced by the gradual revision of *Mark*. It seems, rather, that Parker and Larsen’s argument largely depends on a drastic overestimate of the prevalence of harmonization in the synoptics.<sup>1</sup> In his 2019 study of harmonization in the synoptic gospels, Cambry Pardee concluded that harmonization “was infrequent in the transmission of the Synoptic Gospels in the fourth century and earlier.”<sup>2</sup> Only 5.1% of verses in the 37 manuscripts considered by Pardee contain even one variation unit explicable as harmonization.<sup>3</sup> Most of these harmonistic variants, moreover, consist of single words, meaning substantially more than 95% of the text of the synoptic gospels contains no harmonistic textual variation in any early manuscript.<sup>4</sup> The text tradition of the synoptic gospels simply does not evince the kind of variation found in genuinely fluid texts, like the *Apophthegmata Patrum*.

In review, we can evaluate the viscosity of a text tradition on three axes of variation: 1) structural, 2) textual, and 3) paratextual. This is, of course, only a heuristic —a means of organizing the data— not clearly distinguishable categories of scribal behavior. Nevertheless, the relative stability of the gospels on these three axes allows us to place the gospels along the spectrum of more-or-less fluid premodern texts. First, the manuscripts of the synoptic gospels evince no structural variation. If the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, *Acts of Peter*, or *Gospel of Thomas*

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<sup>1</sup> Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels*, 120.

<sup>2</sup> Cambry Pardee, *Scribal Harmonization in the Synoptic Gospels*, *Scribal Harmonization in the Synoptic Gospels* (Brill, 2019), 432.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Pardee, *Scribal Harmonization in the Synoptic Gospels*, 434.

are “fluid” on a structural level, the synoptic gospels are rock solid. Second, the gospels evince some variation on a textual level but not nearly enough (or, indeed, of the right kind) to blur the distinction between the synoptics. Other studies have demonstrated that the synoptic gospels evince less textual variation than comparable early Christian works, like the *Shepherd of Hermas* or *The Gospel of Thomas*.<sup>5</sup> In this respect, all premodern texts are somewhat unstable, but the synoptic gospels are more stable than comparable early Christian texts (like the *Shepherd*) that are widely recognized as the composition of an author. Third and finally, the paratexts of the synoptic gospels cannot be treated as a monolith. The paratext relevant for the present inquiry, namely the titles of the gospels, are quite stable. There is some variation in wording but the ascriptions to “Matthew,” “Mark,” and “Luke” are ubiquitous and unchanging.<sup>6</sup>

#### 4.8 The Formal Anonymity of the Gospels

If the synoptic gospels are authored books, why are they formally anonymous? Of course, none of the surviving manuscripts of the synoptic gospels are actually anonymous. The gospels, as we have seen, were understood to be the kind of texts that had identifiable authors — and, unsurprisingly, early Christians identified them. Sometime before our earliest manuscript evidence, each canonical gospel had been assigned to a figure of mythic significance and/or an

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<sup>5</sup> K. Martin Heide, ed., “Assessing the Stability of the Transmitted Texts of the New Testament and the Shepherd of Hermas,” in *The Reliability of the New Testament: Bart Ehrman and Daniel Wallace in Dialogue* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 111–45; Tim Ricchuiti, “Tracking Thomas: A Text-Critical Look at the Transmission of the Gospel of Thomas,” in *Revisiting the Corruption of the New Testament: Manuscript, Patristic, and Apocryphal Evidence*, ed. Daniel B. Wallace (Kregel Academic, 2011), 189–228. Both of these studies undercut themselves by presenting this comparative data as if it were contrary to the thesis advanced in Bart Ehrman’s *Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*. This unconvincing argumentation aside, the data is sound and bares upon the present matter.

<sup>6</sup> Silke Petersen, “Die Evangelienüberschriften und die Entstehung des neutestamentlichen Kanons,” *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und Kunde der Älteren Kirche* 97, no. 3–4 (2006).

eyewitness to the narrated events. What needs to be explained, therefore, is *both* the formal anonymity of the synoptics and the felt need to assign them to authors.

Here the conventions of technical literature have significant explanatory power. Whereas Greek historians typically identify themselves, technical prefaces conventionally employ the first person singular and name an addressee (e.g. “most excellent Theophilus”). Technical works without a preface, on the other hand, typically contain no reference to the author. By convention, therefore, technical books are formally anonymous. The use (or putative use) of this literature in an instructional setting meant that the identity of the teacher --speaking as “I” or “we” in the preface-- can be left implicit. Students, this literature presumes, know who their teacher is.

A story from Galen’s *On My Own Books* illustrates the formal anonymity of technical literature (10-11). Galen claims that certain books of his “were given to friends or students without an epigraph since they were not for publication (ἐκδοσιν)” but only “reminders” (ὕπομνήματα) of what they had heard.<sup>7</sup> These writings, however, passed on to the “associates” (κοινωνησάντων) of the initial audience. These associates claimed Galen’s work as their own until some unspecified readers detected the forgery and restored the Galenic attribution.

Whatever we make of Galen’s convoluted explanation for the textual instability of his writings, his narrative is premised on a few assumptions about technical literature — or, at least, certain kinds of technical literature. Galen describes the distribution (though not, in his mind, publication) of technical literature without an authorial attribution *and* the felt need to attribute these same books to some author. Galen shared anonymous copies of his books with friends and students. It is safe to infer from Galen’s narrative that these books were allowed out of the

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<sup>7</sup> φίλοις γὰρ ἢ μαθηταῖς ἐδίδοτο χωρὶς ἐπιγραφῆς ὡς ἂν οὐδὲν πρὸς ἔκδοσιν ἀλλ’ αὐτοῖς ἐκείνοις γεγονότα δεηθεῖσιν ὧν ἤκουσαν ἔχειν ὑπομνήματα (Kühn 19.10).

control of their author without an attribution because of the instructional setting. Galen's students, of course, knew Galen was the author. It was only the associates of Galen's friends who inherited Galen's works and, lacking a formal attribution, re-attributed them. Galen's readership, he claims, re-asserted Galen's authorship. Despite their anonymity, therefore, these books were understood to be the kind of books that had authors. We see with Galen's books, therefore, the same combination of formal anonymity and the perceived need for attribution that is found in the gospels.

The story of Galen at the bookseller (recounted at greater length in chapter two) illustrates the same combination of phenomena in a different scenario. Another doctor's treatise, Galen tells us, had been wrongly ascribed to Galen, and one of Galen's admirers removed the mis-attribution. These events can plausibly be reconstructed as follows: (1) an unknown teacher circulated his work anonymously, (2) a subsequent reader ascribed the work to a famous doctor, and (3) Galen's admirer objected. Here, again, a technical treatise is formally anonymous, and readers felt the need to attribute it.

The same process accounts for the formation of the Hippocratic corpus. There is an immense body of medical literature attributed to Hippocrates, the so-called father of medicine. The use of the first person in these works is common, but the entire corpus is formally anonymous.<sup>8</sup> Scholars in antiquity and today recognize that the Hippocratic corpus came from different authors belonging to different schools of medical thought. As with Galen, it does not follow from the anonymity of these works that their initial readers did not know the identity of their real author. Once these books circulated beyond this author's social network, however, it

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<sup>8</sup> Elizabeth Craik, "The 'Hippocratic Question' and the Nature of the Hippocratic Corpus," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hippocrates* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 25–37.

became necessary to re-attribute them to a figure of some authority. So, Hippocrates accrued an immense and less than consistent bibliography.

If gospels were, indeed, composed in the setting of independent religious experts appropriating the conventions of technical literature, it is safe to assume that Theophilus was a real person and knew the identity of the third evangelist.<sup>9</sup> So too, the first readers of *Matthew* were probably students and/or patrons of the teacher-turned-evangelist. But once these gospels circulated beyond the initial audience, the identity of the author was forgotten. Some readers in the second century seem to have tolerated this anonymity. But already in the first decades of the second century (as Papias and the *Epistula Apostolorum* attest), the gospels had been attributed by some readers to specific authors.

#### 4.9 Conclusion

The present chapter defends the modest conclusion that the synoptic gospels are, in fact, books. The gospels known to us as *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke* were composed (and received) as discrete works by theoretically identifiable authors. Redaction criticism, I argue, reveals an ideological and thematic coherence across the revisions of *Mark* evinced in *Matthew* and *Luke*. Genre criticism, likewise, indicates that the episodic structure of the gospels—once considered evidence of their collective and, therefore, piecemeal composition—was a convention in contemporary literature. It is better explained, therefore, by participation in contemporary literary culture. The gospels themselves do not support a collectivist or gradualist account of gospel origins.

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<sup>9</sup> Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel*, 187–200.

The reception of gospel literature points in the same direction. That is, early readers of the gospels understood them as discrete, authored books. These bookish categories were, of course, prevalent in first and second century literary culture outside the gospels. The later synoptics, authors of *John* and the Johannine epilogue, Papias, author of the *Epistula Apostolorum*, Justin, and a host of other figures before Irenaeus understood gospels accordingly. Lastly, the text tradition reflects an awareness of the synoptics as three distinct works, each with a discrete compositional occasion. There are qualitative and quantitative differences between the kinds of variation evinced between any two manuscripts of the same synoptic gospel and the kinds of variation evinced between all manuscripts of two different synoptic gospels. The text traditions of the gospels, accordingly, do not constitute a “synoptic soup” but, rather, three clusters of manuscripts corresponding to their traditional titles.<sup>10</sup> The gospel of *Mark* did not gradually evolve into *Matthew*. Rather, the evidence of the text tradition is consistent with an authored text, subject to the variation found in all premodern texts.

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<sup>10</sup> Eric Eve, *Relating the Gospels: Memory, Imitation and the Farrer Hypothesis* (London ; New York: T&T Clark, 2021), 206.

## Chapter 5

### The Gospel according to Marcion (Part 1): Textual Transmission and Gospel Rewriting

#### 5.1 Introduction

Marcion of Sinope was a teacher in second century Rome. His opponents describe a gospel used by his followers that closely resembles *Luke*. Marcion, his opponents agree, created this gospel by bowdlerizing the received text of *Luke*. A handful of scholars have questioned this work's relationship to *Luke* as well as Marcion's role in creating it. The following chapter argues that Marcion belongs to the tradition of the synoptic gospels, re-writing *Luke* according to the conventions of technical literature. The present chapter lays the groundwork for that argument by assessing the place of Marcion's gospel in the Lukan text tradition and the evidence for the circulation of both gospels. Marcion, this chapter concludes, was responsible for the distinctive shape of his gospel.

#### 5.2 Who was Marcion?

Marcion was a shipowner from Pontus.<sup>1</sup> This is all there is to know about the arch-heretic's early life. Stories of seducing a virgin and early excommunication are heresiological fiction, absent from earlier authors who relished such salacious anecdotes.<sup>2</sup> Marcion came to

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<sup>1</sup> Marcion's Pontic provenance is widely attested, beginning with Justin, *First Apology* 26; 58. Marcion's occupation first appears in Rhodon (preserved by Eusebius) as ναύτης (Eus *HE* 5.13.3) and then in Tertullian as *nauculus* (*Praesc.* 30.1; *AM* 1.18.4; 3.6.3; 4.9.2; 5.1.2). Since Tertullian merely presumes this biographical detail, which is not particularly well-suited for heresiological polemic, it is probably reliable. On the significance of this term, see von Peter Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten: Untersuchungen zur Sozialgeschichte* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1987), 241–44; Gerhard May, "Der 'Schiffsreeder' Markion," in *Gerhard May: Markion gesammelte Aufsätze*, by Katharina Greschat and Martin Meiser, *Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte Mainz* 68 (Mainz: Von Zabern, 2005), 51–62.

<sup>2</sup> "If there had been any ground for this accusation, Tertullian would have known about it, and, if he had known about it, he was not the kind of man to be silent about it [...]" John Knox, *Marcion and the New Testament: An Essay in the Early History of the Canon* (University of Chicago Press, 1942), 2. On the rejection of what Jürgen

Rome in the first half of the second century and, following a dispute with local leaders, broke from what would-be the catholic church.<sup>3</sup> He soon established a rival network that would span the known world.<sup>4</sup> For centuries thereafter, Marcionite Christians—who knew themselves only as “Christians”—constituted local majorities across the Mediterranean.<sup>5</sup>

In practice, Marcion’s Christianity differed little from his opponents in Rome.<sup>6</sup> Both churches baptized and celebrated a communal meal (Tertullian, *AM* 1.14).<sup>7</sup> Both prayed and gave alms (1.23). Both appointed bishops (Eusebius, *Palestinian Martyrs* 10.3 in both recensions;

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Regul calls “die zweite Traditionslinie” (ps-Tertullian, Epiphanius, Philastrius) see Sebastian Moll, “Three against Tertullian: The Second Tradition about Marcion’s Life,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 59, no. 1 (April 1, 2008): 169–80.

<sup>3</sup> Marcion’s dates are disputed and not particularly significant for our study. Justin’s καὶ ὧν makes him the apologist’s elder contemporary (*First Apology* 58). Irenaeus says Marcion flourished during the bishopric of Anicetus, tenth from Peter (*Against Heresies* 1.27). The Marcionites, according to Tertullian, put “anni fere centum quindecim et dimidium anni cum dimidio mensis” between Jesus and Marcion (*Against Marcion* 1.19) whereas Tertullian himself dates Marcion’s advent to the bishopric of Eleutherius (*Prescription* 30.2) and his ascendancy to the rule of Antoninus Pious (*Against Marcion* 5.19). René Braun, *Tertullien Contre Marcion Tome I, Sources Chrétiennes* 365 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1990), 186. These data points are amenable to different interpretations and are probably not all reconcilable. For one reasonable assessment of the data, see Sebastian Moll, *The Arch-Heretic Marcion* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 31–41. While the dispute with Roman presbyters is explicitly attested only by Epiphanius (*Panarion* 1.42.1.7-2.7) and Philastrius (*Book of Heresies* 17), Moll notes that the former awkwardly (and anachronistically) integrates it with the story of sexual misconduct. It is unlikely, therefore, to be Epiphanius’ own creation. Moll, “Three against Tertullian,” 179–80. Likewise, Gerhard May, although rightly skeptical of Epiphanius’ dramatic scene, argues that parts of the account are drawn from an earlier source. Gerhard May, “Markions Bruch mit der römischen Gemeinde,” in *Markion: gesammelte Aufsätze*, ed. Katharina Greschat and Martin Meiser (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp Von Zabern, 2005), 75–83. Tertullian may offer some indirect corroboration by giving a prominent place to the same parables in his characterization of Marcion’s exegesis (*Against Marcion* 1.2.1-2; 3.16.5; 4.17.12).

<sup>4</sup> The extent of Marcion’s missional work is already attested in Justin’s *First Apology* (26). See also Tertullian, *AM* 4.5; Epiphanius, *Pan* 42.1.1-2; Ephrem *HAH* 1.10.

<sup>5</sup> Walter Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1934), 26–29. Justin is the first of many authors to note that Marcionites self-identify only as “Christians” (*First Apology* 26).

<sup>6</sup> A passage from Cyril of Jerusalem has often been read as warning parishioners against inadvertently participating in Marcionite worship (*Catechetical Lecture* 18.26). Strictly speaking, Cyril envisions confusion occasioned by the Marcionite and Manichean use of the term ἐκκλησία. Still, Cyril’s ἵνα ἐκείνων μὲν τὰ μαρὰ συστήματα φεύγης might portray a parishioner discovering herself in a Marcionite service. WC Reischl and Joseph Rupp, *Cyrylli Hierosolymorum archiepiscopi opera quae supersunt omnia*, vol. 2 (München: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung Hildesheim, 1860), 328.

<sup>7</sup> On the purportedly distinctive form of Marcion’s eucharist, see Alastair Stewart-Sykes, “Bread and fish, water and wine: The Marcionite menu and the maintenance of purity,” in *Marcion und seine kirchengeschichtliche Wirkung/Marcion and His Impact on Church History*, vol. 132, *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2002), 207–20.

*Adamantius Dialogue* 1.8) and priests (*Martyrdom of Pionius* 21). Marcion, no less than other Christians, esteemed asceticism (Tertullian, *AM* 1.29; Clement, *Strom* 3.3.12) and martyrdom (Eusebius, *EH* 5.16.21). Neither special knowledge nor convoluted cosmogonies had any place in his teaching. Rather, Marcion —like his Roman opponents— preached faith in Christ crucified (Tertullian, *AM* 2.27.7).

An outsider might be surprised to learn that two such congregations claimed to worship different gods. The god of Abraham, creator of the world and author of the Mosaic Law, was, according to Marcion, evil, ignorant, and cruel.<sup>8</sup> The elders at Rome were deluded in their veneration of this malevolent deity. Revealed in Jesus is a new god; and this divinity-come-lately is wholly good and concerned to rescue humanity from the creator.

Marcion's scriptures too bore an outward similarity to those of his opponents. Like the Roman elders, Marcion used the Jewish scriptures — but to a radically different end.<sup>9</sup> These scriptures, according to Marcion, testify to the wickedness of the creator. Marcion also accepted a single gospel and ten letters of Paul. While the contents of Marcion's canon would occasion considerable controversy in centuries to come, collections of Christian scripture took many

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<sup>8</sup> Adolf von Harnack famously construes Marcion's doctrine as distinguishing between an Old Testament god of justice and a New Testament god of grace. By isolating one polemical caricature of Marcion and accepting this as reliable, Harnack transformed the second century dualist into a twentieth century German protestant. A series of subsequent studies have effectively unseated Harnack's construction. Winrich Löhr and Sebastian Moll argue compellingly that Marcion distinguished between good and evil gods. Winrich A Löhr, "Did Marcion Distinguish between a Just God and a Good God?," in *Marcion und seine kirchengeschichtliche Wirkung*, by Gerhard May and Katharina Greschat, 1984th ed., *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* 150 (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2002); Moll, *The Arch-Heretic Marcion*. Enrico Norelli qualifies Moll's over-corrections against Harnack but agrees with the central thesis. Enrico Norelli, "Un 'Dieu Bon' Agressif et Haineux? Le Marcion Discutable de Sebastian Moll," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History; Cambridge* 65, no. 2 (April 2014): 347–53. Nevertheless, Harnack's construal of Marcion's dualism still has prominent defenders. Judith Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic: God and Scripture in the Second Century* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 337–49, esp. 348.

<sup>9</sup> Moll, *The Arch-Heretic Marcion*, 78–83.

different shapes in the mid-second century.<sup>10</sup> Marcion's table of contents may have been unremarkable to his contemporaries in Rome.

### 5.3 Reconstructing Marcion's *Gospel*

The mere existence of a distinctively Marcionite gospel is uncontroversial. It is attested already by Irenaeus (*AH* 1.27.2) and a dozen later authors cite or characterize its content.<sup>11</sup> Most impressive are the systematic treatments of Marcion's scripture by Tertullian and Epiphanius. In the fourth and fifth book of his *Against Marcion*, Tertullian provides methodical commentary on Marcion's *Gospel* and collection of Pauline letters.<sup>12</sup> Epiphanius offers a similarly robust catalog of the differences between Marcion's scriptures and his own. His *Panarion* includes two lists of Marcionite readings extracted from an earlier, lost treatise (42.10.1).<sup>13</sup> Epiphanius claims to have composed this earlier treatise by copying directly from a manuscript of Marcion's scriptures. Ulrich Schmid and Dieter Roth argue compellingly that the differences between Epiphanius' two, redundant catalogs and their correspondence to Tertullian's quotations support the

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<sup>10</sup> The *Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs*, for instance, speaks only of "Libri et epistulae Pauli viri iusti." A. A. R. Bastiaensen and Giuseppe Chiarini, *Atti e passioni dei martiri* (Milano: Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, 1987). Justin, Hegesippus, and Serapion reflect apparently *ad hoc* gospel collections. Basilides and Tatian had ten and eleven letter collections respectively. On the existence of this ten letter collection before Marcion, see Ulrich Schmid, *Marcion und sein Apostolos: Rekonstruktion und historische Einordnung der marcionitischen Paulusbrieffausgabe*, *Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Textforschung*, Bd. 25 (Berlin ; New York: De Gruyter, 1995), 284–308.

<sup>11</sup> The earliest plausible (but not explicit) attestation of Marcion's *Gospel* is Dionysius of Corinth (Eusebius, *EH* 23.12). The primary sources are Tertullian, Epiphanius, the *Adamantius Dialogue*, and Eznik of Kolb. The testimonies of Irenaeus, (ps-)Tertullian, Hippolytus, Origen, Jerome, Ephrem, (ps-)Ephrem, Philastrius, and Al-Birūni corroborate or clarify these witnesses.

<sup>12</sup> In composing this treatise, Ulrich Schmid and Dieter Roth argue compellingly, Tertullian made *ad hoc* Latin translations from a Greek copy of Marcion's scripture. Dieter T. Roth, "Did Tertullian Possess a Greek Copy or Latin Translation of Marcion's Gospel?," *Vigiliae Christianae* 63, no. 5 (2009): 429–67. Schmid, *Marcion und sein Apostolos*, 40–59.

<sup>13</sup> Karl Holl and Jurgen Dummer, *Epiphanius II Panarion haer. 34-64*, vol. 2, *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1980), 106. See also Epiphanius' claim at 3.11.16 that he transcribed Marcion's text himself.

heresiologist's claim to have, indeed, copied off such an *Ur-Exzerptsammlung*.<sup>14</sup> There is every reason to believe that Tertullian and Epiphanius, indeed, had direct access to a distinctive gospel associated with Marcion.<sup>15</sup> Thanks to the pettifogging polemics of these heresiologists, Marcion's lost gospel is one of the best-known early Christian work without any direct text tradition.

Scholars have reconstructed Marcion's *Gospel* from hundreds of quotations and testimonia. No edition is perfect, but the universe cannot be reinvented every time we wish to make a pie.<sup>16</sup> Throughout this study, I rely on Dieter Roth's reconstruction.<sup>17</sup> My rare disagreements with Roth are noted and, in every such instance, I agree with the reconstructions of Jason BeDuhn and/or Matthias Klinghardt.<sup>18</sup>

What did Marcion's gospel look like? Marcion's opponents claim that his gospel was a mutilation of *Luke*. First, Irenaeus accuses Marcion of "circumcising" the gospel.<sup>19</sup>

Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 1.27.2

And beyond these things, he cuts up (circumcidens) the *Gospel according to Luke* and removes all those things written about the generation of the Lord and much of the

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<sup>14</sup> Schmid, *Marcion und sein Apostolos*, 150–75; Dieter T Roth, *The Text of Marcion's Gospel*, New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents 49 (Lieden: Brill, 2015), 270–83.

<sup>15</sup> That Tertullian did not merely invent these readings but, indeed, referred to an artefact which he believed to be Marcionite is confirmed by his misattribution of readings to Marcion's editorial hand that are independently attested in the Lukan text tradition. A particularly amusing example is his attribution of the Lukan "division" (separationem/διαμερισμόν) to Marcion's gospel at 12:51, instead of Matthew's (machaeram/μάχαιραν) at *AM* 4.29.14.

<sup>16</sup> Carl Sagan, *Cosmos* (New York: Random House, 1980), 218.

<sup>17</sup> On the few short-comings of Roth's edition, see Ian N. Mills, "The Text of Marcion's Gospel, Written by Dieter T. Roth," *Gnosis: Journal of Gnostic Studies* 3, no. 2 (July 30, 2018): 273–75.

<sup>18</sup> Jason BeDuhn, *The First New Testament: Marcion's Scriptural Canon* (Salem, Oregon: Polebridge Press, 2013); Matthias Klinghardt, *Das älteste Evangelium und die Entstehung der kanonischen Evangelien Band II: Rekonstruktion, Übersetzung, Varianten* (Tübingen: Francke A. Verlag, 2015).

<sup>19</sup> Elsewhere, Irenaeus implies that Marcion's gospel began with Luke 3:1 (*Against Heresies* 4.6.2). As discussed below, part of this single verse probably introduced 4:31-35. See also Roth, *The Text of Marcion's Gospel*, 75; 412.

teaching of the words of the Lord, in which the Lord is recorded most clearly acknowledging that the author of this universe is his Father [...]<sup>20</sup>

Epiphanius offers a corroborative but more detailed contrast between Marcion's *Gospel* and the opening of *Luke*.

Epiphanius, *Panarion* 42.11.4

For right at the beginning, everything treated by Luke from the beginning – that is, when he says “Since many have attempted...” and so on, and the things concerning Elizabeth and the announcement of the angel regarding Mary the virgin, and John and Zachariah, and the birth in Bethlehem, the genealogy, and the matter of the baptism – excising all these things, he started out and arranged this as the beginning of the gospel, “In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar” and so on.<sup>21</sup>

The picture provided by Irenaeus and Epiphanius can be completed with Tertullian's statement that Marcion's Jesus moved “from heaven immediately to the synagogue” (*AM* 4.7.5).<sup>22</sup>

Although relevant testimonia could be multiplied, these three witnesses report that the Lukan prologue (1:1-4), nativities of John the Baptist and Jesus (1:5-2:40), visit to the Temple (2:31-52), preaching of John the Baptist (3:2-18), baptism of Jesus (3:21-22), genealogy (3:23-38), and temptation (4:1-13) were not found in Marcion's gospel.<sup>23</sup> Right from the start, according to his opponents, Marcion omitted a significant part of *Luke*. If, for convenience, we adopt the pericope

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<sup>20</sup> *Et super haec, id quod est secundum Lucam Euangelium circumcidens et omnia quae sunt de generatione Domini conscripta auferens et de doctrina sermonum Domini multa auferens, in quibus manifestissime Conditozem huius uniuersitatis suum Patrem confitens Dominus conscriptus est [...].* Adelin Rousseau, Louis Doutreleau, and Charles Mercier, *Irénée de Lyon. Contre les hérésies. Livre I.*, vol. 2, Sources chrétiennes 264 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1979), 350.

<sup>21</sup> εὐθὺς μὲν γὰρ ἐν τῇ ἀρχῇ πάντα τὰ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς τῷ Λουκᾷ πεπραγματευμένα τουτέστιν ὡς λέγει «ἐπειδὴ περ πολλοὶ ἐπεχείρησαν» καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς καὶ τὰ περὶ τῆς Ἑλισάβετ καὶ τοῦ ἀγγέλου εὐαγγελιζομένου Μαρίας τὴν παρθένου, Ἰωάννου τε καὶ Ζαχαρίου καὶ τῆς ἐν Βηθλεὲμ γεννήσεως, γενεαλογίας καὶ τῆς τοῦ βαπτίσματος ὑποθέσεως — ταῦτα πάντα περικόψας ἀπεπήδησεν καὶ ἀρχὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἔταξε ταύτην «ἐν τῷ πεντεκαίδεκάτῳ ἔτει Τιβερίου Καίσαρος» καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς. Holl and Dummer, *Epiphanius II Panarion haer. 34-64*, 2:107–8.

<sup>22</sup> “*De caelo statim ad synagogam.*” Claudio Moreschini and René Braun, eds., *Tertullien Contre Marcion Tome IV*, Sources Chrétiennes 456 (Paris: Cerf, 2001), 96. A similar statement is found in *Hip Ref.* 7.19.

<sup>23</sup> Tertullian hints at this elsewhere (*AM* 5.6.7). Likewise, Tertullian's silence concerning these in his discussion of the opening of Marcion's gospel offers indirect corroboration of the omission (*AM* 4.7). As discussed below, Marcion re-arranged the remaining sections of *Luke* 4.

division of Kurt Aland's synopsis, seventeen pericopes were removed from the beginning of the third gospel. While there is inevitable ambiguity around precise wording, this block omitted from the opening of the gospel consists of approximately 2,800 words.<sup>24</sup>

The point is not, of course, that Marcion's gospel lacked 2,800 words rather than 2,700 or 2,900. The goal of this chapter is to compare the compositional behavior required to produce Marcion's gospel to other scribal and compositional behaviors. This comparison requires some tool for estimating the difference between Marcion's *Gospel* and manuscripts of other gospels. Simply counting pericopes would be wildly imprecise since Aland's pericope divisions reflect the concerns of producing a modern synopsis and, as a result, produce pericopes of wildly different sizes and character. Counting words introduces its own uncertainties. Nevertheless, a round number that includes only substantial omissions allows for meaningful comparison.

The gospel's beginning is not the only place where Marcion, according to his opponents, made substantial excisions. Marcion omitted the parables of the Barren Fig-tree (13:1-9), Prodigal Son (15:11-32), Wicked Tenants (20:9-18) and, probably, the Good Samaritan (10:29-37).<sup>25</sup> Likewise, Jesus' lament for Jerusalem (13:29-35), triumphal entry (19:28-44), and cleansing of the temple (19:45-48) fell out of Marcion's life of Jesus. These seven pericopes amount to about 1,300 words.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> According to the text of the SBL Greek New Testament, these verses add up to exactly 2,825 words. Marcion's copy of Luke did not, of course, precisely correspond to any of our critical editions. As argued below, a miscount of a couple hundred words would be irrelevant for my argument.

<sup>25</sup> Since no witness to Marcion's text mentions "The Good Samaritan," Roth marks it as merely "unattested." Beduhn, however, notes a meaningful silence in an anti-Marcionite work attributed to Ephrem. BeDuhn, *The First New Testament*, 157. Tsutsui argues that omission of 10:29-37 explains the distinctive form of verses 25-27 in Marcion's *Gospel*. von Kenji Tsutsui, *Die Auseinandersetzung mit den Markioniten im Adamantios-Dialog: Ein Kommentar zu den Büchern I-II*, *Patristische Texte und Studien*, Bd. 55 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004., 2004), 98. See also Klinghardt, *Das älteste Evangelium und die Entstehung der kanonischen Evangelien Band II*, 710–21.

<sup>26</sup> According to the SBL Greek New Testament, these verses add up to 1,292 words. The same caveats enumerated above, of course, apply here (and again below).

Our sources for Marcion's gospel also attest many phrase-to-paragraph length omissions (i.e. 4:16c-22; 8:19; 9:26c; 9:31α; 11:29γ-32, 49-51; 12:6-7, 28a; 17:10bc, 12c-13; 18:31-34; 20:37-38; 21:18, 21-22; 22:3α, 16, 30a, 35-38, 49-51; 23:34c, 43; 24:39β), but it is sometimes difficult to estimate their extent.<sup>27</sup> A conservative estimate has Marcion eliminating about 650 additional words from *Luke*.<sup>28</sup>

There are countless smaller omissions attributed to Marcion's gospel, but these move us on to increasingly unstable ground. Historians must assume that Marcion's gospel was subject to the same vagaries of transmission as the canonical gospels (see the discussion below). The omission of single words and short phrases—even those without independent attestation in the Lukan text tradition—may not have been Marcion's own handiwork. I reflect below on the potential significance of such minor variations attributed to Marcion, but these small omissions cannot be used to estimate the scale of Marcion's treatment of *Luke*.<sup>29</sup>

In sum, Marcion's *Gospel* lacked about 4,800 of the approximately 19,450 words in *Luke*.<sup>30</sup> That is, just under a quarter of *The Gospel according to Luke* has no corresponding

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<sup>27</sup> My list of minor omissions closely follows Roth's reconstruction. The minor differences (e.g. 12:7 is strictly unattested but logically dependent on the omitted 12:6) do not impact my argument. See the discussion of this omission at BeDuhn, *The First New Testament*, 163. More often, I agree with Roth against BeDuhn (e.g. 12:28). Roth, *The Text of Marcion's Gospel*, 156–57. That smaller portions of larger omissions are also omitted in a few manuscripts of Luke (e.g. 4:22 in f<sup>13</sup>) does not problematize assigning the full omission to Marcion's editorial hand. There are plausible arguments that many more “unattested” passages were indeed omitted from Marcion's *Gospel* (e.g. 4:24, 10:12-15) and including these would strengthen my argument below. Nevertheless, I consider it safer to generally adhere to Roth's conservative reconstruction. That said, Roth's printed reconstruction is sometimes more cautious than the conclusions reached in his own analysis (e.g. 20:18; 23:34c), and I typically follow the latter over the former. To reference partial verses, I follow the *cola et commata* printed in the Stuttgart Vulgate. A complete clause is designated by a lowercase Latin letter while a lowercase Greek letter denotes only part of that clause. This reference system was proposed in Nicholas Zola, “Tatian's Diatessaron in Latin: A New Edition and Translation of Codex Fuldensis” (Doctoral, Waco, Texas, Baylor University, 2014).

<sup>28</sup> According to the SBL Greek New Testament, these verses add up to exactly 675 words.

<sup>29</sup> For comparative purposes, therefore, such small omissions must also be excluded from our approximation of the Alexandrian grammarian's revision of the Homeric Vulgate and *Matthew* and *Luke*'s use of Mark. This is discussed for each below.

<sup>30</sup> According to the SBL Greek New Testament, Luke contains 19,446 words.

element in Marcion's gospel. The distinctive content of Marcion's gospel will be treated at length below but already the shape of this work has come into view. Unlike any other surviving gospel, Marcion's life of Jesus began with a conflict in the synagogue at Nazareth. The ensuing ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus are much the same as other synoptics — especially Marcion's source, *Luke*.

#### 5.4 Marcion's *Gospel* and the Lukan Text Tradition

The second century, according to accepted wisdom, was an era of relative textual instability for the gospels.<sup>31</sup> Judith Lieu invokes this “fluidity” of Christian texts in the second century to characterize Marcion's gospel as “just one voice within wider evidence of continuing textual instability.”<sup>32</sup> Instead of describing Marcion as an editor of *Luke* or the received text of *Luke* as a revision of Marcion's gospel, Lieu proposes a “dynamic model” according to which both gospels were produced in the course of second century textual transmission.<sup>33</sup> But does the Lukan text tradition support Lieu's proposal? That is, can the distinctive shape of Marcion's gospel be explained by the purportedly uncontrolled early transmission of *Luke*? Lieu's claim can be evaluated only by comparing the variation ascribed to Marcion's gospel to the rest of the Lukan textual tradition. This evidence, I argue, indicates that Marcion's gospel cannot be the result of the same scribal practices that produced the rest of the synoptic text traditions.

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<sup>31</sup> William L. Petersen, “The Genesis of the Gospels,” in *Patristic and Text-Critical Studies: The Collected Essays of William L. Petersen*, ed. Jan Krans and Joseph Verheyden, vol. 40, New Testament Tools, Studies, and Documents (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012). It is probably true that the second century was a period of instability relative to later centuries but, as I argued in chapter four, the gospels are quite stable relative to other early Christian texts.

<sup>32</sup> Judith Lieu, “Marcion's Gospel and the New Testament: Catalyst or Consequence?,” *New Testament Studies* 63, no. 2 (2017): 331.

<sup>33</sup> Judith Lieu, “Marcion and the Synoptic Problem,” in *New Studies in the Synoptic Problem: Oxford Conference, April 2008: Essays in Honour of Christopher Tuckett*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 239 (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 750.

#### 5.4.1 A Quantitative Distinction

There is, as discussed in chapter four, meaningful variation in the synoptic text traditions. Like all premodern literature, manuscripts of *Luke* reflect mechanical errors and purposeful changes. But the extent of this variation is often overstated. As argued in chapters two and four, there is no reason to suppose that Christian attitudes toward literary property and textual transmission differed from their Jewish and pagan neighbors. The evidence for the transmission of *Luke* reflects these attitudes. In the context of early Christian literature, *Luke* is a relatively stable text.

A complete text of *Luke* survives in five manuscripts from before the sixth century: Sinaiticus (ⲛ01), Alexandrinus (A02), Vaticanus (B03), Bezae Cantabrigiensis (D05), and Washingtonianus (W032). These five witnesses evince some of the most extreme variation in any of the synoptic text traditions. Codex Bezae, for instance, contains the “Cambridge Pericope,” a non-canonical story interpolated into *Luke* 6. Codex Washingtonianus, on the other hand, omits the genealogy from *Luke* 3 — the single largest omission from any manuscript of any synoptic gospel (apart from the nearly identical omission in miniscule 579). Codex Alexandrinus reflects the so-called Byzantine text of *Luke*, while Sinaiticus and Vaticanus represent Hort’s “neutral text.” As such, these witnesses provide a meaningful sample of the variation in the early text tradition. The inclusion of other complete witnesses to *Luke* —mostly Byzantine manuscripts— would only shrink the standard deviation, causing the Lukan text tradition to appear more and more stable.

I present, again, the word count (including corrections by the first hand) of each manuscript of *Luke* according to the transcriptions of Alan Bunning.<sup>34</sup>

S 01	19,468
A 02	19,830
B 03	19,364
D 05	19,264
W 032	19,399

The mean of these five witnesses to *Luke* is 19,465 words, with a relative standard deviation of almost exactly 1%. Marcion, in contrast, omitted about a quarter of *Luke*. Thus, the distinctive shape of Marcion's gospel sets it apart from the variation typical of the Lukan text tradition. At more than twenty standard deviations from the Lukan mean, Marcion's *Gospel* is not merely an eccentric witness to *Luke*, but something else entirely. This degree of variation requires some explanation other than the instability typical of Lukan textual transmission.

A comparison with early, complete witnesses to *Matthew* and *Mark* only strengthens this conclusion. The three early, complete manuscripts of *Matthew* have a relative standard deviation of .95%, while the four manuscripts of *Mark* have a relative standard deviation of 2.08%. The degree of instability in neither text tradition approaches Marcion's omission of almost a quarter of *Luke*. The text traditions of the synoptic gospels, therefore, contain nothing comparable to the degree of variation attested for Marcion. The distinctive shape of Marcion's gospel cannot be explained as a product of the same processes of transmission that produced the surviving witnesses to the synoptic gospels.

Such quantitative comparisons are only meaningful against the backdrop of the scale of omission in other compositional practices. The use of *Mark* by the authors of *Matthew* and *Luke*

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<sup>34</sup> Transcriptions of all early manuscripts have been made available by Alan Bunning at <https://greekcntr.org/>.

furnishes a better analog for Marcion's omission of a quarter of *Luke*. If, for the sake of comparison, one counts only substantial omissions,<sup>35</sup> *Matthew* omits about 2750 words from a total of just over 11,000 in *Mark*.<sup>36</sup> That is, *Matthew* omits just under 25% of *Mark*. *Matthew* omits six complete pericopes from *Mark*, as well as three smaller episodes (counted as pericopes by Aland).<sup>37</sup> Similarly, *Luke* omits about 4,300 words of *Mark*.<sup>38</sup> That is, *Luke* omits just under

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<sup>35</sup> To estimate the size of Marcion's omissions from Luke, the smallest omissions I counted were phrase length. The witnesses to Marcion's *Gospel* are less likely to report smaller omissions with any consistency. Likewise, inferring from the variation in extant gospel manuscripts, smaller omissions are more likely the result of ordinary textual variation and, so, more difficult to confidently ascribe to Marcion's redactional hand. In the same way, smaller omissions more often arise in the act of quotation and are too less probably attributable to Marcion. Although more minute comparison is possible (although hardly unproblematic) with the synoptic gospels, I take a grammatical clause – almost everywhere corresponding to the *cola et commata* of the Stuttgart *Vulgate* – as the basic unit of omission for the sake of consistency. If any significant part of a phrase is preserved or adapted in a recognizable form, I do not count that clause as an omission. I take “significant part” to include any noun, adjective, adverb, or verb (excepting formulaic speech indicators). For the same reasons, I do not count the omission of subordinate clauses, unless they extend for a half-dozen words or longer (e.g. Mk 3:5a, 15:41a). Again, I do not count any omission of two words or less – even if they constitute a syntactically independent clause (e.g. 16:8d). This not only allows for a more consistent comparison with Marcion's treatment of Luke but precludes a thousand additional judgement calls about what qualifies as an adaptation versus omission in Matthew and Luke's minute re-writing of Mark. Likewise, counting smaller omissions would drastically increase the number of judgements dependent on known textual variants.

<sup>36</sup> Matthew omits Mark 1:1, 13c, 21, 23-28, 30b, 33, 34acd, 35-38, 43, 45, 2:2, 4, 7b, 13, 15d, 18, 19c, 26c, 27, 3:3, 4c, 5ab, 8γd, 9-11, 13b, 17b, 20-21, 23, 29c, 30, 31β, 32a, 4:2b, 12c, 13bc, 14, 19b, 23, 24γ, 26-29, 30c, 32b, 34b, 35, 39βc, 40, 5:3, 4a, 5, 6a, 8-10, 15βc, 16, 18-20, 21, 23a, 24β, 26, 29-33, 34β, 35-37, 40β, 41αb, 42b, 43, 6:1b, 7b, 12, 14d, 15-16, 17α, 19α, 20bcd, 21β, 22βcd, 24bcd, 25a, 27α, 31cd, 33αβ, 37cde, 38abd, 40, 41d, 48d, 50a, 52, 56a, 7:2-4, 9, 13b, 19β, 24b, 26, 30, 31-36, 8:1a, 3b, 7, 14b, 17c, 18ab, 19b, 20c, 22-26, 32a, 38a, 9:6, 12c, 15-16, 18, 20-21, 22b, 23-24, 25aβcd, 27, 29, 32-34a, 35, 37b, 38-40, 45, 50cd, 10:10, 12, 24ac, 32bc, 46a, 49bc, 50, 52, 11:3α, 5-6, 10a, 13d, 16, 18-19, 20-21, 23cd, 12:5, 6a, 12c, 14δ, 27b, 29, 31c, 32-34, 38, 40a, 41-44, 13:10, 35c, 36-37, 14:5b, 7b, 8, 13c, 15, 23b, 35β, 40c, 44β, 51-52, 56b, 58γ, 59, 61α, 68γ, 15:19c, 25, 41, 44-45, 16:1, 4. These passages, according to the same edition, amount to 2750 words. According to the *SBLGNT*, Mark contains 11,085 words.

<sup>37</sup> Matthew omits from Mark the Demoniac in the Synagogue (1:23-28), Departure from Capernaum (1:35-38), Parable of the Seed Growing Secretly (4:26-29), Healing the Deaf-Mute (7:31-36), Blind Man at Bethsaida (8:22-26), and the Widow's Mite (12:41-44). Matthew also omits the Incredulity of Jesus' Followers (Mk 3:20-21), the Conspiracy of the Chief Priests and Scribes (11:18-19), and the Man Fleeing Naked (14:51-52). These are marked as pericopes by Aland since they have parallels in Luke (but not Matthew). This, however, reflects the mechanics of producing a modern synopsis, not the narrative coherence of these gospel scenes. The distinction is ultimately unimportant for my arguments.

<sup>38</sup> Luke omits 1:1, 6, 13cd, 14-15, 37, 43, 2:13bc, 15c, 18, 19b, 26c, 27bc, 3:4d, 5b, 15, 16α, 17b, 20-21, 23, 25b, 29c, 30, 31β, 32a, 33b, 34, 4:1acd, 2b, 5ab, 12c, 13bc, 24c, 26-29, 31bc, 32b, 33-34, 38, 40b, 5:4b, 5, 19δ, 20b, 23c, 26γ, 32, 34β, 38a, 40bc, 43b, 6:1, 2bc, 3cd, 5-6, 7b, 13aβ, 14d, 18-29, 31, 33αβ, 35bc, 37cde, 38abd, 40, 41d, 45-56, 7:3-36, 8:1-10, 13, 14, 16-26, 32-33, 37, 9:6b, 9c, 10-13, 15-16, 21-25aβcd, 26-29, 30, 31b, 34a, 35, 39cd, 41, 43-49, 50cd, 10:1-10, 16, 24, 32abc, 35-40, 49bc, 50:11:3c, 11, 12-14, 15cd, 16, 19, 20-25, 29b, 12:1cde, 5b, 6a, 11, 12c, 15b, 16α, 27b, 29, 31-34, 41b, 13:9a, 10, 11c, 15-16, 18, 20, 22-23, 27, 32, 37, 14:4b, 5-7, 8a, 9, 18-19, 21c, 23b, 27-28, 31, 33-34, 35β, 37c, 38b, 39-42, 43bc, 44, 46, 49b, 50-52, 53b, 54b, 55-61, 64b, 66, 68bc, 15:3-5, 6, 9-

40% of *Mark*. This consists of twelve pericopes and, at least, four briefer episodes.<sup>39</sup> Given the constraints imposed for the sake of comparison with Marcion (see fn. 37), these figures are remarkably close to Morgenthaller's statistics (see chapter 2).

The author of *Matthew* thus omits roughly the same percent of *Mark* that Marcion is said to have omitted from *Luke*. Both authors allow about a quarter of their source to fall away. The author of *Luke*, in part due to the so-called "great omission," omits about 15% more than either *Matthew* or Marcion.<sup>40</sup> Still, in contrast to the kind of variation found in the text tradition of the synoptic gospels, Marcion and the latter synoptic evangelists handle their sources in more or less the same fashion.

#### 5.4.2 A Qualitative Distinction

So far, the present study has been preoccupied with the excisions from *Luke* evident in Marcion's *Gospel*. Omissions are not, however, the only kind of variation that distinguishes Marcion's *Gospel* from the Lukan text tradition. In addition to the quantitative arguments adduced above, there are qualitative differences between Marcion's *Gospel* and every known manuscript of *Luke* that align the compositional procedure required to produce this gospel with the work of a synoptic evangelist against the sources of variation evinced within the synoptic text

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10, 12, 16-20, 23, 25, 29-30, 32, 34-35, 36c, 41-42, 44-45, 16:1, 3, 7bc, 8bcd. These passages, according to the same edition, amount to 4,304 words.

<sup>39</sup> The author of *Luke* omits from *Mark* the Parable of the Seed Growing Secretly (4:26-29), Walking on the Water (6:45-52), Healings in Gennesaret (6:53-56), Hand Washing Controversy (7:1-13), What Defiles (7:14-23), Syrophenician Woman (7:24-30), Healing the Deaf-Mute (7:31-36), Feeding the Four thousand (8:1-10), The Sign of Jonah (8:11-13), Yeast of the Pharisees and Herod (8:14-21), Blind Man of Bethsaida (8:22-26), Sons of Zebedee (10:35-40). The four brief episodes omitted are the incredulity of his followers (3:20-21), Parable Theory (4:33-34), Elijah Must Come First (9:9-13), and the Trial before the Sanhedrin (14:55-60).

<sup>40</sup> As noted above, there is good reason to think that Marcion omitted more of his gospel than merely those passages explicitly attested as absent. A strong argument from silence can be made, for instance, that Marcion excised *Luke* 4:24 or 14:1-11 from his gospel. Including such omissions would situate Marcion's treatment of *Luke* neatly between *Matthew* and *Luke*'s treatment of *Mark* – and even further from the method of the Hellenistic text critics.

traditions. Namely, Marcion rearranged the sequence of the gospel — as no synoptic scribe ever did.

Epiphanius reports that Marcion “does not go on in order [...] not proceeding straight but going through everything recklessly” (*Pan* 42.11.6).<sup>41</sup> Tertullian, in turn, reports that Marcion’s Jesus moves “from heaven immediately to the synagogue” (*AM* 4.7.5). In the *Gospel according to Luke*, Jesus’ public ministry begins with the programmatic story of his rejection at Nazareth (4:16-30).<sup>42</sup> Marcion’s Jesus, however, does not begin with the Synagogue in Nazareth, but that in Capernaum (*AM* 4.7.1). That is to say, Marcion’s gospel began with an equivalent of *Luke* 3:1ab followed immediately by the exorcism of a demoniac in the Capernaum synagogue, narrated in *Luke* at 4:31-35 (*AM* 4.7.5-6). Tertullian only thereafter proceeds to discuss Marcion’s redacted version of the Rejection at Nazareth, narrated in *Luke* at 4:14-30 (*AM* 4.8).

The *Adamantius Dialog* confirms that Tertullian is here following Marcion’s sequence.

*Adamantius Dialogue* 2.19d<sup>43</sup>

“[...] nor then, as [the Marcionites] say, did [Jesus] arriving in the time of Tiberius first appear in Capernaum”

The *Adamantius Dialog*, thus, indicates that Marcion’s *Gospel* began with *Luke* 3:1ab, immediately succeeded by the incident in the Capernaum synagogue (4:31-35). The author of

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<sup>41</sup> οὐ καθ’ εἰρμὸν πάλιν ἐπιμένει [...] οὐκ ὀρθῶς βαδίζων ἀλλὰ ἐρραδιουργημένως τὰ πάντα περινοστεύων. Holl and Dummer, *Epiphanius II Panarion haer.* 34-64, 2:108.

<sup>42</sup> This pericope establishes the pattern of salvation history narrated by *Luke-Acts*. See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, 1st edition (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday & Co., 1982), 520; Francois Bovon, *Luke I: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50*, ed. Helmut Koester (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 152.

<sup>43</sup> οὐτε τότε πρῶτον, ὡς φασιν, ἐπὶ Τιβερίου κατελθὼν ἐφάνη ἐν Καφαρναούμ. W. H. Van de Adamantius Sande Bakhuyzen, *Der Dialog des Adamantius: Peri Tes Eis Theon Orthes Pisteos* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1901).

Marcion's *Gospel* must, therefore, have transposed the Lukan pericopes at the beginning of the new gospel, placing the exorcism in Capernaum before the Rejection at Nazareth.<sup>44</sup>

Chapter four argued at length that variation in inter-pericope sequence maps onto a useful distinction between authorial and scribal activity in the synoptic tradition. *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, and Marcion's gospel (as well as Tatian's) tell the same stories in different orders. But, so far as we can tell from the surviving text tradition, no scribe ever re-ordered the stories that make up a synoptic gospel. Marcion, therefore, falls on the authorial side of this qualitative distinction.<sup>45</sup>

### 5.5 Was Marcion responsible?

Marcion's opponents unanimously attribute responsibility for the shape of his gospel to Marcion himself. Marcion, according to these heresiologists, received a copy of *Luke* and re-wrote it. But is there reason to believe these polemically charged descriptions? A handful of scholars in the last two hundred years have denied that Marcion re-wrote the received text of *Luke*. A nearly comprehensive history of the question was recently assembled by Dieter Roth

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<sup>44</sup> Marcion's revised order is often explained by the reference to miracles in Capernaum at Luke 4:23. BeDuhn, *The First New Testament*, 129. This is certainly possible. It should, however, give us pause that Luke as received is not really incoherent. Capernaum would have been envisioned as part of Galilee and the surrounding country as described in Luke 4:14-15. As a possible alternative, might not Marcion, confronted by the story of Jesus reading from Jewish scripture, prefer to open his gospel with the exorcism of a demoniac in a synagogue? For Marcion, it is not Jesus' use of Jewish scripture that sets his countrymen against him but the opposition of another god. For a similar line of argumentation, see Christopher M. Hays, "Marcion vs. Luke: A Response to the Plädoyer of Matthias Klinghardt," *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche*; Berlin 99, no. 2 (2008): 222-24.

<sup>45</sup> Marcion made other changes to the sequence of Luke's gospel. The parable of the Unshrunk Patch (5:36) seems to have been placed after the Old and New Wineskins (5:37-38). See the discussion at BeDuhn, *The First New Testament*, 134. It is, of course, debatable whether this should be understood as inter-pericope (story-by-story) or intra-pericope (phrase-by-phrase) variation. A clearer example of the latter is Marcion's placement of Luke 4:27 in the middle of 17:14. Inter- and intra-pericope variation are merely heuristic categories – useful as they may be for characterizing the variation in the synoptic text tradition. Marcion's redaction of Luke's sequence, like Matthew and Luke's treatment of Mark's sequence, seems to have covered the spectrum (as manuscripts of the synoptics do not).

and updated by Jason BeDuhn.<sup>46</sup> It is unnecessary to rehearse here again the myriad revisionist accounts that deny Marcion's responsibility for rewriting *Luke*. Indeed, every conceivable re-arrangement of the synoptic relationships has been proposed.<sup>47</sup> Leland E. Wilshire, Christopher M. Hays, and Dieter Roth have provided powerful answers to the kinds of internal arguments (i.e. lines of reasoning from the complexion of the Lukan and Marcionite text) which such revisionist accounts rely upon.<sup>48</sup> I present, instead, a reconsideration of the external evidence for the circulation of *Luke* and Marcion's *Gospel* that is sufficient to establish that Marcion was most likely responsible for the shape of his gospel.<sup>49</sup>

I am, therefore, in the unfortunate position of defending something adjacent to the traditional position. Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Epiphanius were happy to caricature and mischaracterize their opponents but, here, they got something right: Marcion rewrote *Luke*. At the same time, these heresiologists described Marcion's re-writing of *Luke* in a derogatory and misleading manner. Marcion's opponents got the direction of dependence right but, as with the

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<sup>46</sup> Roth, *The Text of Marcion's Gospel*, 7–45; Jason BeDuhn, "New Studies of Marcion's Evangelion," *Zeitschrift Für Antikes Christentum* 21, no. 1 (2017): 8–24. See also the important clarification in Dieter T. Roth, "Marcion's Gospel and the History of Early Christianity: The Devil Is in the (Reconstructed) Details," *Zeitschrift Für Antikes Christentum* 21, no. 1 (2017): 25–40.

<sup>47</sup> The most significant studies for the current conversation include John Knox, *Marcion and the New Testament: An Essay in the Early History of the Canon* (University of Chicago Press, 1942); Joseph B Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts: A Defining Struggle* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina, 2006); BeDuhn, *The First New Testament*; Markus Vinzent, *Marcion and the Dating of the Synoptic Gospels* (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2014); Klinghardt, *Das älteste Evangelium und die Entstehung der kanonischen Evangelien Band II*; Daniel A. Smith, "Marcion's Gospel and the Resurrected Jesus of Canonical Luke 24," *Zeitschrift Für Antikes Christentum / Journal of Ancient Christianity* 21, no. 1 (May 2017): 41–62.

<sup>48</sup> Leland Edward Wilshire, "Was Canonical Luke Written in the Second Century?—A Continuing Discussion," *New Testament Studies* 20, no. 3 (April 1974): 246–53; Hays, "Marcion vs. Luke"; Dieter Roth, "Review of Marcion and the Dating of the Synoptic Gospels. By Markus Vinzent," *Studia Patristica Supplements* 2 (2014): 800–803.

<sup>49</sup> Historical inquiry does not work by excluding alternative possibilities but by establishing the relative plausibility of competing explanations. Marcion's responsibility for the shape of his gospel is the best (but not the only possible) explanation for (1) the use of non-Marcionite *Luke* by all kinds of Christians before and contemporary with Marcion and (2) the exclusive and unrivaled circulation of Marcion's *Gospel* in Marcionite circles.

*Gospel of the Hebrews* (see the discussion in chapter six), polemically mis-characterized the re-writing of a gospel as the corruption of a canonical text.

The scholarly alternatives to the traditional account are rendered highly implausible by the external evidence for the circulation of *Luke* before Marcion in a wide variety of Christian circles as well as internal and circumstantial evidence for Marcion's responsibility. Marcionite Christians, conversely, used this distinctive gospel otherwise unknown to all variety of Christians before and after Marcion. The pattern of this evidence strongly suggest that Marcion himself rewrote *Luke*.

### 5.5.1 Basilides of Alexandria

Basilides of Alexandria is the earliest, easily datable author who knew and used *Luke*.<sup>50</sup> Jerome's Latin translation of Eusebius' *Chronicon* reports that Basilides lingered (*commoratur*) in Alexandria until 132 CE.<sup>51</sup> Since the heresiologists agree that he was a predecessor of Valentinus (e.g. Irenaeus *AH* 24.1; Epiphanius 1.31.21), Basilides' tenure must have begun some decades earlier.<sup>52</sup> Basilides is, in any case, Marcion's predecessor. It is significant evidence for the present inquiry, therefore, that Basilides' corpus reflects knowledge of *Luke* in its non-Marcionite form.

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<sup>50</sup> Andrew Gregory and Winrich Löhr reach the same conclusion. My argument here closely follows Gregory. Andrew Gregory, *The Reception of Luke and Acts in the Period Before Irenaeus: Looking for Luke in the Second Century* (Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 77–80; von Winrich Alfried Löhr, *Basilides und seine Schule: eine Studie zur Theologie- und Kirchengeschichte des zweiten Jahrhunderts*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 83 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 325–26.

<sup>51</sup> The Armenian gives 133, instead. Löhr, *Basilides und seine Schule*, 35.

<sup>52</sup> This information does not fit well with Clement's claim that Marcion was an old man during the lifetime of Basilides and Valentinus (Clement *Stromata* 7.17). Clement then dates Simon and Peter latest of all. Clearly, Clement is confused.

Hegemonius' *Acts of Archelaus* (67) quotes from Basilides' *Exegetica* in order to demonstrate that his heretical opponent Manes was influenced by earlier heretics. Eusebius describes Basilides' *Exegetica* as "about the gospel" (*EH* 4.7.6).<sup>53</sup> Accordingly, Hegemonius' quotation of the thirteenth volume invokes the Parable of Dives and Lazarus (*Luke* 16:19-31).

By the parable of the rich man and the poor, [the word of salvation] indicates whence arises the nature that overtakes things without root and without place.<sup>54</sup>

Basilides, thus, appeals to the parable of Lazarus and Dives in order to explain the origin of some malignant "nature."<sup>55</sup> This Lukan parable is not found in *Matthew*, *Mark*, or *John*. The parable is, however, found in Marcion's gospel.<sup>56</sup> Hegemonius citation of the *Exegetica*, therefore, shows only that Basilides knew some form of the third gospel. Two other testimonia will demonstrate that Basilides' knew this gospel in its non-Marcionite shape.

Clement of Alexandria and the Hippolytan Refutator furnish evidence that Basilides knew non-Marcionite *Luke* decades before the advent of Marcion. Clement reports that the followers of Basilides celebrate Jesus' baptism. They disagree amongst themselves, according to Clement, about the exact day on which Jesus was baptized. Important for our purposes, however, Clement reports that the Basilideans all agreed about the year of Jesus' baptism.

Clement, *Stromata* 1.21.146<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> James Kelhoffer argues that Basilides' *Exegetica* did not concern the gospel in a bibliographic sense. His argument works by excluding, first, *Stromata* 4.81 where Clement explicitly cites a passage from the *Exegetica* that discusses *Matthew* 5:21-28. Kelhoffer, then, ignores considerable additional evidence that Basilides' *Exegetica* treated the gospel tradition (e.g. *Stromata* 4.12; 7.17). James A. Kelhoffer, "Basilides's Gospel and Exegetica (Treatises)," *Vigiliae Christianae* 59, no. 2 (2005): 115–34.

<sup>54</sup> *per parabolam divitis et pauperis naturam sine radice et sine loco rebus supervenientem unde pullulaverit indicat.* Charles Henry Beeson, *Hegemonius Acta Archelai*, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte 16 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1906), 96.

<sup>55</sup> This "nature" (*naturam*) is described with language that may be drawn from the Parable of the Sower (*Mt* 13:1-23//*Mk* 4:1-20//*Lk* 8:4-15).

<sup>56</sup> Roth, *The Text of Marcion's Gospel*, 426–27.

<sup>57</sup> Οἱ δὲ ἀπὸ Βασιλείδου καὶ τοῦ βαπτίσματος αὐτοῦ τὴν ἡμέραν ἐορτάζουσι προδιανυκτερεύοντες <ἐν> ἀναγνώσει. φασὶ δὲ εἶναι τὸ πεντεκαίδεκατον ἔτος Τιβερίου Καίσαρος τὴν πεντεκαιδεκάτην τοῦ Τυβί μηνός, τινὲς

And those from Basilides also celebrate the day of his [i.e. Jesus'] baptism, passing the night before <in> readings. They say it was on the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar on the fifteenth day of the month of Tubi – or alternatively some say on the eleventh of this month.

This precise manner of dating Jesus' baptism is unique to *Luke* (3:1). While the same phrase is, indeed, found in Marcion's gospel, it introduces Jesus' entrance into the Capernaum synagogue rather than Jesus' baptism.<sup>58</sup> The Basilidean consensus that Jesus was baptized on the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, therefore, betrays Basilidean dependence on a uniquely Lukan construction over and against Marcion's gospel. Competing factions of Basilidean Christians in Egypt, according to Clement, held *Luke* in common in the mid-second century. In light of clear evidence from Hegemonius that Basilides' *Exegetica* treated material from the third gospel (above), this Basilidean consensus probably reflects Basilides treatment of non-Marcionite *Luke* decades before Marcion flourished.<sup>59</sup>

Finally, the pseudo-Hippolytan *Refutation of All Heresies* provides the most valuable testimony to Basilides' use of *Luke*. The writings of Basilides and the Basilideans are quoted extensively in the *Refutation* (5.8-16).<sup>60</sup> One such quotation on the topic of Basilidean Christology cites non-Marcionite, special Lukan material.

This, [Basilides] says, is what was stated: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you’ – that which came from the Sonship through the boundary of the Spirit upon the Ogdoad and Hebdomad, unto Mary. ‘And the power of the Most High will overshadow you’ – the ‘power’ of discernment (which came) from the height above (through) the Demiurge, unto creation, which is of the Son” (*Refutation of All Heresies* 7.26.9).<sup>61</sup>

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δὲ αὖ τὴν ἑνδεκάτην τοῦ αὐτοῦ μηνός. Ludwig Früchtel, ed., *Clemens Alexandrinus. Zweiter Band. Stromata Buch I-VI*, Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller Der Ersten Jahrhunderte 15 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1960).

<sup>58</sup> Roth, *The Text of Marcion's Gospel*, 412.

<sup>59</sup> Löhr, *Basilides und seine Schule*, 42–48, esp. 45.

<sup>60</sup> The Refutator even seems to know the *Exegetica* and relates it to the revelation of “the gospel” (7.14).

<sup>61</sup> τοῦτό ἐστι, φησί, τὸ εἰρημένον· «Πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σέ», τὸ ἀπὸ τῆς υἰότητος διὰ τοῦ μεθορίου Πνεύματος ἐπὶ τὴν Ὀγδοάδα καὶ τὴν ἑβδομάδα διελθὼν μέχρι τῆς Μαρίας, «καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι,» ἢ δύναμις τῆς κρίσεως, ἀπὸ τῆς ἀκρωρείας ἄνωθεν <διὰ> τοῦ δημιουργοῦ μέχρι τῆς κτίσεως, ὅ ἐστι τοῦ (ὑ)οῦ. I adopt here David Litwa's text in preference to Marcovich since the former employs fewer conjectures. Their reconstruction of the text itself only differs in Marcovich's printing of τοῦ Ἰ(ησ)οῦ for Litwa's τοῦ (ὑ)οῦ.

The Refutator provides Basilides' commentary on the Lukan nativity. Both the lemma and Basilides' interpretation depend on the phrasing of *Luke* 1:35. That is, Basilides' "power" (δύναμις) descending from "the height above" (ἀπὸ τῆς ἀκρωρείας ἄνωθεν) is a transparent rendering of *Luke*'s "power of the most high" (δύναμις ὑψίστου). This is a uniquely Lukan passage not found in Marcion's gospel.

Taken together, the *Acts of Archelaus*, Clement of Alexandria, and the pseudo-Hippolytan *Refutation of All Heresies* provide compelling evidence that Basilides knew and used *Luke* in its non-Marcionite form. These testimonia include two direct citations of Basilides' exegesis and a discussion of Basilidean liturgy. The third gospel as it is preserved in the entire manuscript tradition—in contrast to Marcion's gospel—is multiply attested for Basilides in Alexandria decades before Marcion.

### 5.5.2 Epistle of the Apostles

The *Epistula Apostolorum*, as discussed in chapter four, is a pseudepigraphic letter from sometime before the year 150.<sup>62</sup> At the very latest, therefore, it is a work contemporary with Marcion. The work names only Cerinthus and Simon as the opponents of the apostles (1) and, in its treatment of false teachers, Jewish scripture, the gospels, and Paul (*pace* Vinzent), the *Epistula* shows no awareness of Marcion's heresy.<sup>63</sup>

The author of this work (as argued in chapter four) knows the life and teachings of Jesus from written gospels. The extended summary of Jesus' life found at the beginning of the *Epistula*

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This has no effect on my argument. M. David Litwa, *Refutation of All Heresies* (Atlanta, Georgia: SBL Press, 2016), 528.

<sup>62</sup> This is based on the author's prediction that the eschaton would occur 120 years after the letter's putative composition (17).

<sup>63</sup> M. Vinzent, *Christ's Resurrection in Early Christianity: And the Making of the New Testament* (Ashgate, 2011), 128–42.

weaves together stories from *Matthew*, *Luke*, *John*, and the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* into a single narrative.<sup>64</sup> As Darrell Hannah notes, the *Epistula* quotes Lukan redaction of *Mark*.<sup>65</sup>

*Mark* 10:27  
 ἐμβλέψας αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς  
 λέγει· Παρὰ ἀνθρώποις  
 ἀδύνατον ἀλλ' οὐ παρὰ θεῶ,  
 πάντα γὰρ δυνατὰ παρὰ τῷ  
 θεῷ.

*Luke* 18:27  
 ὁ δὲ εἶπεν·  
 Τὰ ἀδύνατα παρὰ ἀνθρώποις  
 δυνατὰ παρὰ τῷ  
 θεῷ ἐστίν.

*Epistula Apostolorum* 21.9<sup>66</sup>  
 Since what is impossible with  
 men is possible with the  
 Father.

The presence of *Luke*'s distinctive re-writing of *Mark* in the *Epistula* shows that our second century author was working with a text of either *Luke* or Marcion's gospel — not some other synoptic-type book. It is telling, therefore, that the author of the *Epistula* includes the Lukan swaddling clothes in a reference to Jesus' infancy (3) and the distinctively Lukan annunciation (14). Both of these features are absent from Marcion's gospel. This predecessor (or exact contemporary) of Marcion, probably writing in Asia Minor, used *Luke* in its non-Marcionite form.<sup>67</sup>

### 5.5.3 Theodotus the Valentinian

Theodotus, a disciple of Valentinus, is the next earliest, easily datable author who used *Luke*.<sup>68</sup> Apart from a stray reference in Theodoret of Cyr (*Haer.* 1.8), Clement of Alexandria's

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<sup>64</sup> Darrell D. Hannah, "The Four-Gospel 'Canon' in the *Epistula Apostolorum*," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 59, no. 2 (October 1, 2008): 598–633. Hannah's argument for the presence of distinctively Markan material is less compelling than the other gospels.

<sup>65</sup> Hannah, 613.

<sup>66</sup> The Coptic manuscript is here lacunose. Isaak Wajnberg translates the Ethiopic as "Denn was den Menschen unmöglich ist, ist dem Vater ein Mögliches." Carl Schmidt and Isaak Wajnberg, *Gespräche Jesu mit seinen Jüngern nach der Auferstehung; ein katholisch-apostolisches Sendschreiben des 2. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1919), 74.

<sup>67</sup> On the geographic provenance of the work, see Charles E. Hill, "The 'Epistula Apostolorum': An Asian Tract from the Time of Polycarp," *Journal of Early Christian Studies; Baltimore, Md., Etc.* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 1–53.

<sup>68</sup> Although Andrew Gregory affirms the use of *Luke* among Valentinian Christians, Theodotus is passed over without comment. Gregory, *The Reception of Luke and Acts in the Period Before Irenaeus*, 80–83.

*Epitomes* is the only surviving source for Theodotus' teaching.<sup>69</sup> The work is a collection of extracts from Valentinian writings, along with critical commentary from Clement.<sup>70</sup> The full title in both manuscripts is "Epitomes from the Works of Theodotus and the So-Called Eastern School at the Times of Valentinus."<sup>71</sup> This title describes Theodotus as a contemporary of his teacher.<sup>72</sup> Since Irenaeus (*AH* 4.3) and Tertullian (*Praesc.* 30.2) both report that Valentinus' tenure in Rome began before 140 and ended around 160, Theodotus must have been an elder contemporary of Marcion.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> This Theodotus should not be confused with the Roman adoptionists Theodotus of Byzantium and Theodotus the Banker. Theodoret of Cyr names Theodotus second of all Valentinus' disciples – after an unknown Cossianus and before Hercleon, Ptolemy, and Marcus. If this list is chronological, it too might suggest Theodotus was a pupil of Valentinus. Justin's reference to "Valentinians" (*Dial.* 35) indicates that Valentinus had a following during his lifetime. Geoffrey S. Smith, "Identifying Justin's 'Valentinians,'" in *Gegenspieler: Zur Auseinandersetzung mit dem Gegner in frühjüdischer und urchristlicher Literatur*, ed. Ulrich Mell and Michael Tilly (Mohr Siebeck, 2019).

<sup>70</sup> Joel Kalvesmaki, "Italian versus Eastern Valentinianism?," *Vigiliae Christianae* 62, no. 1 (2008): 80–81.

<sup>71</sup> ἐκ τῶν Θεοδοῦτου καὶ τῆς ἀνατολικῆς καλουμένης διδασκαλίας κατὰ τοὺς Οὐαλεντίνου χρόνους ἐπιτομαί. Geoffrey S. Smith, trans., *Valentinian Christianity: Texts and Translations*, First edition (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2020), 58. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, suppl. graec. 250 is a direct copy of Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Laur. V.3. Robert Pierce Casey, *The Excerpta Ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria*, Studies and Documents 1 (London: Christophers, 1934), 40.

<sup>72</sup> The origin of the *Epitome*'s title is debated. Clement is himself responsible for the title of his *Stromata* (1.1, 2.23, et al.) and, possibly, his *Paedagogus* (1.1). Robert Casey, arguing from the arrangement of additional titles in the sole manuscript, considers it likely that the full Greek title of the *Epitomes* originated with Clement as well. Casey, *The Excerpta Ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria*, 3–5. Joel Kalvesmaki argues that it was provided by an incompetent scribe. Kalvesmaki, "Italian versus Eastern Valentinianism?," 80–84. On this point, however, his arguments are not persuasive. Kalvesmaki claims that the work is generically mis-labeled because it does not conform to the "well-defined genre" of epitome. Instead, Kalvesmaki notes rightly, it draws on multiple works and includes Clement's commentary. The title, however, does not identify the work as a proper epitome (i.e. an abridgment of a single book) but a collection of epitomes (ἐπιτομαί). There is every reason, therefore, to expect multiple sources and no reason to consider commentary by the collector as out of place. Kalvesmaki also argues that Clement contradicts the title by referring to Valentinus' successors (not contemporaries) as οἱ Οὐαλεντινιανοί and οἱ ἀπὸ Οὐαλεντίνου. Kalvesmaki, 82. There is, however, no reason to think that either of these titles connotes chronological posteriority. Indeed, Geoffrey Smith argues compellingly that Οὐαλεντινιανοί was coined by Valentinus' critics as a derogatory label for an ideologically heterogeneous group who gathered with Valentinus in Rome. Smith, "Identifying Justin's 'Valentinians.'" Finally, Kalvesmaki's criticisms of understanding the καὶ as exegetical are more persuasive but do not bear directly upon the credibility of the title. Christoph Marksches is even more skeptical, questioning the attribution to Clement and any other information in the title. This too is unjustified. As Casey notes, the critical commentary in the *Epitomes* closely matches Clement's language elsewhere and, the author of the *Eclogae* (appended to the *Stromateis* immediately after the *Epitomes*) is a student of Pantaeus (56.2). Casey, *The Excerpta Ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria*, 4–5.

<sup>73</sup> The more precise information comes from Irenaeus, who reports that Valentinus came to Rome under Hyginus (136-140ce) and endured until Anicetus (155-166ce). See the discussion von Christoph Marksches, *Valentinus Gnosticus? : Untersuchungen zur valentinianischen Gnosis ; Mit einem Kommentar zu den Fragmenten*

The very first extract features a quotation from *Luke*.

(1) “Father,” he says, “I commit into your hands my spirit.” Wisdom, he says, set forth flesh for the word, the spiritual seed. Wearing this, the Savior descended. (2) On account of this, in the passion he commits Wisdom to the Father, in order that he might receive her from the Father and not be restrained here by those able to deprive (him). Thus, every spiritual seed — the elect — were committed through the aforementioned cry. (3) The elect seed, we say, [...] <sup>74</sup>

This extract, marked as such by the singular φησί (1.1-2) and delimited by the subsequent φαμὲν (1.3), is universally recognized as a quotation from Theodotus. <sup>75</sup> It begins with an unambiguous quotation of *Luke* 23:46 as also found in Marcion’s gospel. Not only does the initial citation clearly belong to the third gospel, but Theodotus’ interpretation is premised on the Lukan verbiage (i.e. παρατίθημι, Πάτερ, φωνή). <sup>76</sup> Theodotus, this excerpt establishes, knew the third gospel in some form. Since this passage is identical in *Luke* and Marcion’s gospel, however, it cannot be used to determine which of these was known to Theodotus.

A subsequent excerpt does, however, allow us to identify Theodotus’ *Vorlage* as non-Marcionite *Luke*. Excerpt 74 belongs to an uninterrupted block of Valentinian material, extending from 66 to the end of the treatise. The most recent indication of Clement’s source is the singular φήσιν in 67.1 — referring, in context, to Theodotus. Indeed, Robert Casey argues

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*Valentins*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament ; 65 (Tübingen : Mohr, 1992., 1992), 335–36; Einar Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed: The Church of the “Valentinians”* (Brill, 2006), 417–18.

<sup>74</sup> «Πάτερ», φησί, «παρατίθεμαί σοι εἰς χεῖρας τὸ Πνεῦμά μου.» Ὁ προέβαλε, φησί, σαρκίον τῷ Λόγῳ ἢ Σοφία, τὸ πνευματικὸν σπέρμα, τοῦτο στολισάμενος κατήλθεν ὁ Σωτήρ. Ὅθεν ἐν τῷ πάθει τὴν Σοφίαν παρατίθεται τῷ Πατρὶ, ἵνα αὐτὴν ἀπολάβῃ παρὰ τοῦ Πατρός, καὶ μὴ κατασχεθῆ ἑνταῦθα ὑπὸ τῶν στερίσκων δυναμένων. Οὕτως πᾶν πνευματικὸν σπέρμα, τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς, διὰ τῆς προειρημένης φωνῆς παρατίθεται. Τὸ ἐκλεκτὸν σπέρμα φαμὲν [...]. Smith, *Valentinian Christianity*, 58.

<sup>75</sup> Scholars reasonably assume that the title provides the subject of the initial φησί. Casey, *The Excerpta Ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria*, 5; Francois Sagnard, *Extraits de Théodote. Clément d’Alexandrie ; Texte Grec, Introduction, Traduction et Notes de F. Sagnard.*, Sources Chrétiennes 23 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1948), 52; Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed*, 31.

<sup>76</sup> There are minor differences in word order and grammatical case, but this sort of loose quotation seems to have been typical of Theodotus —perhaps reflecting citation from memory or a willingness to paraphrase— since it characterizes the scriptural allusions throughout the Theodotian excerpts.

that the language of this Valentinian block, including ὁ Κύριος in 74 as a designation for “the Savior” rather than “Christ,” is premised on an argument from earlier extracts that are explicitly ascribed to Theodotus.<sup>77</sup>

The relevant quotation appears in a discussion of fate and the conflict between celestial powers, beginning in excerpt 69. The Lord, according to Theodotus, rescues us from these warring powers (73.1). He proceeds to explain from the gospel narratives how this was accomplished.

*Epitomes of Theodotus 74*<sup>78</sup>

Διὰ τοῦτο ὁ Κύριος κατήλθεν εἰρήνην ποιήσων τὴν ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ τοῖς ἐπὶ γῆς, ὡς φησιν ὁ Ἀπόστολος· «Εἰρήνη ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις.» Διὰ τοῦτο ἀνέτειλεν ξένος ἀστήρ καὶ καινός, καταλύων τὴν παλαιὰν ἀστροθεσίαν, [...].

On account of this, the Lord descended making peace from heaven for those upon the earth. As the apostle says, “Peace on earth and glory in the highest.” On account of this, a strange and new star arose, destroying the ancient arrangement-of-stars [...].

Here again, the quotation is loose but unmistakably drawn from *Luke*. Theodotus lifts both phrases, δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις and ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη, directly from *Luke* 2:14 but reverses their order. The preceding exegetical comment assumes the Lukan verbiage (i.e. εἰρήνην, οὐρανοῦ, γῆς). Likewise, the following allusion to the Matthean star confirms that Theodotus is discussing Jesus’ nativity. The attribution to “the apostle” need not refer to Paul, since Theodotus elsewhere attributes the fourth gospel to “the apostle” (41) and, further, refers to all twelve disciples as “apostles” (25).<sup>79</sup> Theodotus, here, unambiguously cites non-Marcionite *Luke*.

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<sup>77</sup> Casey, *The Excerpta Ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria*, 7.

<sup>78</sup> Sagnard, *Extraits de Théodote. Clément d’Alexandrie ; Texte Grec, Introduction, Traduction et Notes de F. Sagnard.*, 169.

<sup>79</sup> Indeed, the final Valentinian block containing the Lukan quotation is introduced with the statement that “the savior” taught “the apostles” in parables and then plainly in secret. Clearly, Jesus’ disciples are here in view. These, it is assumed, wrote the gospels. Since Theodotus attributed this gospel to an apostle (not a companion of

Irenaeus of Lyon corroborates the attribution of non-Marcionite *Luke* to early Valentinians. In his *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus draws several examples of Valentinian exegesis from the *Commentarii* of Valentinus' disciples (1.Preface.2).<sup>80</sup> Irenaeus' description of this Valentinian work closely corresponds to a discrete section of Clement's *Epitome* (43.2-65), apparently confirming that Irenaeus really did draw upon well-known Valentinian texts. The work known to Irenaeus included a Valentinian interpretation of the presentation of Jesus in the temple (*Luke* 2:23 at *AH* 1.3.4; 2:28, 36 at *AH* 1.8.4), the twelve year-old Jesus in the Temple (*Luke* 2:42 at *AH* 1.3.2), and uniquely Lukan elements of John the Baptist's preaching (*Luke* 3:17 at *AH* 1.3.5). All these were absent from Marcion's gospel. Irenaeus' Valentinian *Commentarii*, therefore, corroborates the inference from Clement's *Epitomes* that early Valentinians used non-Marcionite *Luke*.

In sum, Basilides of Alexandria, the *Epistula Apostolorum*, and Theodotus the Valentinian used a version of *Luke* that contained material omitted by Marcion. These three authors are earlier than or exactly contemporary with Marcion. They are, moreover, diverse: They represent rival sects of early Christianity; and each originated in a different part of the ancient Mediterranean. An ideologically and geographically diverse array of Christians attest the broad circulation of non-Marcionite *Luke* before Marcion.

#### 5.5.4 Justin Martyr

Justin Martyr is a fourth, easily datable witness to non-Marcionite *Luke*. In contrast to the foregoing, Justin was a junior contemporary of Marcion (*I Ap.* 26.5) and his two references to

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Paul), the manuscript of the third gospel he encountered may have lacked the authorial sub-title, "according to Luke."

<sup>80</sup> A substantial overlap between *Against Heresies* 1.4.5-7.1 and a discrete section of Clement's *Epitome* 43.2-65 seems to confirm Irenaeus' use of a particular, well-known Valentinian text.

contemporary prefects (1 *Ap.* 29.6; 2 *Ap.* 1.1) allow us to date the apologies between 150 and 154 C.E.<sup>81</sup> Justin, therefore, wrote the apologies no more than ten years after Marcion’s advent. Justin’s conflate citations of the synoptic gospels, A.J. Bellinzoni argues compellingly, were derived from a harmonized source (as opposed to being *ad hoc* paraphrastic citations).<sup>82</sup> We cannot say whether this was a gospel, a catechetical manual, or a testimonia collection. Furthermore, we cannot say whether Justin inherited this mediating work or composed it himself. We can, however, infer from Justin’s quotations that proto-orthodox Christians in Rome accepted *Luke* as a comparable authority to *Matthew* at some point before the composition of Justin’s apologies in the early 150s.

Justin not only knows special Lukan material but, as Andrew Gregory demonstrates, cites Lukan redaction of *Mark*.<sup>83</sup> At *Luke* 20:36, for instance, the third evangelist is carefully rewriting *Mark* 12:25 (*Dialogue* 81.4). Here, the third evangelist coins an apparent neologism. For the Markan εἰσὶν ὡς ἄγγελοι = “they are like angels” (reproduced in *Matthew*), *Luke* gives ἰσάγγελοι εἰσὶν = “they are equal-to-angels.” This word appears nowhere in Greek literature before the third gospel, and thereafter only in works dependent on *Luke*. It is, by all indications, a Lukan invention. Justin, following closely the Lukan phrasing, reproduces ἰσάγγελοι ἔσσονται.<sup>84</sup> This

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<sup>81</sup> “Μαρκίωνα δέ τινα Ποντικόν, ὃς καὶ νῦν ἔτι ἐστὶ διδάσκων τοὺς πειθομένους [...]” Miroslav Marcovich, ed., *Iustini Martyris Apologiae pro Christianis* (Berlin; New York: W. de Gruyter, 1994), 70. Marcovich, 11.

<sup>82</sup> Justin’s paraphrases and harmonization are too consistent in details large and small across his corpus to be the product of memory or *ad hoc* paraphrase. AJ Bellinzoni, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Writings of Justin Martyr*, vol. 17, Supplements to Novum Testamentum (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1967), *passim*, esp. 30, 47–48, 95–100.

<sup>83</sup> Gregory, *The Reception of Luke and Acts in the Period Before Irenaeus*, 211–92. In addition to the passage discussed below, see Gregory’s treatment of 1 *Ap.* 19.6.

<sup>84</sup> ὅπερ καὶ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν εἶπεν, ὅτι Οὔτε γαμήσουσιν οὔτε γαμηθήσονται, ἀλλὰ ἰσάγγελοι ἔσσονται, τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς ἀναστάσεως ὄντες. Philippe Bobichon, *Justin Martyr, Dialogue Avec Tryphon: Édition Critique: Introduction, Texte Grec, Traduction*, Paradosis: Études de Littérature et de Théologie Anciennes (Fribourg: Academic Press Fribourg, 2003), 410.

example from Gregory establishes Justin’s use of the third gospel but does not distinguish *Luke* from Marcion’s gospel.<sup>85</sup>

There is, nevertheless, abundant evidence for Justin’s use of non-Marcionite, special Lukan material. Justin, for instance, knows a distinctly Lukan form of the annunciation.

*1 Apology 33.4-5*

For if she had sexual intercourse with anyone, she was no longer a maiden (παρθένος). But coming upon her, the power of God overshadowed the maiden and caused her to conceive while still a maiden. And the angel of God, sent to that maiden at that point of time, announced good news, saying ‘Behold, you will conceive in your womb from the Holy Spirit, and you will bear a son, and he will be called the son of the most high. And you will call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’ As those who recorded everything about our Savior Jesus Christ taught.<sup>86</sup>

*Dialog with Typho 100.5*

But the maiden Mary received faith and joy when the angel Gabriel announced good news to her that the Spirit of the Lord will come upon her and the power of the most high will overshadow her, wherefore also the holy one begotten from her is the Son of God. She answered, “Let it happen to me according to your word.”<sup>87</sup>

These two descriptions of the annunciation are filled with material unique to *Luke*. Only *Luke* depicts the angel appearing to Mary instead of Joseph. Only *Luke* names this angel Gabriel. Indeed, much of Gabriel’s proclamation is unique to *Luke*.

*1 Apology 33.5*

*Luke 1:31-32a*

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<sup>85</sup> The distinctive term is also attested for Marcion’s gospel. Roth, *The Text of Marcion’s Gospel*, 431.

<sup>86</sup> εἰ γὰρ ἐσυνουσιάσθη ὑπὸ ὄτουοῦν, οὐκ ἔτι ἦν παρθένος, ἀλλὰ δύναμις θεοῦ ἐπελθοῦσα τῇ παρθένω ἐπεσκίασεν αὐτήν καὶ κυοφορῆσαι παρθένον οὖσαν πεποίηκε. καὶ ὁ ἀποσταλεῖς δὲ πρὸς αὐτήν τὴν παρθένον κατ’ ἐκεῖνο τοῦ καιροῦ ἄγγελος θεοῦ εὐηγγελίσαστο αὐτήν εἰπών· ‘Ἴδοὺ συλλήψῃ ἐν γαστρὶ ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ τέξῃ υἱόν, καὶ υἱὸς ὑψίστου κληθήσεται. καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν, αὐτὸς γὰρ σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν,’ ὡς οἱ ἀπομνημονεύσαντες πάντα τὰ περὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐδίδαξαν. Denis Minns and Paul Parvis, eds., *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr: Apologies*, 1st edition (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 172.

<sup>87</sup> πίστιν δὲ καὶ χαρὰν λαβοῦσα Μαρία ἡ παρθένος, εὐαγγελιζομένου αὐτῇ Γαβριὴλ ἀγγέλου ὅτι πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπ’ αὐτήν ἐπελεύσεται καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει αὐτήν, διὸ καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον ἐξ αὐτῆς ἅγιόν ἐστιν υἱὸς θεοῦ, ἀπεκρίνατο· Γένοιτό μοι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά σου. Bobichon, *Justin Martyr, Dialogue Avec Tryphon: Édition Critique: Introduction, Texte Grec, Traduction*, 454–56.

ἰδοὺ συλλήψῃ ἐν γαστρὶ ἐκ πνεύματος  
ἀγίου καὶ τέξῃ υἱόν, καὶ υἱὸς ὑψίστου  
κληθήσεται. καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ  
Ἰησοῦν,

αὐτὸς γὰρ σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν  
ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν,

*Dialog with Trypho* 100.5

πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπ’ αὐτήν ἐπελεύσεται καὶ  
δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει αὐτήν, διὸ καὶ τὸ  
γεννώμενον ἐξ αὐτῆς ἅγιόν ἐστιν υἱὸς θεοῦ

καὶ ἰδοὺ συλλήψῃ ἐν γαστρὶ  
καὶ τέξῃ υἱόν,  
καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ  
Ἰησοῦν. οὗτος ἔσται μέγας καὶ υἱὸς Ὑψίστου  
κληθήσεται,  
[Matt 1:21b]

*Luke* 1:35

πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σέ, καὶ δύναμις  
ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι· διὸ καὶ τὸ  
γεννώμενον ἅγιον κληθήσεται, υἱὸς θεοῦ·

Likewise, Mary’s reply to Gabriel is found only in *Luke*. Justin quotes it precisely.

*Dialog with Trypho* 100.5

Γένοιτό μοι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά σου.

*Luke* 1:38

Γένοιτό μοι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά σου.

Examples of special Lukan material known to Justin but omitted by Marcion can be multiplied: Justin knows the uniquely Lukan details of John’s nativity (*Dialog* 84.4), Quirinius’ census (78.4), Jesus’ manger (78.5), Jesus’ age at baptism (88.2) and God’s adoption of Jesus at baptism (103.6). Additionally, Justin echoes language from the Lukan “Road to Emmaus” regarding Jesus’ fulfillment of prophecy (*Luke* 24:27 at *1 Apology* 50.12). This passage was almost certainly absent from Marcion’s gospel, despite not being counted among the explicit omissions above.<sup>88</sup>

Helpfully, Justin names his sources for the annunciation scene in particular: “the memoirs” (οἱ ἀπομνημονεύσαντες), which he elsewhere concedes are commonly called

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<sup>88</sup> In their treatments of Marcion’s gospel, both Tertullian and Epiphanius pass over this verse in meaningful silence. In this case, their silence is evidence for the absence of the passage from Marcion’s gospel because both heresiologists set out to demonstrate the continuity between Jewish scripture and Marcion’s Jesus. If this passage were present in Marcion’s gospel, it would have provided the ideal proof-text for their polemical programs. Note that this judgement depends on inferences about the theology and working methods of Tertullian and Epiphanius — *not* Marcion.

“gospels” (εὐαγγέλια) (1 *Apology* 66.3).<sup>89</sup> As we have seen, Justin attests passage from throughout *Luke* absent from Marcion’s gospel. There is every reason to believe, therefore, that *Luke* stood among Justin’s apostolic memoirs. Justin, an exact contemporary of Marcion at Rome, attests the existence of *Luke* in its non-Marcionite form.

#### 5.5.5 Other Witnesses in the Mid-Second Century

Basilides of Alexandria, the *Epistula Apostolorum*, Theodotus the Valentinian, and Justin Martyr attest the circulation of *Luke* —as opposed to Marcion’s *Gospel*— in ideologically and geographically disparate contexts before and contemporary with Marcion. I highlighted these four authors because they are easily datable, geographically localizable, and ideologically diverse. Early attestations of non-Marcionite *Luke* can be multiplied, however, if we admit a host of anonymous second century works and several other figures who are difficult to date with precision. These include the *Protoevangelium of James*, *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, Ebionite *Gospel of the Hebrews*, the Marcosians, and *The Birth of Mary*. These are ideologically diverse texts and figures, dateable sometime in the second century and scattered across the Mediterranean.

The *Protoevangelium of James* represents something like proto-orthodox Christianity in the early to middle second century.<sup>90</sup> It cannot be placed geographically. Although most of this work concerns Mary’s upbringing, the annunciation scene is a systematic harmonization of

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<sup>89</sup> Minns and Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr*, 256.

<sup>90</sup> In defense of dating the *Protoevangelium of James* before Justin Martyr (and, therefore, at least contemporary with Marcion’s early life) see George Themelis Zervos, “Dating the ‘Protevangeliium of James’: The Justin Martyr Connection,” *Seminar Papers* 130, no. 33 (1994): 415–34; Thomas O’Loughlin, “The Protevangeliium Iacobi: A Case of Gospel Harmonization,” ed. Markus Vinzent, *Studia Patristica* 55 (2014): 165–73; Bellinzoni, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Writings of Justin Martyr*, 17:65.

*Matthew* and *Luke* — including extensive verbal borrowings.<sup>91</sup> The Lukan infancy, of course, was absent from Marcion’s gospel. The *Protoevangelium* is, therefore, another witness to the use of non-Marcionite *Luke* earlier than or contemporary with Marcion.

The *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* probably originated in Egypt sometime in the mid-second century.<sup>92</sup> It seems to have been used by the Marcosians (Irenaeus, *AH* 1.20.1-2) but the narrative does not betray an affiliation with any recognizable sect. The *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* concludes by retelling the story of “Jesus in the Temple” — including extended verbatim agreements with *Luke* 2:43-7 and 52.<sup>93</sup> This Lukan material was, of course, absent from Marcion’s gospel.

The final three pieces of evidence for the circulation of non-Marcionite *Luke* are harder to situate in place and time. Irenaeus tells us that the Marcosians cited *Luke* 2:49 as evidence that the Father of Jesus was some god other than that of the Jewish scriptures (*AH* 1.20.2). The exegetical tradition known to Irenaeus must come from sometime in the mid-second century but, beyond that, no further specificity is possible. Likewise, *The Birth of Mary*, attributed by Epiphanius to certain gnostics, expands upon Zacharias’ vision in *Luke* 1:5-25 (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 26.12-1-4). J.D. Dubois identifies a number of Jewish exegetical traditions that were not widely

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<sup>91</sup> Mark Goodacre, “The Protoevangelium of James and the Creative Rewriting of Matthew and Luke,” in *Connecting Gospels: Beyond the Canonical/Non-Canonical Divide*, ed. Francis Watson and Sarah Parkhouse (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 57–76.

<sup>92</sup> Jonah Bissell, “School Buildings in Mediterranean Antiquity: Notes on the Provenance of the Infancy Gospel of Thomas,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 43, no. 3 (2021): 303–20. Irenaeus reports that the Marcosians use a text containing both Jesus’ conflict with a teacher and the twelve-year old Jesus in the temple. The confluence of these two stories is unique to the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, leading most scholars to conclude that Irenaeus had this text in view. At the same time, the character of the narrative and its wide reception has convinced most scholars that it was not really a Marcosian composition.

<sup>93</sup> Tony Burke, “Completing the Gospel: The Infancy Gospel of Thomas as a Supplement to the Gospel of Luke,” in *The Reception and Interpretation of the Bible in Late Antiquity. Proceedings of the Montreal Colloquium in Honour of Charles Kannengeiser, 11-13 October 2006*, ed. L. DiTommaso and L. Turcescu (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2008), 102–19.

known in Christian literature and, so, argues it was the composition of second century Jewish-Christians (and only later appropriated by Epiphanius' gnostics).<sup>94</sup> Finally, the Ebionite *Gospel of the Hebrews* draws upon the synoptic gospels, including uniquely Lukan material from the baptism. This work was probably authored by a law observant Christian in the second century.<sup>95</sup>

It is worth reflecting on the ideological diversity of *Luke's* reception in the early and mid-second century. It is popular in the literature on Marcion's gospel to refer to the received text of *Luke* (i.e. a version of the third gospel containing the Lukan infancy, temptation, baptism, etc...) as "catholic *Luke*" to distinguish it from Marcion's gospel and/or a hypothetical ur-*Luke*. This is a mistake. The received text of *Luke* was not the special province of monotheists insisting on the continuity between Jewish scripture and the Jesus movement. On the contrary, some of the earliest evidence for the reception of *Luke* comes from Basilides and the disciples of Valentinus. Likewise, Christians with close connections to Jewish practice and interpretive traditions knew this gospel. The received form of *Luke* was held in common by proto-orthodox Christians and their opponents.

There is nothing "catholic" about the reception of non-Marcionite *Luke*. This is not just a matter of scholarly nomenclature, but a serious objection to any model of gospel origins that understands the received *Luke* as the product of anti-Marcionite redaction of either an ur-*Luke* or Marcion's gospel. How did proto-orthodox revisors of an already circulating third gospel

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<sup>94</sup> Jean-Daniel Dubois, "Hypothese Sur Lorigine de Lapocryphe Genna Marias," *Augustinianum* 23 (1983): 263–70.

<sup>95</sup> Andrew Gregory, *The Gospel According to the Hebrews and the Gospel of the Ebionites*, Oxford Early Christian Gospel Texts (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017).

persuade Basilideans, Valentinians, Marcosians, and their other opponents to adopt their lately revised gospel?<sup>96</sup>

There is, therefore, considerable evidence that *Luke* (as opposed to Marcion's gospel) was used before and contemporary with Marcion in diverse ideological circles and geographical locations. Varieties of Jewish, gnostic, and otherwise non-descript Christians in Egypt, Italy, Palestine, and Asia Minor used *Luke* in its received form. There is, conversely, no evidence that Marcion's gospel was used before or after Marcion by any group of non-Marcionite Christians. The simplest explanation for the exclusively Marcionite circulation of Marcion's gospel (in contrast to the ideological and geographical distribution of *Luke*) is that Marcion was, indeed, responsible for re-writing the gospel.

## 5.6 Conclusion

Marcion's opponents give detailed descriptions of a gospel associated with the second century teacher. This gospel is unmistakably similar to *Luke*. The closeness of that relationship led some scholars to suppose that Marcion's gospel was not, in fact, a separate work but merely an eccentric copy of *Luke* — a product of second century Christianity's (purportedly) *laissez faire* copying practices. There is, of course, significant variation in the text of *Luke*. But Marcion's gospel does not fall within (or, indeed, remotely close to) the range of variation of exhibited by the Lukan text tradition. Assessed quantitatively, Marcion's *Gospel* must be explained as the product of some process other than that which gave rise to even the most eccentric manuscripts of *Luke*. Furthermore, the rearrangement of pericopes in Marcion's *Gospel*

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<sup>96</sup> This does not preclude positing an ur-*Luke* on other —especially internal— grounds. But it is the received *Luke* that is attested across the Mediterranean by a diverse readership in the early second century —shortly after its composition (assuming dependence on Josephus). If there was an ur-*Luke*, there is no reason to think it ever circulated.

differs qualitatively from the variation found between manuscripts of *Luke*. The shape of Marcion's *Gospel* is not plausibly explained by the kinds of variation attested in the synoptic text tradition.

The most plausible explanation for the circulation of *Luke* and Marcion's *Gospel* is that Marcion was responsible for the creation of the latter. The third gospel circulated among various sects of Christianity, across the entire Mediterranean, before Marcion's activity. The distinctive form attributed to Marcion, on the other hand, is only found among Marcion's followers. The most plausible explanation for this pattern of evidence is that Marcion was, indeed, responsible for producing the gospel attributed to him.

## Chapter 6

### The Gospel according to Marcion (Part 2): Ancient Textual Criticism and Gospel Rewriting

#### 6.1 Introduction

Marcion of Sinope was accused by his opponents of tampering with scripture. Many modern scholars have concluded that Marcion was an ancient textual critic. This, I argue, reflects a misunderstanding of textual criticism as practiced by Marcion's contemporaries and an unwitting capitulation to heresiological polemic. Marcion's treatment of *Luke* resembles, rather, the compositional procedures evinced in the synoptic gospels. There is, moreover, neglected evidence that Marcion was recognized as an evangelist in antiquity. Marcion, I conclude, authored a new work on the same *hypothesis* as the synoptic gospels according to the conventions of technical literature. Marcion's gospel represents a continuation of the synoptic tradition of gospel writing by a Greek speaking teacher in second century Rome.

#### 6.2 Marcion as Textual Critic?

Marcion, according to Irenaeus, persuaded his disciples that he was more reliable (*veraciorem*) than the apostolic evangelists (*AH 1.27.2*).<sup>1</sup> This earliest testimony to Marcion's gospel would suggest that Marcion styled himself an evangelist. Irenaeus insists, however, that Marcion did not furnish his followers with a gospel, but a mere "fragment" (*particulam*). That is, Irenaeus denies that Marcion's handiwork is, indeed, a gospel.

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<sup>1</sup> *semetipsum veraciorem esse quam sunt hi qui Evangelium tradiderunt apostoli suasit discipulis suis, non Euangelium, sed particulam Euangelii tradens eis [...]*. Adelin Rousseau, Louis Doutreleau, and Charles Mercier, *Irénée de Lyon. Contre les hérésies. Livre I.*, vol. 2, Sources chrétiennes 264 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1979), 350.

Tertullian too suggests that Marcion was a failed evangelist. Marcion, according to Tertullian, “made” a gospel that was “his own and novel” (*suum et nouum fecit*). Tertullian objects, however, that Marcion’s gospel was composed entirely of “the emendations of ours” (*AM* 4.4.5).<sup>2</sup> Marcion may have composed a “*Gospel according to the Antitheses*” (*AM* 4.1.1), but, according to Tertullian, this was made with “a knife rather than a pen” (*Prescription* 38).<sup>3</sup> So Tertullian, labels Marcion an “*emendator*,” rather than an evangelist (*AH* 4.4.5).<sup>4</sup> This, I argue, is probably not the language Marcion would have used to represent himself.

Epiphanius gives yet balder expression to this polemic. Marcion’s compositional activity is characterized thus: “And I will come to the things written by [Marcion] – or, rather, to the things falsified” (*Panarion* 42.9.1).<sup>5</sup> Epiphanius thus acknowledges that Marcion would seem to have written a gospel but only perpetrated a fraud.

Scholars (apart from those addressed in the preceding chapter) have accepted Tertullian and Epiphanius’ heresiological representation of Marcion’s compositional activity.<sup>6</sup> Few scholars, of course, would charge him with “falsifying” the gospel, but Tertullian’s

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<sup>2</sup> *id emendans quod invenit, et id posterius, quod de nostri emendatio constituens suum et nouum fecit.* Claudio Moreschini and René Braun, eds., *Tertullien Contre Marcion Tome IV*, Sources Chrétiennes 456 (Paris: Cerf, 2001), 80.

<sup>3</sup> [...] *exinde euangelio quoque secundum Antithesis credendo patrocinaretur.* Moreschini and Braun, 58. “*Marcion enim exserte et palam machaera, non stilo usus est.*” Pierre De Labriolle, *Tertullien. De Praescriptione Haereticorum* (Paris: Librairie Alphonse Picard et Fils, 1907), 84. See the similar characterization in Tertullian’s *Against Marcion*: “*Quis tam comesor mus Ponticus quam qui euangelia conrosit?*” René Braun, *Tertullien Contre Marcion Tome I*, Sources Chrétiennes 365 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1990), 104.

<sup>4</sup> *Emendator sane euangelii* [...]. Moreschini and Braun, *Tertullien Contre Marcion Tome IV*, 80.

<sup>5</sup> Ἐλεύσομαι δὲ εἰς τὰ ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ γεγραμμένα, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐρραδιουργημένα. Karl Holl and Jürgen Dummer, *Epiphanius II Panarion haer. 34-64*, vol. 2, *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1980), 104.

<sup>6</sup> A more careful account of Marcion’s activity appears in the work of Gerhard May. May characterizes Marcion’s undertaking as a “philologischen Operationen” but does not invoke ancient textual criticism to explain Marcion’s theory, method, or result. Instead, May focuses on Marcion’s dogmatic motives and the willingness of Christians in the second century to revise sacred texts. Gerhard May, “Markion in seiner Zeit,” in *Markion: gesammelte Aufsätze*, ed. Katharina Greschat and Martin Meiser (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp Von Zabern, 2005), 1–12.

characterization of Marcion as “*emendator*” (*AM* 4.4.5) is widely embraced.<sup>7</sup> Adolf Harnack, for instance, notes that Marcion did not appeal to a new revelation or claim divine inspiration but worked “lediglich mit den Mitteln der Philologie.”<sup>8</sup> Marcion was, according to Harnack, „a skillful philologist.”<sup>9</sup>

Robert Grant, in a monograph on the appropriation of ancient scholarly techniques by early Christians, dedicates a chapter to Marcion’s adoption of “contemporary critical approaches” to textual criticism.<sup>10</sup> Grant compares Marcion to individual librarians at Alexandria and suggests the direct influence of these Hellenistic scholars on the second century heretic.<sup>11</sup> Marcion, according to Grant, “knew current theories about interpolated religious documents, as well as the editorial procedures of the great Hellenistic textual critics.”<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, E.D. Blackman says that Marcion did not prepare his own “version of the gospel” but was merely “a textual reviser.”<sup>13</sup> Peter Lampe pronounces, “Marcion hat textkritisch gearbeitet” and compares him to Zenodotus, the first librarian of Alexandria.<sup>14</sup> More recently, Moll and Lieu borrow Tertullian’s very language. Moll characterizes Marcion’s gospel as the

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<sup>7</sup> Moreschini and Braun, *Tertullien Contre Marcion Tome IV*, 80.

<sup>8</sup> Adolf von Harnack, *Marcion, das Evangelium vom fremden Gott; eine Monographie zur Geschichte der Grundlegung der Katholischen Kirche*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 45 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1924), 39.

<sup>9</sup> “Diese Änderungen sind Conjecturen eines geschickten Philologen.” Harnack, 58.

<sup>10</sup> Robert M. Grant, *Heresy and Criticism: The Search for Authenticity in Early Christian Literature* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/J. Knox Press, 1993), 35.

<sup>11</sup> Robert M. Grant, “Marcion and the Critical Method,” in *From Jesus to Paul: Studies in Honour of Francis Wright Beare*, ed. Peter Richardson and John C. Hurd (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1984), 212. Grant’s comparison of Marcion with Galen is treated below.

<sup>12</sup> Grant, *Heresy and Criticism*, 33.

<sup>13</sup> E. C. Blackman, *Marcion and His Influence*: (London: SPCK, 1948), 43.

<sup>14</sup> Specifically, Lampe characterizes Marcion’s method as “ungrammatisch” for his dogmatic rather than stylistic, grammatical, or aesthetic analysis. Lampe notes that Zenodotus, according to his Alexandrian successors, shared this fault. von Peter Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten: Untersuchungen zur Sozialgeschichte* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1987), 215–16.

product of “textual criticism” — *emendatio*.<sup>15</sup> Finally, Marcion’s “literary output,” according to Judith Lieu, “matches the practice of textual *emendation* in the ‘recovery’ of an original text and meaning that was a regular aspect of contemporary scholarly activity.”<sup>16</sup>

This account of Marcion’s treatment of *Luke* situates him in contemporary intellectual culture and thereby provides a more sympathetic portrait of the Pontic heretic than the polemics of his ancient adversaries. And although I will argue for this account’s inadequacy, characterizing Marcion as an ancient text critic does capture something crucial about Marcion’s critique of his evangelical predecessors. Marcion, according to Tertullian, “argued in his *Antitheses*” that the gospel “was falsified (*interpolatum*) by the defenders of Judaism” (*AM* 4.4.3, see also 4.3.2, 4.3.4, 4.6.2, 4.25).<sup>17</sup> There is no reason to doubt that Marcion’s *Antitheses*, indeed,

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<sup>15</sup> Sebastian Moll, *The Arch-Heretic Marcion* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 28. Moll’s actual description of Marcion’s theological revision of the gospel, on the other hand, recognizes the authorial activities central to my argument.

<sup>16</sup> Emphasis added. Judith Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic: God and Scripture in the Second Century* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 319.

<sup>17</sup> “*Si enim id euangelium quod Lucae refertur penes nos — viderimus an et penes Marcionem — ipsum est quod Marcion per Antithesis suas arguit ut interpolatum a protectoribus Iudaismi ad concorporationem legis et prophetarum.*” Moreschini and Braun, *Tertullien Contre Marcion Tome IV*, 78. Beduhn argues that “gospel” here in Marcion’s *Antitheses* referred to the message of salvation rather than a text. Jason David BeDuhn, “The Myth of Marcion as Redactor: The Evidence of ‘Marcion’s’ Gospel Against an Assumed Marcionite Redaction,” *Annali Di Storia Dell’Esegesi* 29, no. 1 (2012): 37–39. This requires reading Tertullian’s paraphrase of Marcion against Tertullian’s interpretation of the passage – a dubious exercise. Tertullian elsewhere uses similar language (*interpolaverunt, intexta, addiderunt*) to describe Marcion’s own justification for erasing passages from the gospel (4.3.4; 4.6.2; 4.25.18). Moreschini and Braun, *Tertullien Contre Marcion Tome IV*, 74, 88–90, 328. Likewise, Tertullian more than once reports that Marcion attacked rival gospels (4.3.2). Marcion’s *Antitheses* was evidently concerned with texts. The *Adamantius Dialogue*, the only other proposed witness to the contents of *Antitheses*, would corroborate this: Megethius, a Marcionite mouthpiece, is concerned to demonstrate that other gospels are falsified (1.5). Klinghardt proposes another reinterpretation of the same passage. The phrase “*interpolatum [...] ad concorporationem legis et prophetarum*”, according to Klinghardt, refers to “die Integration von Markions Evangelium in ein *corpus*, das auch Gesetz und Propheten enthielt”. Matthias Klinghardt, “Markion vs. Lukas: Plädoyer für die Wiederaufnahme eines alten Falles,” *New Testament Studies* 52, no. 4 (2006): 495. This interpretation, as Christopher Hays already noted, relies on tendentious translations of key terms. Christopher M. Hays, “Marcion vs. Luke: A Response to the Plädoyer of Matthias Klinghardt,” *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche; Berlin* 99, no. 2 (2008): 218–19. The parallel uses of similar language in less ambiguous passages (adduced above) render Klinghardt’s interpretation implausible. Finally, in one of the passages cited above, Tertullian entertains the idea that the copies of *Luke* known to him had descended from a falsified, post-apostolic archetype (4.3.4). Although it is remarkably difficult here to disentangle Tertullian’s rhetorical argumentation from the echoes of Marcion’s claims, it might be inferred that Marcion located the

charged his ideological opponents with corrupting sacred documents. This, however, is where the similarities with ancient textual criticism end.

I take ‘textual criticism’ in Hellenistic and Roman antiquity to be activities oriented toward identifying, establishing, or restoring *an* authorial text of a work.<sup>18</sup> This need not involve the preparation of an edition: commentators and other scholars evaluate variation in manuscript traditions with an eye to determining an authorial text (as discussed in chapter four). Likewise, the preparation of an ἔκδοσις does not invariably involve textual criticism since this language was also used for publication in general.<sup>19</sup> The practice of textual criticism in antiquity is often described with the language of “healing” (διορθώσεις/emendare) but, since other compositional activities are also characterized with this vocabulary, they are neither sufficient nor necessary conditions for recognizing textual criticism (as defined above).<sup>20</sup>

### 6.3 Hellenistic Textual Criticism

To ascertain the character of textual criticism as Marcion’s contemporaries practiced it, we must begin with Alexandrian Homeric scholarship. The methods for editing literary texts

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corruption of a true gospel at a specific point in the history of its transmission. This would be a further analog with some ancient textual critics. While Tertullian elsewhere reports that Marcion’s followers credit him with “restoring” (recurare) a corrupted faith (AM 1.20.), he never attributes this rhetoric of restoration to Marcion himself. Marcion’s theory of corruption is treated at greater length in chapter five, below.

<sup>18</sup> The indefinite article here is supremely important. Ancient authors, as demonstrated in Chapter Two and Four, cared a great deal about whether or not a reading was authorial. They did not, however, understand works to consist of singular, definitive authorial texts. Rather, it was common practice for author to revise their works already in circulation or for readers to send a work to its author for revision — and not merely restoration to a chronologically anterior text.

<sup>19</sup> Following van Gronigen, I understand ἔκδοσις as only referring to the release of a work, either from authorial control or a purposefully restricted readership. B. A. van Gronigen, “ΕΚΔΟΣΙΣ,” *Mnemosyne* 16, no. 1 (1963): 1–17. The initial publication of a work or the author’s publication of a second edition of a work would not be text critical in nature.

<sup>20</sup> Porphyry, for instance, describes his preparation of Plotinus’ work for publication as διορθώσεις (*Vita* 7). This is a distinct textual practice: Porphyry is not attempting to restore an authorial text but to prepare unpublished written materials for a wider readership. Thank you to Jeremiah Coogan for this example.

pioneered by the librarians at Alexandria provided a paradigm for textual scholarship from the third century BCE into the Middle Ages. As will be shown, these Hellenistic scholars defined textual criticism for Marcion's Roman contemporaries, including Jewish and Christian scholars.

### 6.3.1 Zenodotus

Zenodotus of Ephesus was the father of Alexandrian textual scholarship.<sup>21</sup> He was appointed to head the Ptolemaic library at the beginning of the third century BCE. Zenodotus' great innovation was introducing the obelus (—) to mark spurious lines.<sup>22</sup> Simplistic as it may seem, this operation, called "athetesis" (ἀθέτησις), was the foundation of text critical scholarship. The Homeric scholia further credit him with circumscribing (περιγράφειν) passages he considered spurious.<sup>23</sup> This probably refers to the brackets found in some Homeric papyri. Zenodotus' edition appears to have been a received text furnished with these two kinds of critical

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<sup>21</sup> Readers and copyists, of course, altered the text of manuscripts long before the foundation of the library at Alexandria. I am interested, however, in the ancient scholarly conventions that are so-often invoked to describe Marcion's redaction of *Luke*. On the papyrological evidence for editorial activity antedating Zenodotus, see Franco Montanari, "Correcting a Copy, Editing a Text. Alexandrian Ekdosis and Papyri," in *From Scholars to Scholia: Chapters in the History of Ancient Greek Scholarship*, ed. Franco Montanari and Lara Pagani, Trends in Classics. Supplementary Volumes, v. 9 (Berlin ; New York: De Gruyter, 2011), 3–5.

<sup>22</sup> The prolog in Venetus A reads τὸν δὲ ὀβελὸν ἔλαβεν ἐκ τῆς Ζηνοδότου διορθώσεως. Hartmut Erbse, *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem (scholia vetera). Vol I: Praefationem et Scholia ad Libros A-D Continens* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1969), lxxv. Klaus Nickau concludes "es gibt keinen triftigen Grund, daran (that Zenodotus invented the obelus) zu zweifeln." Klaus Nickau, *Untersuchungen zur textkritischen Methode des Zenodotos von Ephesos* (Walter de Gruyter, 1977), 10.

<sup>23</sup> See, for instance, the brackets at *Il.* 2.156-69, 8.493-6, 11.794-5, and *Od.* 3.400-1. Nickau, *Untersuchungen zur textkritischen Methode des Zenodotos von Ephesos*, 10–12; Francesca Schironi, *The Best of the Grammarians: Aristarchus of Samothrace on the Iliad* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018), 573.

sigla (σημεῖα).<sup>24</sup> The genesis of textual scholarship in the Hellenistic world was Zenodotus' invention of a method to mark suspect lines without actually deleting them.<sup>25</sup>

### 6.3.2 Aristophanes of Byzantium

Aristophanes of Byzantium marks the next stage in the evolution of Alexandrian textual criticism. He ascended to head librarian at the beginning of the second century BCE. Although the system of diacritics and punctuation still used today are Aristophanes' most famous invention, his more sophisticated text critical apparatus concerns us here.<sup>26</sup> While Zenodotus' obelus marked a passage as suspect without any indication of the editor's reasoning,

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<sup>24</sup> In addition to descriptions of athetesis (ἀθετεῖν) and rejection (οὐ προσίεσθαι), a number of other terms are used to describe Zenodotus' treatment of the text. The reports that certain lines do not appear (οὐ φέρεσθαι, οὐκ εἶναι) or are not written (οὐ γράφειν) in Zenodotus' edition probably refer to differences between Zenodotus' Ionian base text and the Alexandrian Vulgate. The less common claim that Zenodotus removed (ἤρκε, συντέμνειν, (περι)αἶρειν, etc...) certain lines has been variously explained. Since variant readings are occasionally attributed to Zenodotus' edition of lines described in this way, this language of excision must sometimes reflect imprecise terminology for athetesis (*Il.* 2.111, 116). This is unremarkable given the extant scholia stand at several removes from the edition itself. In other cases, this terminology probably refers to omissions in Zenodotus' base text, not Zenodotus' editorial hand. Since Zenodotus issued no commentary, the origin of unmarked omissions could only be inferred by later grammarians from the text of Zenodotus' edition. Current scholarship weighs decidedly in favor of this interpretation and against attributing any actual excisions, emendations, and interpolations to Zenodotus himself. Nickau, *Untersuchungen zur textkritischen Methode des Zenodotos von Ephesos*, 6–19; Franco Montanari, "Zenodotus, Aristarchus, and the Ekdosis of Homer," in *Editing Texts = Texte Edieren*, ed. Glenn W. Most, Aporemata; Bd. 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998., 1998), 1–21; Martin L. West, "Zenodotus' Text," in *Studies in the Text and Transmission of the Iliad*, by Martin L. West (München: K.G. Saur, 2001), 33–45; Montanari, "Correcting a Copy, Editing a Text. Alexandrian Ekdosis and Papyri"; Schironi, *The Best of the Grammarians*, 572–78. Additionally, the sole scholion for Zenodotus' text of Hesiod supports this reconstruction. C. M. Schroeder, "Zenodotus' Text of Hesiod," *The Classical Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (2009): 271–74.

<sup>25</sup> This interpretation of athetesis is now widely accepted. Particularly important evidence for this conservative understanding of athetesis is the attribution of variant readings to Zenodotus within sections he reportedly athetized (e.g. *Il.* 2.156-169 and 161a). Nickau, *Untersuchungen zur textkritischen Methode des Zenodotos von Ephesos*, 6; Montanari, "Zenodotus, Aristarchus, and the Ekdosis of Homer," 8.

<sup>26</sup> On the former, see Philomen Probert and Stephanie Roussou, "The Invention of the Greek Prosodic Signs," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, September 23, 2019, 1–22. Like Probert and Roussou, Pfeiffer is skeptical toward the ancient attribution of diacritics and punctuation to Aristophanes. Here too Aristophanes probably drew upon pre-existent practices. Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1968), 179–80. See the discussions of Aristophanes' text critical sigla in Pfeiffer, 173–74, 178; Schironi, *The Best of the Grammarians*, 49–52.

Aristophanes introduced new sigla to communicate his justification for athetization.<sup>27</sup>

Aristophanes' *asteriskos* (※) accompanied an obelus to indicate that a line had been interpolated from another context.<sup>28</sup> For reference purposes, another *asteriskos* stood alone at the line's original location. Aristophanes' sigma (C) and anti-sigma (O) functioned similarly, designating successive lines with redundant content.<sup>29</sup> This too, given his assumptions about Homeric style, is a kind of athetesis. Likewise, Aristophanes used the *keraunion* (T) to mark an entire passage as "cheap" (εὐτελές) — that is, unbecoming of Homer.<sup>30</sup> Only the *chi* (χ), attributed to Aristophanes in a single scholion, denotes anything other than athetesis — and its purpose remains obscure.<sup>31</sup> Thus Aristophanes' innovation was a means for more clearly communicating the scope of and justification for proposed atheteses. Textual criticism for Aristophanes, as with Zenodotus before him, consisted of marking *spuria* while simultaneously preserving the text as received.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> This narrative of Alexandrian scholars gradually disambiguating their annotations is indebted to Francesca Schironi, "The Ambiguity of Signs: Critical Σημεία from Zenodotus to Origen," in *Homer and the Bible in the Eyes of Ancient Interpreters*, by Maren Niehoff (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2012), 87–112.

<sup>28</sup> Sch. *Od.* 3.71 makes it clear that Aristophanes employed the asteriskos not merely to index similar lines but as a kind of athetesis. Schironi provides a translation at Schironi, *The Best of the Grammarians*, 50 fn. 8. Another scholion (frag. 424), however, says Aristophanes used the asteriskos to mark non-sense lines. of Byzantium Aristophanes, *Aristophanis Byzantii fragmenta*, Sammlung griechischer und lateinischer Grammatiker ; Bd. 6 (Berlin ; New York: de Gruyter, 1986), 168. This too, given Aristophanes' assumptions about Homer, would be a kind of athetesis. West suggests the name "Aristophanes" was substituted for "Aristarchus" at Sch. *Od.* 3.71. †m. L. West, "Aristophanes of Byzantium's Text of Homer," *Classical Philology* 112, no. 1 (2016): 42 fn. 58.

<sup>29</sup> See the discussion of Sch. *Od.* 5.257a at West, "Aristophanes of Byzantium's Text of Homer," 42; Schironi, *The Best of the Grammarians*, 51.

<sup>30</sup> See the discussion of Sch. *Od.* 18.281-3 at West, "Aristophanes of Byzantium's Text of Homer," 24; Schironi, *The Best of the Grammarians*, 52; Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age*, 178 n. 10.

<sup>31</sup> See the discussion of Aristophanes' use of the *chi* in Sch. *Od.* 6.297 at West, "Aristophanes of Byzantium's Text of Homer," 38. It also appeared in editions of Plato but apparently with a different purpose (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 3.65). See the discussion in Francesca Schironi, "Plato at Alexandria: Aristophanes, Aristarchus and the 'Philological Tradition of a Philosopher,'" *The Classical Quarterly* 55, no. 2 (2005): 429–30.

<sup>32</sup> This is an extension of the debate outlined in footnote 24, 25, and 37 but further corroborated by West's study of Aristophanes' *Odyssey*. West, "Aristophanes of Byzantium's Text of Homer," 41–43. West admits that Aristophanes conjectured substitutions but considers it most likely that these remained in the margins. West, 42. Pfeiffer concurs Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age*, 173–78.

### 6.3.3 Aristarchus

Aristarchus of Samothrace succeeded Aristophanes as librarian later in the second century. He was regarded as “the best of the grammarians” (ὁ ἄριστος γραμματικός).<sup>33</sup> He transformed textual criticism into the discipline that Marcion’s contemporaries would recognize.<sup>34</sup> Although Aristarchus expanded the collection of critical sigla employed by Alexandrian editions, his most profound contribution to textual criticism is the edition-commentary format.<sup>35</sup> Although both editions and commentaries (ὑπομνήματα) antedated him, these were combined by Aristarchus into a single work with two interdependent halves. This is emblemized by the dipole (>), a critical sign introduced by Aristarchus. The dipole appeared in Aristarchus’ edition to indicate that the commentary contained some relevant exegetical, linguistic, or text critical note. Aristarchus’ edition was, therefore, not self-explanatory but pointed the reader to his commentary. Similarly, the commentary could not be used without the edition since it did not reproduce the continuous text but only lines marked under a critical symbol.<sup>36</sup> Aristarchus thus transformed the scholarly edition into a diptych.

As with Zenodotus and Aristophanes before him, Aristarchean textual criticism was the annotation of a received text.<sup>37</sup> For Aristarchus, this “annotation” was no longer limited to

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<sup>33</sup> Sch. D *Il.* 2.316 as discussed in Schironi, *The Best of the Grammarians*, xxv. This was not, Schironi notes, an idiosyncratic judgement. Athenaeus names Aristarchus ὁ γραμματικώτατος (*Deipnosophists* 15.671f-672a). Strabo calls Aristarchus (and Crates) ὁ κορυφαῖος in the science of grammar (*Geography* 1.2.24). See also the *Anecdota Parisina* below.

<sup>34</sup> The so-called “Hawara Homer” (Pack<sup>2</sup> 616), for instance, was created by a contemporary of Marcion in the Aristarchean mold. See the further discussion of Roman textual scholarship below.

<sup>35</sup> I follow the reconstruction proposed by Pfeiffer and adopted by Schironi. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age*, 218; Schironi, *The Best of the Grammarians*, 52–56.

<sup>36</sup> Moreover, Aristarchus may have repeated only the first few words of some passages under discussion.

<sup>37</sup> Hartmut Erbse and Michael Haslam have hypothesized an Aristarchean “pre-ekdosis” to explain the standardization of the Homeric text *circa* 150 alongside the failure of Aristarchus’ recorded critical judgements to impact the text tradition (see fn. 40 below) (Hartmut Erbse, “Über Aristarchs Iliasausgaben,” *Hermes; Wiesbaden, etc.* 87 (1959): 275–303; Michael Haslam, “Homeric Papyri and Transmission of the Text,” in *A New Companion to*

drawing sigla in the margins. In his duplex editions, Aristarchus could propose and defend emendations, furnish various reading aids, and offer exegetical insights. Still, Aristarchus' method, no less than the work of his predecessors, evinces remarkable conservatism in preserving the received – purportedly interpolated – text of the poems.

#### 6.3.4 Comparison with Marcion

There are many obvious dissimilarities between Marcion's edition and those of the great Hellenistic text critics. Textual criticism as it was practiced by the Alexandrian librarians was the annotation of manuscripts with critical sigla.<sup>38</sup> Marcion employed no such paratexts. The edition-commentary format invented by Aristarchus inspired generations of Hellenistic scholars. No ancient source attributes a commentary to Marcion.

There is, however, a more profound difference between the text critical methods of the Alexandrian grammarians and Marcion's treatment of the third gospel. The development of sigla permitted the Alexandrians to propose emendations without effacing the received text.<sup>39</sup> In fact,

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*Homer*, ed. Barry Powell and Ian Morris (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1997), 84–87.) Aristarchus, *ex hypothesi*, physically excised spurious lines from earlier “wild” texts of Homer without leaving any evidence of their existence. On this account, Aristarchus published only this preparatory text and not the edition furnished with his critical markings. Schironi, who does not consider Finkelberg's argument, finds this theory “the most plausible.” Schironi, *The Best of the Grammarians*, 41–43. This theory is plagued with difficulties: It posits a completely unattested phase of complex editorial activity out of keeping with the methods of former librarians and the attested methods of Aristarchus himself. It is, further, inherently untestable. Paul Collart and Stephanie West argue that the book trade better accounts for the same phenomena (Paul Collart, “Les papyrus de l'Iliade (2e article),” *Revue de Philologie, de Littérature et d'Histoire Anciennes; Paris* 7 (1933): 52–54; Stephanie West, *The Ptolemaic Papyri of Homer*, *Papyrologica Coloniensia* 3 (Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1967), 16–17.). Equally plausible, Margalit Finkelberg proposes that a standardized text uninfluenced by the emendation proposed by the Alexandrian grammarians was the work of Cydas, the military officer appointed librarian after Aristarchus' ouster. Margalit Finkelberg, “Regional Texts and the Circulation of Books: The Case of Homer,” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 46, no. 3 (2006): 231–36. These latter proposals seem considerably more likely than the first but even if Aristarchus did secretly collate manuscripts and then anonymously publish his un-edited base text, it did not figure in the reception of Alexandrian textual criticism.

<sup>38</sup> Although I focused on the Alexandrian grammarians, there is evidence of similar practices for their rivals. Schironi notes that Apollonius Rhodius and Crates of Mallas practiced athetesis. Schironi, *The Best of the Grammarians*, 446.

<sup>39</sup> I have engaged debates surrounding this point above in fn. 24, 25, 32, and 37.

the atheteses, emendations, and other alterations proposed by these most famous textual critics exerted no discernable influence on the text tradition itself.<sup>40</sup> As demonstrated below, the image of the Alexandrians in Roman memory is characterized by a conservatism with the received text. Marcion, in contrast, re-wrote the gospel itself, omitting almost a quarter of the *Gospel according to Luke*. Hellenistic textual scholarship was typified by a profound conservatism not shared by Marcion.<sup>41</sup> In both form and method, therefore, Marcion bears little resemblance to the librarians of Alexandria.

#### 6.4 Roman Textual Criticism

Reportedly, it was Crates of Mallus, not an Alexandrian librarian, who first brought textual scholarship to Rome in the second century BCE (Suetonius, *De Gram.* 2.2). Nevertheless, Suetonius introduces Crates to his Roman readership as “a contemporary of Aristarchus.”<sup>42</sup> The Pergamene scholar is situated historically by referring to the better known Alexandrians. Furthermore, James Zetzel notes that the activities credited to Crates’ influence —most notably the division of a work into several books— are characteristic of Alexandrian (not Pergamene)

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<sup>40</sup> The evidence is nicely summarized at Margalit Finkelberg, “Regional Texts and the Circulation of Books: The Case of Homer,” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 46, no. 3 (2006): 231–36. Schironi concurs and so characterizes the relevant history of scholarship. Schironi, *The Best of the Grammarians*, 43 fn. 63.

<sup>41</sup> Pfeiffer refers to this “inclination to save the old text” as “a characteristic attitude of the Greek spirit.” Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age*, 173.

<sup>42</sup> *Primus igitur, quantum opinamur, studium grammaticae in urbem intulit Crates Mallotes, Aristarchi aequalis, qui missus ad senatum ab Attalo rege inter secundum ac tertium Punicum bellum sub ipsam Ennii mortem, cum regione Palatii prolapsus in cloacae foramen crus fregisset, per omne legationis simul et valitudinis tempus plurimas acroasis subinde fecit assidueque disseruit, ac nostris exemplo fuit ad imitandum* (2.2). JC Rolfe, Suetonius. *Lives of the Caesars, Volume II: Claudius. Nero. Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. Vespasian. Titus, Domitian. Lives of Illustrious Men: Grammarians and Rhetoricians. Poets (Terence. Virgil. Horace. Tibullus. Persius. Lucan). Lives of Pliny the Elder and Passienus Crispus.*, Loeb Classical Library 38 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), 380.

scholarship.<sup>43</sup> As we will see, Marcion’s Roman contemporaries consistently look back to Aristarchus and the Alexandrians to construct their own notion of textual scholarship.<sup>44</sup>

#### 6.4.1 The Beginnings

After Crates and his Roman imitators, Suetonius says that Aelius Stilo “arranged and expanded grammatical scholarship” (*Gram.* 3.1).<sup>45</sup> What were Aelius’ contributions to scholarship? An anonymous account preserved in a single manuscript (*Parisinus 7530*) describes the critical procedure of Aelius and his pupils.<sup>46</sup> The fragment begins with a catalog of text critical sigla — mostly those developed by the Alexandrians. There follows immediately an account of early Roman textual criticism:

Varro, Servius, Aelius and, finally, Probus used these [critical sigla] alone in annotating the texts of Ennius, Lucilius, and the historians. They added these [critical sigla] to Virgil, Horace, and Lucretius, as Aristarchus did to Homer.<sup>47</sup>

The reference to Marcus Valerius Probus as the most recent grammarian suggests that this fragment goes back to the late first or second century CE.<sup>48</sup> It describes the editions of Aelius and other Roman scholars as works of poetry and prose annotated with Alexandrian sigla. Like the Alexandrian librarians (and unlike Marcion), Roman textual scholars recorded their text critical judgements with sigla on a copy of the received text.

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<sup>43</sup> James E. G. Zetzel, *Critics, Compilers, and Commentators: An Introduction to Roman Philology, 200 BCE-800 CE* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 23–24.

<sup>44</sup> “what is most perplexing about Suetonius’ tale is that the [philological] work Romans undertake, apparently under the influence of the Pergamene Crates, looks much more Alexandrian in inspiration.” Zetzel, 23–24. This point will be further illustrated by the evidence surveyed below.

<sup>45</sup> “*Instruxerunt auxeruntque ab omni parte grammaticam L. Aelius Lanuvinus generque Aelii Ser. Clodius,*” Rolfe, *Suetonius. Lives of the Caesars, Volume II*, 382.

<sup>46</sup> I depend here on the reconstruction of S. F. Bonner, “Anecdote Parisinum,” *Hermes* 88, no. 3 (1960): 359.

<sup>47</sup> *his solis (sc. notis) in adnotationibus hennii lucii et historicorum usi sunt varros hennius haelius aequae et postremo probus, qui illas in virgilio et horatio et lucretio apposuit, ut homero aristarchus.*

<sup>48</sup> H. D. Jocelyn, “The Annotations of M. Valerius Probus (II) [The Annotations of M. Valerius Probus (II)],” *The Classical Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (1985): 153.

The anonymous fragment continues with a textually corrupt version of the Peisistratus legend.<sup>49</sup> This story about the corruption and restoration of Homer’s epics survives in several versions.<sup>50</sup> Here I consider the Latin version from *Parisinus 7530* alongside a version preserved in the Greek scholion to Dionysius Thrax’s *Art of Grammar*. Despite a few differences in narrative detail, these two Roman-era retellings of the Peisistratus legend reflect a shared understanding of the Alexandrian’s editorial enterprise. Both versions of the legend begin with the Homeric corpus in a sorry state: In the Latin, they are “disordered and confused” (*inordinata et confuse*). In the Greek, they are wiped out by a natural disaster (ἢ ὑπὸ πυρὸς ἢ ὑπὸ ὑδάτων ἐπιφορᾶς ἢ ὑπὸ σεισμοῦ). In both versions, Peisistratus, the Athenian tyrant, pays for recitations of Homeric lines in order to reconstitute the epics. In both versions, Greeks take advantage of this program by composing new lines for financial gain. The Latin version, then, introduces the Alexandrian grammarians.

On account of this it happened that afterward wiser men (the greatest of whom was Aristarchus) judged verses chiefly by marking them with an obelus as often as they rejected them as either bad or un-Homeric.<sup>51</sup>

The Greek version provides a slightly fuller description of the same events.

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<sup>49</sup> Because of the textual difficulties in this passage, I leave it untranslated. *obelus uersibus apponitur hac causa. Pisistratus quondam Atheniensium tyrannus inordinata et confusa adhuc poesi Homeri praemio sollicitare proposuit eos qui eam ordinarent iisque praemii nomine in singulos uersus singulos obolos constituit. mercede multi inducti pauperes, quibus ingenium affluebat, quoniam aut inuenire aut disponere † debebat non poterant, fingendo plurimos uersus operis nobilitatem corruperunt. unde euenit, ut postea prudentiores uiri, quorum summus in hac re fuit Aristarchus, quotiens inprobarent uersus quasi aut malos aut non Homericos, obelo potissimum notandos existimarent. nam et ipsius Homeri proprios sed non eo dignos eadem hac nota condemnarunt.*

<sup>50</sup> On the versions of this story, see Jed Wyrick, *The Ascension of Authorship: Attribution and Canon Formation in Jewish, Hellenistic, and Christian Traditions*, Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature; 49 (Cambridge, Mass; London: Harvard University Press, 2005), 203–80.

<sup>51</sup> *unde euenit, ut postea prudentiores uiri, quorum summus in hac re fuit Aristarchus, quotiens inprobarent uersus quasi aut malos aut non Homericos, obelo potissimum notandos existimarent. nam et ipsius Homeri proprios sed non eo dignos eadem hac nota condemnarunt.* Heinrich Keilii, *Grammatici latini*, vol. 7 (Lipsiae: BG Teubneri, 1855), 533–37.

When some of those who assembled Homeric lines for Peisistratus, having investigated, added also their own (ιδίους) lines – as already said – in order to get more money – and already these [lines] became customary to readers, it did not escape the notice of the judges. But because of custom and expectation they allowed those lines to remain. Imposing obelisks (sic) on each of the lines that were spurious, alien, and unworthy of the poet, they displayed it as this, since they are unworthy of Homer.<sup>52</sup>

In the Greek, certain “judges” (κριταί) marked dubious lines with an “obelisk” (instead of the expected “obelus”). These annotations were employed, according to the Roman scholiast, in order to preserve the received text with which the masses were familiar. These annotating “judges” are identified earlier in the story as “grammarians” (γραμματικοί).<sup>53</sup> According to both versions of the story, therefore, textual criticism—as exemplified by the Alexandrians—concerned itself with recovering an authorial text while also preserving the form in which it was received.<sup>54</sup> It is especially notable that the Latin fragment—probably composed by a near contemporary of Marcion—invokes this conservative procedure to explain the methods of Roman scholarship.

#### 6.4.2 First and Second Century Scholarship

Quintilian, the first century rhetorician, refers to the Alexandrian grammarians in his account of an ideal education. Writing, reading, speaking, and interpreting, says Quintilian, are

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<sup>52</sup> Ἐπειδὴ δὲ τινες τῶν συναγαγόντων τοὺς Ὀμηρικοὺς στίχους πρὸς τὸν Πεισίστρατον διὰ τὸ πλείονα μισθὸν λαβεῖν καὶ ἰδίους στίχους, ὡς προεῖρηται, σκεψάμενοι προσέθηκαν, καὶ ἤδη ἐν συνηθείᾳ ἐγένοντο τοῖς ἀναγινώσκουσιν, οὐκ ἔλαθε τοῦτο τοὺς κριτάς, ἀλλὰ διὰ μὲν τὴν συνήθειαν καὶ πρόληψιν ἀφῆκαν αὐτοὺς κείσθαι, ὀβελίσκους δὲ ἐκάστω τῶν ἀδοκίμων καὶ ἀλλοτρίων καὶ ἀναξίων τοῦ ποιητοῦ στίχων παρατιθέμενοι τοῦτο αὐτὸ ἐνεδείξαντο, ὡς ἀνάξιοι εἰσι τοῦ Ὀμήρου. Hilgard, Alfred, *Grammatici Graeci*, vol. 1.3 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1901 repr. 1965): 30.

<sup>53</sup> Curiously, Zenodotus and Aristarchus are identified earlier in this narrative, not as “grammarians” but compilers of the Homeric lines.

<sup>54</sup> The scholiast’s narrative reflects a radically eclectic vision of textual criticism. The edition envisioned does not merely preserve the base text of a given manuscript but apparently incorporates all dubiously Homeric lines.

always mixed up with “criticism” (*iudicium*). To explain this, Quintilian invokes the Alexandrians.

Which [referring to “criticism”] the ancient grammarians practiced with such severity that they allowed themselves not only, like a censor, to mark with a certain small rod a verse and books whose inscriptions they considered false (as if they were expelling substitutes from a family) but, collecting some authors into a canon (*ordinem*), banished others entirely from their number. (*Institutes of Oratory* 1.4.3)<sup>55</sup>

Quintilian remembers the Alexandrian scholars for their use of the obelus, their interrogation of authorial attributions, and their creation of literary canons. He contrasts textual criticism and *Echtheitskritik* with the act of “banishing entirely” (*omnino exemerint*) certain authors from a literary canon. This contrast depends on his reader’s recognition of the conservatism inherent in the act of obelization (as well as the cataloging of spurious works).<sup>56</sup> Quintilian, thus, understood the act of obelization to consist of marking lines but not erasing or omitting them.

The Alexandrian conservatism of Roman textual scholarship is borne out also in the papyrological remains of second century Greek scholarship. William Johnson provides a helpful survey the remains of “scholarly editions” from Oxyrhynchus.<sup>57</sup> These are literary works with text critical sigla and annotations that reflect scholarly emendation and refer to textual variation. For instance, a note in the margins of one papyrus of Alcman’s *Partheneion* reports that an interpolated line “was bracketed [in] Aristonicus’ copy, but was left unbracketed in Ptolemy’s

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<sup>55</sup> *quo quidem ita severe sunt usi veteres grammatici ut non versus modo censoria quadam virgula notare et libros qui falso viderentur inscripti tamquam subditos summovere familia permiserint sibi, sed auctores alios in ordinem redegerint, alios omnino exemerint numero.* Donald A. Russell, *Quintilian. The Orator’s Education, Volume I: Books 1-2*, Loeb Classical Library 124 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 102–4.

<sup>56</sup> Zetzel reads Quintilian to suggest that these “severe practices of iudicium” were reserved for the *veteres grammatici*. Zetzel, *Critics, Compilers, and Commentators*, 19. Although this would bolster my thesis, the grammar does not demand Zetzel’s interpretation.

<sup>57</sup> William A. Johnson, *Readers and Reading Culture in the High Roman Empire: A Study of Elite Communities*, 1 edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 185–90.

(*P.Oxy.* 24.2387).”<sup>58</sup> From this survey, Johnson observes that the scribal hands of the annotators are contemporary with but rarely identical to the copyist responsible for the base text.<sup>59</sup> Different actors, it seems, were responsible for the production of new copies and the annotation of those copies. This is material evidence for the picture of Greek and Roman scholarship given above: ancient textual critics did not re-write the received text, they annotated it.

Examples of scholarly conservatism and the reception of Alexandrian scholarship could be multiplied from other Roman authors (e.g. Strabo, *Geography* 1,2,34; Seneca, Ep. 88.39; Cicero, *Ad. Fam.* 9.10 Athenaeus, *Deip.* 2.9, 40; 5.10). Most Roman grammarians, however, did not produce scholarly editions but composed stand-alone commentaries, original treatises, and reading aids (e.g. lexicons, introductions, and summaries). These treatises are usually concerned to elucidate historical, geographical, metrical, and grammatical (not text critical) issues.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, manuscript variation was a fact of Roman book culture, and commentators — especially in the medical and philosophical traditions— addressed textual uncertainties.<sup>61</sup> These are treated below.

#### 6.4.3 Medical Literature

Galen of Pergamon was not only a first-class physician but a practiced philologist.<sup>62</sup> ~~An appeal to Aristarchean principles of Homeric interpretation suggests he too was influenced by~~

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<sup>58</sup> Johnson, 189.

<sup>59</sup> Johnson, 186.

<sup>60</sup> Zetzel, *Critics, Compilers, and Commentators*, 66–67.

<sup>61</sup> Treatments of textual variation appear in other literary traditions, of course. On discussions of textual problems in geographic works, see Jessica Lightfoot, “Textual Wanderings: Homeric Scholarship and the Written Landscape of Strabo’s *Geography*,” *American Journal of Philology* 140, no. 4 (2019): 671–97. Johnson, *Readers and Reading Culture in the High Roman Empire*, 184.

<sup>62</sup> Ann Ellis Hanson, “Galen: Author and Critic,” in *Editing Texts = Texte Edieren*, ed. Glenn W. Most, Aporemata; Bd. 2 (Göttingen : Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998., 1998), 1–21.

the Alexandrian grammatical tradition (*De differentia pulsuum libri iv* 8.715.4; *De Com. Sec. Hipp.* 7.646.3-4).<sup>63</sup> For Galen, however, Hippocrates stood in for Homer. Galen wrote a glossary, commentaries, and numerous treatises on the Hippocratic corpus, including a lost catalog of authentic and spurious works.<sup>64</sup>

Galen was not the first scholar to apply Hellenistic philology to the works of Hippocrates. He frequently complains about Artemidorus Capito and Dioscorides' text critical judgements. Some of Galen's criticisms might be understood to imply that these scholars re-wrote the received text. But Galen's fuller descriptions of these scholarly editions suggests otherwise. Discussing an interpolation in Hippocrates' *On the Nature of Humans*, Galen provides the following description of Dioscorides' method.

Dioscorides wrote next to each line of this whole passage a sign (σημεῖον), which is called an obelus (ὄβελόν) — Aristarchus used such a sign for the lines of the poet suspected by him. Dioscorides, then, wrote these [signs] supposing the present passage was by Hippocrates the son of Thessalos (K 110-111).<sup>65</sup>

The named "Hippocrates son of Thessalos" was the grandson of the more famous Hippocrates, the supposed author of *Epidemics*. Dioscorides, therefore, is marking an interpolation into an authorial text with *obeloi*. Galen's description reveals, therefore, that these late first century scholars of medical literature produced Aristarchean editions of the Hippocratic works, marking interpolations with sigla rather than revising the text.

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<sup>63</sup> Hanson, 47; Francesca Schironi, "Greek Commentaries," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 19, no. 3 (2012): 437.

<sup>64</sup> Aileen R. Das, "New Material from Galen's On the Authentic and Spurious Works of Hippocrates," *Classical Philology* 113, no. 3 (2018): 305–29.

<sup>65</sup> Ταύτης ὅλης τῆς ῥήσεως Διοσκορίδης ἐκάστῳ στίχῳ προσέγραψε σημεῖον, ὃ καλοῦσιν ὄβελόν, οἷον σημεῖον καὶ Ἀρίσταρχος ἐχρήσατο παρὰ τῷ ποιητῇ πρὸς τοὺς ὑποπτευομένους ὑπ' αὐτοῦ στίχους. ταῦτα μὲν ὁ Διοσκορίδης ἔγραψεν εἰκάζων εἶναι τὴν προκειμένην ῥήσιν Ἴπποκράτους τοῦ Θεσσαλοῦ υἱέος. Kühn 15.110-111.

Earlier in the same work, Galen accuses Artemidorus and Dioscorides of “boldly changing the text” (21-24).<sup>66</sup> We can understand this passage in one of two ways. It may simply be another reference to the emendations proposed by these scholars using Alexandrian sigla. Galen, on this line of interpretation, would be upset by the scholar’s “boldly” deciding to emend the text (i.e. propose an emendation using sigla) rather than interpret it.

The alternative is to interpret Galen as accusing his opponent of violating scholarly norms. On this line of interpretation, Galen discovered a variant reading printed as the base text of Artemidorus and Dioscorides’ editions and attributed it to their editorial hand. Given the norms of ancient textual criticism, this would amount to an accusation of professional misconduct (see further discussion below). Since we know Artemidorus and Dioscorides made their editorial interventions with Aristarchean sigla in keeping with contemporary conventions, it seems unlikely that Galen’s charge (on this second line of interpretation) is anything more than polemic.<sup>67</sup> More likely the Hippocratic text known to Artemidorus and Dioscorides simply contained this variant reading. Galen, on this second line of interpretation, seized upon a textual variant as an opportunity to charge his rivals (i.e. the previous generation of scholars) with surreptitiously altering the Hippocratic base text. This kind of polemic, I argue below, is key to understanding the rhetorical strategy of Tertullian and Epiphanius.

Robert Grant singles out Galen’s *Commentary on the Aphorisms* as a particularly apt analogy for Marcion’s treatment of the gospel.<sup>68</sup> Galen’s commentary on Hippocrates’ medical

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<sup>66</sup> τὴν λέξιν ὑπήλλαξε τολμηρῶς. Kühn 15.22.

<sup>67</sup> As discussed with the Alexandrian librarians, the language used by Homeric scholars sometimes suggests that earlier scholars were responsible for the variant readings in the base text of the annotated editions belonging to those earlier scholars. The linguistic evidence from these variants and the conventions of Alexandrian text criticism (surveyed above) suggests, however, that this is either innocent metonymy or polemical mischaracterization.

<sup>68</sup> Grant, *Heresy and Criticism*, 32–35; 44.

maxims evaluates the authenticity of individual aphorisms on the grounds of style, internal consistency, and manuscript attestation. Galen, according to L.O. Bröcker, rejects between 31 and 50 of the Hippocratic aphorisms as inauthentic.<sup>69</sup> Grant would have us believe that Marcion critically evaluated the teachings of Jesus in the same manner.

Grant's appeal to Galen, however, is no more convincing than his earlier attempts to cast Marcion in the mold of the Alexandrian librarians.<sup>70</sup> There is, of course, the obvious generic disanalogy: Galen wrote exegetical commentaries on the Hippocratic corpus and all his text critical scholarship appears therein. We have no evidence that Galen ever attempted to alter an edition of the Hippocratic text. Marcion, on the other hand, did not compose commentaries but re-wrote the gospel itself.

Admittedly, Galen reproduced the text of the aphorisms as *lemmata* in his commentary.<sup>71</sup> And since Galen discusses variant readings (e.g. *Aphorisms* 18.179-180), he could have made editorial decisions about what to print as his *lemmata*. In this way, Galen might have produced a sort of edition of the *Aphorisms* in the interspersed *lemmata* of his commentary. But this creates an even graver problem for Grant's appeal to Galen as an analogy for Marcion because Galen preserves and comments upon the aphorisms which he judged spurious.<sup>72</sup> While Marcion omits one fourth of *Luke*, Galen reproduces all the aphorisms from his *Vorlage* and argues in his

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<sup>69</sup> The total number of aphorisms differs from manuscript to manuscript. Galen comments on 406 but knew that some manuscripts that contained more. The highest number in any manuscript is 425. L. O. Bröcker, "Die Methoden Galens in der literarischen Kritik. (I in der niedern, II in der mittleren, III in der verneinenden höhern, IV in der bejahenden höhern Kritik)," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 40 (1885): 421.

<sup>70</sup> Grant, "Marcion and the Critical Method"; Grant, *Heresy and Criticism*, 44.

<sup>71</sup> For a discussion of Galen's lemmatology, see Todd Curtis, "Author, Argument and Exegesis: A Rhetorical Analysis of Galen's In Hippocratis de Natura Hominis Commentaria Tria," in *Ancient Concepts of the Hippocratic*, ed. Lesley Dean-Jones and Ralph M. Rosen (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2016), 402–6.

<sup>72</sup> For a list of examples, see Bröcker, "Die Methoden Galens in der literarischen Kritik. (I in der niedern, II in der mittleren, III in der verneinenden höhern, IV in der bejahenden höhern Kritik)," 421–22.

commentary for their inauthenticity.<sup>73</sup> In keeping with wider conventions of textual scholarship, therefore, Galen's commentary preserves the Hippocratic text as he received it.<sup>74</sup> Marcion did not.

#### 6.4.4 Philosophical Literature

Roman philosophical schools also engaged in philological study of their forebears' writings. Zeno of Sidon, for instance, was notorious among the Epicureans for resolving interpretive difficulties in the writings of Epicurus by means of conjectural emendation.<sup>75</sup> Zeno's philological proposals, however, appeared in independent treatises, like his *On Grammar*.<sup>76</sup> There is no suggestion that Zeno published copies of Epicurean works reflecting his own emendations. Similarly, commentaries and treatises by Platonic, Peripatetic, and Stoic philosophers address variation in the manuscript traditions of their predecessors and employ conjectural emendation as an interpretive strategy.<sup>77</sup> To actually alter the received text, however, was unacceptable — as illustrated by traditions about Appellicon's treatment of the Aristotelian

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<sup>73</sup> Galen concludes by noting that most manuscripts contain additional spurious aphorisms that he does not reproduce or comment upon. The extant text tradition for these is unstable. Galen's conclusion at 6.82 may reflect his chosen *Vorlage*. In any case, Galen preserves purportedly inauthentic aphorisms throughout his commentary.

<sup>74</sup> The same practice can be seen in Galen's other Hippocratic commentaries. For instance, Galen argued that the entire second book of *On the Nature of Man* was interpolated but provides commentary nevertheless. Curtis, "Author, Argument and Exegesis." As a rule, Galen does not alter the text in the lemma to comport with his own textual judgements, even where his preferred reading boasts manuscript support. For possible counter-examples, see Giulia Ecca, "Editing the Lemmata of Galen's Commentary on the Hippocratic Aphorisms, Book 5," in *Sicut Dicit: Editing Ancient and Medieval Commentaries on Authoritative Texts*, vol. 8, 0 vols., Lectio 8 (Brepols Publishers, 2020), 163–83. Even these cases are complicated by the limited evidence of the textual corpus, Galen's influence on the subsequent textual and commentary traditions, and harmonization in Galen's own text tradition.

<sup>75</sup> Enzo Puglia, *Aporie Testuali Ed Esetiche in Epicuro (PHerc. 1012)* (Napoli: Bibliopolis, 1988), 64–75. Demetrius Lacon and Philodemus treat textual problems as well. Enzo Puglia, "La Filologia Degli Epicurei," *Cronache Ercolanesi*, 1982.

<sup>76</sup> A. Angeli and M. Colaizzo, "I Frammenti Di Zenone Sidonio," *Cronache Ercolanesi* 9 (1979): 53, 92.

<sup>77</sup> H. Gregory Snyder, *Teachers and Texts in the Ancient World: Philosophers, Jews and Christians* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), 50–53, 69–75, 113. Snyder cites Porphyry (as preserved in Eusebius *Praeperatio* 4.7) to support the willingness of Platonic scholars to revise texts according to a perceived meaning. Porphyry's statement, however, refers to his citation practices (which were notoriously paraphrastic in antiquity), not an attempt to edit a received text.

corpus (see below). Textual variation was often invoked to solve exegetical puzzles, but ancient scholars credited greedy booksellers, incompetent copyists, and charlatans with its origin.

Editing of the kind attributed to Marcion was not a conventional practice in Roman philosophical schools.

In sum, Roman textual critics reflect the same methodological conservatism as their Hellenistic forerunners. Indeed, many Romans explicitly modeled themselves on the Alexandrians, whom they remembered for annotating a received text. Although few Roman scholars concerned themselves with preparing new editions of old texts, those who did imitated the Alexandrian technique. Other scholars, like Galen and Zeno of Sidon, engaged in textual scholarship by writing exegetical commentaries and independent treatises. In such works emendations might be proposed, but the received text remained unaltered. In all these respects, Marcion bears little resemblance to Roman textual scholarship. Notably, however, the alteration of a received text does appear as an accusation against one's opponents.

## **6.5 Jewish and Christian Textual Scholarship**

As argued in the preceding chapters, Grecophone Jews and Christians participated in the literary culture(s) of their contemporaries. So too the conventions of Hellenistic and Roman scholarship informed the way some Jewish and Christian intellectuals approached their sacred texts. The conservatism of Hellenistic and Roman scholarship is evident too in the textual criticism of scripture.

### 6.5.1 Philo's Alexandrian Opponents

An Alexandrian Jewish group opposed by Philo, Maren Niehoff demonstrates, applied Aristarchean criticism to the Jewish Scriptures.<sup>78</sup> From Philo's polemically charged description, we learn that these Alexandrian Jews judged the appropriateness (εὐπρεπές) of certain passages by comparing them to other parts of scripture (*Mut.* 60-2). This mirrors the vocabulary and procedures of Aristarchean textual criticism. These Jews, according to Philo, "attach blame" (μώμους [...] προσάπτειν) and "reproach with a false accusation" (φαυλίσαντες ἐπὶ διαβολῇ) lines of scripture they think unworthy of preservation (διασφύζειν). Although the "obelus" is not explicitly named, Philo evidently is describing athetization. Philo proceeds to quote this opposing school's justification for textual emendation, suggesting that his opponents employed the Aristarchean edition-commentary format. Philo thus attests the criticism of Jewish scriptures on the model of Alexandrian editions. Notably, however, Philo does not accuse his opponents of actually deleting the passages or otherwise tampering with scripture. The language of "attaching blame" and merely "deeming" passages undeserving of preservation instead suggests that these Jewish text critics worked with the same conservatism toward the received text that characterized Hellenistic and Roman textual scholarship. For this unnamed Jewish school in Alexandria, the received text of scripture was subject to criticism, but nonetheless preserved.

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<sup>78</sup> Maren R. Niehoff, "Homeric Scholarship and Bible Exegesis in Ancient Alexandria Evidence from Philo's 'Quarrelsome' Colleagues," *The Classical Quarterly* 57, no. 1 (2007): 166–82.

### 6.5.2 Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*

The pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* reflect a parallel reception of Hellenistic and Roman textual criticism by a Christian author, roughly contemporary with Marcion.<sup>79</sup> Peter, in preparation for a debate with Simon Magus, teaches Clement that scripture contains falsehoods.

Pseudo-Clementine, *Homilies* 2.38.1-2<sup>80</sup>

For the scriptures contain many falsehoods against God for this reason: In the purpose of God, the prophet Moses handed over the law with explanations to a certain chosen seventy in order also to furnish those of the people who wish. After not much time, the written law received also some falsehoods against the only God who created heaven and earth and all things in them. For some righteous purpose, the wicked one dared to accomplish this. And this happened for a reason and justly, that they might be exposed who listening eagerly dare to believe things written against God and those who by love for him not only disbelieve things said against him but do not tolerate even to hear the

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<sup>79</sup> Since Charles Bigg detected an Arian Christology in the *Homilies*, twentieth century scholarship dated this work to the fourth century. Charles Bigg, “The Clementine Homilies,” in *Studia Biblica et Ecclesiastica*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), 157–88. This line of reasoning is undermined, however, by Rudolf Lorenz’s treatment of the pseudo-Clementines in his monograph on Arian Christology. Rudolf Lorenz, *Arius judaizans? Untersuchungen zur dogmengeschichtlichen Einordnung des Arius* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 150–53. A scholarly consensus before Bigg placed the *Homilies* in the third century. This sketch of the *status quaestionis* is indebted to F. Stanley Jones’ indispensable two-part history of scholarship. F Stanley Jones, “The Pseudo-Clementines: A History of Research Part I,” *A Journal of Early Christian Studies*, n.d., 18; Stanley Jones, “The Pseudo-Clementines: A History of Research\* Part II,” *The Second Century: A Journal of Early Christian Studies; Baltimore, Md., Etc.* 2 (1982). A parallel with Apelles and Origen, noted by Giovanni Battista Bazzana, may favor this earlier dating. Giovanni Battista Bazzana, “Apelles and the Pseudo-Clementine Doctrine of the False Pericopes,” in *Soyez Des Changeurs Avisés: Controverses Exégétiques Dans La Littérature Apocryphe Chrétienne*, 2012. The *Grundschrift* underlying the *Homilies* and *Recognitions* must be a yet earlier composition. Since the explicit articulations of the so-called “Theory of False Pericopes” do not appear in *Recognitions*, this motif has often been attributed to the redactor of the *Homilies*. There is evidence, however, that this motif belonged to the *Grundschrift* and was expunged from the *Recognitions*. Namely, *Recognitions* 1.21 appears to re-write *Homilies* 2.35-39 in a matter inconsistent with the theology of the *Grundschrift* (as reconstructed from the concordant testimony of *Recognitions* and *Homilies*). Instead of the “Theory of False Pericopes” introduced here by the *Homilies*, the *Recognitions* suggests that Peter must teach Clement to interpret scripture allegorically. Allegorical interpretation, however, is explicitly rejected at *Recognitions* 10.42. This piece of evidence for the reception of text critical conventions probably, therefore, can be dated between the late second and third centuries.

<sup>80</sup> πολλὰ γὰρ ψευδῆ κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ προσέλαβον αἱ γραφαὶ λόγῳ τούτῳ· τοῦ προφήτου Μωυσέως γνώμη τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκλεκτοῖς τισὶν ἐβδόμηκοντα τὸν νόμον σὺν ταῖς ἐπιλύσεσιν παραδεδοκόςτος πρὸς τὸ καὶ αὐτοὺς ἐφοδιάζειν τοῦ λαοῦ τοὺς βουλομένους, μετ’ οὐ πολὺ γραφεῖς ὁ νόμος προσέλαβέν τινα καὶ ψευδῆ κατὰ τοῦ μόνου θεοῦ τοῦ τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς δημιουργήσαντος, τοῦτο τοῦ πονηροῦ δικαίῳ τινὶ λόγῳ ἐνεργῆσαι τετολμηκότος. καὶ τοῦτο γέγονεν λόγῳ καὶ κρίσει, ὅπως ἐλεγχθῶσιν τίνες τολμῶσιν τὰ κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ γραφέντα φιληκόως ἔχειν τίνες τε σορογῆ τῇ πρὸς αὐτὸν τὰ κατ’ αὐτοῦ λεγόμενα μὴ μόνον ἀπιστεῖν, ἀλλὰ μηδὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἀκούειν ἀνέχεσθαι, κὰν ἀληθῆ τυγχάνη, πολλῶ κρίναντες ἀσφαλέστερον περὶ εὐφήμου πίστεως κινδυνεύειν ἢ ἐπὶ βλασφημίῳις λόγοις δυσσυνειδήτως βιοῦν. Bernhard Rehm, Johannes Irmscher, and Franz Paschke, *Die Pseudoklementinen I. Homilien*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1969), 51.

beginning, even should they happen to be true, considering it much safer to take a risk with reverent faith than to live with a troubled conscience about blasphemous words.

Scripture, Peter explains, was interpolated by “the wicked one” (ὁ πονηρός).<sup>81</sup> This attribution of false passages to a malicious actor neatly parallels the Peisistratus legend. Indeed, the appeal to willful interpolators (διασκευασταί) as grounds for athetization goes back, at least, to Aristarchus (*Sch. Il.* 20.267-272).<sup>82</sup> It is not necessary, of course, to imagine that the pseudo-Clementine homilist knew Aristarchus’ commentary. Rather, this reflects wide-spread intellectual currents in the first Christian centuries.

The pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* evinces the same conservatism toward the received text found in the Alexandrian librarians, Peisistratus legend, and Philo’s opponents. In the passage already cited, Peter explains that the interpolations serve “some righteous purpose” (*Homilies* 2.38). It is later clarified that God has permitted the interpolation of scripture in order to test human interpreters (3.4-5). Righteous people, who refuse to believe anything unworthy of God, will recognize these passages as interpolations. There is, therefore, no suggestion of removing these divinely ordained textual corruptions. Indeed, Peter is unwilling even to identify these passages as interpolations in public lest he offend the masses (2.39). Rather, Peter publicly “affirms” (συγκατατιθέμενοι) the false chapters, only disclosing their falsehood to initiates in private (2.39). This provides an even closer parallel to the etiology of Homeric criticism provided in the Peisistratus legend. That is, both sources describe scholars preserving

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<sup>81</sup> Donald Carlson rightly argues that the oral transmission of Torah by Moses and its textualization by the elders is not the cause of the corruption. The Oral Torah passed on by the elders is part of the solution, not the problem. The only hint at exactly how the evil one interpolated scripture is the phrase “after a little time.” Donald H. Carlson, *Jewish-Christian Interpretation of the Pentateuch in the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* (Fortress Press, 2013).

<sup>82</sup> Schironi notes, however, that the interpolators posited by Aristarchus are typically ignorant, not malevolent. Schironi, *The Best of the Grammarians*, 485–86.

interpolated lines in deference to the unwitting masses. The pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* thus provides a new theological justification for the well-established practice of preserving purported interpolations. The *Homilies* are a further witness to the conservatism conventional in textual scholarship as understood by Marcion’s contemporaries.

### 6.5.3 Origen

Origen of Alexandria, although working a century after Marcion, represents one further, relevant datum in the reception of Alexandrian textual scholarship. Origen’s *Hexapla* was a columnar synopsis of the Greek versions of Jewish scripture alongside a Hebrew text and an adjacent column of Hebrew transcribed into Greek (Eus *HE* 6.16). Using this synopsis, Origen created the *Tetrapla* – a corrected edition of his Old Testament.<sup>83</sup> After recounting the causes of variation between manuscripts, Origen describes his *Tetrapla* in the following manner:

Origen of Alexandria, *Commentary on Matthew* 15.14<sup>84</sup>

Therefore, by God’s grace, we were able to heal the disagreement in the copies of the Old Testament using the other editions as a standard. When the reading in the Septuagint was uncertain because of the disagreement of the copies, we made a judgement from the other editions keeping the agreement in them. We marked with an obelus certain passages not

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<sup>83</sup> On the relationship between the Hexapla and the Tetrapla, I follow the reconstruction of RG Jenkins, Peter Gentry, John Meade, and Francesca Schironi. For the clearest articulation of this view to-date, see the forthcoming Peter Gentry, “Origen’s Hexapla and Tetrapla” in, *T&T Clark Handbook of Septuagint Research* by Glennie and Ross (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2021). Schironi, on the other hand, lays out a powerful argument for this view and identifies a fragment of Origen’s revised (Tetraplaric) edition in Francesca Schironi, “P.Grenf. 1.5, Origen, and the Scriptorium of Caesarea” 52 (2015): 181–223. On the less-discussed evidence in favor of this view from the colophons of the so-called Syro-Hexapla, see RG Jenkins, “Hexaplaric Marginalia and the Hexapla-Tetrapla Question,” in *Origen’s Hexapla and Fragments: Papers Presented at the Rich Seminar on the Hexapla, Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, [July] 25th-3rd August 1994*, ed. Alison Salvesen, *Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum* 58 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 73–87; John D. Meade, “An Analysis of the Syro-Hexapla of Job and Its Relationship to Other Ancient Sources,” *Aramaic Studies* 14, no. 2 (January 1, 2016): 240–41.

<sup>84</sup> τὴν μὲν οὖν ἐν τοῖς ἀντιγράφοις τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης διαφωνίαν θεοῦ διδόντος εὕρομεν ἰάσασθαι, κριτηρίῳ χρησάμενοι ταῖς λοιπαῖς ἐκδόσεσιν· τῶν γὰρ ἀμφιβαλλομένων παρὰ τοῖς Ἑβδομήκοντα διὰ τὴν τῶν ἀντιγράφων διαφωνίαν τὴν κρίσιν ποιησάμενοι ἀπὸ τῶν λοιπῶν ἐκδόσεων τὸ συνᾶδον ἐκεῖναις ἐφυλάξαμεν, καὶ τινὰ μὲν ὠβελίσσαμεν <ὡς> ἐν τῷ Ἑβραϊκῷ μὴ κείμενα (οὐ τολμήσαντες αὐτὰ πάντα περιελεῖν), τινὰ δὲ μετ’ ἀστερίσκων προσεθήκαμεν, ἵνα δῆλον ᾖ ὅτι μὴ κείμενα παρὰ τοῖς Ἑβδομήκοντα ἐκ τῶν λοιπῶν ἐκδόσεων συμφώνως τῷ Ἑβραϊκῷ προσεθήκαμεν [...]. Ernst Benz and Erich Klostermann, eds., *Origenes Matthäuserklärung I*, GCS 40 (JC Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1935), 388.

in the Hebrew, not daring to remove these entirely. We imposed asterisks on certain passages in order that it would be clear that they were not in the Septuagint and that we had added them from the other editions agreeing with the Hebrew.

Origen thus re-appropriated the Alexandrian sigla for his attempt “to heal” (ἰάσασθαι) the text of the Old Testament. Zenodotus’ obelus, in Origen’s edition, marks Greek passages not found in the Hebrew.<sup>85</sup> Origen reveals his familiarity with the siglum’s conventional use by clarifying that he would not dare to delete the obelized lines.<sup>86</sup> Origen, like the pseudo-Clementines, provides theological justification for the conservatism conventional in ancient textual criticism. Like the Alexandrian grammarians and unlike Marcion, Origen was committed to preserving the text as received.

This limited survey of Hellenistic, Roman, Jewish, and Christian authors makes clear the contrast between Marcion’s treatment of the gospel and the conventions of ancient textual scholarship. Textual criticism as practiced by Marcion’s contemporaries was decidedly conservative. However badly interpolated, corrupted, or disordered these scholars considered the text, it ought to be preserved in the form it was received. Marcion, as we have seen, felt no such compunction.

## 6.6 Marcion’s Gospel and Ancient Text Critical Editions

Ancient textual criticism, we have seen, was conservative. The Alexandrian librarians developed a method for restoring an authorial text while preserving the text as it was received. First and second century scholars not only adopted this method of creating scholarly editions but

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<sup>85</sup> Origen refers to the obelus in his *Letter to Africanus* as τοὺς καλουμένους παρ’ Ἑλλησιν (3-7). J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus* (series Graeca) (MPG) 11, Paris: Migne, 1857-1866: 57.

<sup>86</sup> Epiphanius, who continued to “correct” Origen’s tetraplaric text, explains his justification for preserving obelized passages (*Weights and Measures* 3). Jerome, on the other hand, (mis)interprets Origen’s use of the obelus in keeping with its Alexandrian meaning (*Prolog to Chronicles*).

shared its underlying ethos of conservatism. Commentators, like Galen and Zeno of Sidon, preserved the text forms they deemed spurious or corrupt, and Christians did not dare to excise (putative) interpolations from scripture.

Modern scholarship has identified Marcion as a textual critic without a clear conception of the conventions that constituted textual scholarship in antiquity. Marcion's gospel differs from ancient scholarly editions (and the other products of ancient textual criticism) both qualitatively and quantitatively. With respect to each of these distinctions, moreover, Marcion's compositional behavior more closely resembles the method of the synoptic evangelists than that of ancient textual critics.

#### 6.6.1 A Qualitative Distinction

As oft repeated in the foregoing survey, Marcion did not treat *Luke* the way ancient textual critics treated their sources. Marcion's scholarly contemporaries insisted on preserving the received text in its corrupted form alongside proposed emendations. Altering the text itself was an accusation to be leveled against professional rivals, demonic powers, and (as discussed below) historical villains. But if Marcion's gospel is to be understood as an edition of *Luke*, its would-be-editor erased a quarter of the received text. Identifying Marcion as a textual critic is comprehensible as an accusation against him but not plausible as an account of the literary conventions according to which Marcion himself acted.

On the other hand, the synoptic evangelists and Marcion proceeded in strikingly similar fashion. Like Marcion, the authors of *Matthew* and *Luke* did not supply critical sigla, supplement with commentary, or otherwise preserve the received text of their predecessors. Rather, they borrow whole swathes of text from their sources while also exercising considerable selectivity,

omitting pericopes in part and entire. The manner of Marcion's rewriting of *Luke* resembles the synoptic gospels over and against ancient textual critics.

### 6.6.2 A Quantitative Distinction

In addition to the qualitative difference between Marcion's treatment of the gospels and the methods of textual criticism in antiquity, there is also a quantitative difference. As shown in the previous chapter, Marcion excised a quarter of *Luke* — probably more. Not only words and the occasional line, but entire pericopes were omitted.<sup>87</sup> This reflects, I argued, a significantly larger revision of *Luke* than can be found anywhere in the text traditions of the synoptic gospels.

The scale of Marcion's revisions of *Luke* also set his compositional behavior apart from ancient textual criticism. Marcion omitted a quarter of *Luke*. The most censorious of the Alexandrians athetized nothing comparable. By Francesca Schironi's count, Aristarchus marked as spurious about 525 lines of *The Iliad*.<sup>88</sup> Schironi urges appropriate caution given the limitations of our evidence but nevertheless estimates that this represents only 3.3% of the vulgate text.<sup>89</sup> Even doubling, tripling, or quadrupling Schironi's estimate, the scale of Aristarchus' athetesis does not approach Marcion's omissions from *Luke*. Judging from the sigla preserved in later papyri, the Homeric scholars of Marcion's day were even more conservative.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Athetesis in Homeric scholarship functioned line-by-line. Omissions only rarely extended to anything comparable to the synoptic pericope. For one example of an extended omission, see Aristarchean *Sch. Il.* 3.396-418 and the discussion at Schironi, *The Best of the Grammarians*, 481–84.

<sup>88</sup> Schironi, 448–50.

<sup>89</sup> It is not possible to make any comparable estimate for the *Odyssey* since nothing like *Venetus A* survives for this work. Perhaps the percent would be larger than the *Iliad* if the scholion at *Od.* 23.296 is interpreted as a rejection of the entire twenty-fourth book. However, Hartmut Erbse argues that this is a misunderstanding of Aristophanes' and Aristarchus' intention. Hartmut Erbse, *Beiträge zum Verständnis der Odyssee* (Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 1972), 166–77.

<sup>90</sup> The few papyri with an Aristarchean apparatus preserve only a fraction of those sigla attested by the Homeric scholia. This preservation, Kathleen McNamee demonstrates, was not random but selective with an evident

As argued in the preceding chapter, the handling of source material by the synoptic evangelists furnishes a much closer analogy to Marcion's behavior. The author of *Matthew* and Marcion both omitted about a quarter of their primary source. The third evangelist omitted 15% more of *Mark*, but this is an insignificant difference in comparison to the standard variation of the synoptic text traditions (1-2%) and the known omissions proposed by Aristarchus (3.3%). Both qualitatively and quantitatively, Marcion treated his source material not like a synoptic copyist or a contemporary textual critic but like a synoptic evangelist.

### 6.7 The Gospel Rewritten

As we have seen, Marcion's treatment of the *Luke* on a macro-structural level resembles the synoptic evangelists. The preceding chapter noted that Marcion re-arranged the sequence of *Luke* as the authors of *Matthew* and *Luke* did with *Mark*. This is the kind of creative change never found in the text tradition of the synoptic gospels. The present chapter, then, argued that Marcion exercised the kind of selectivity that must have characterized the composition of *Matthew* and *Luke*. In terms of method and scale, the creation of the synoptic gospels is a far closer analog to Marcion's work than textual scholarship or the kind of variation found in the manuscript tradition.

Marcion did not limit himself to winnowing and rearranging the received text of *Luke*. Rather, Marcion creatively rewrote the gospel. As discussed in chapter two, the conservatism of *Matthew* and *Luke* with *Mark* is unparalleled outside technical literature. Marcion shares this distinctive quality of the synoptic tradition, closely following *Luke* throughout his gospel. Like

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interest in notes and proposed emendations that facilitate reading. Kathleen McNamee, "Aristarchus and 'Everyman's' Homer," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 22, no. 3 (September 16, 1981): 247–55.

the authors of *Matthew* and *Luke*, however, Marcion redacted the text of the gospel to reflect his distinctive theological outlook. Here, along with selectivity and re-ordering, we see Marcion's authorial hand at work.

Epiphanius accuses Marcion of including material "strangely tampered with by him and unlike the copy of the *Gospel according to Luke* or the meaning of the apostolic writing" (*Pan* 42.10.4).<sup>91</sup> He, according to Epiphanius, "added other things beyond what was written" (*Pan* 42.9.2) – that is, "artificial additions" consisting of "harmful and strange things [...] from his dumb, fattened mind" (*Pan* 42.11.12).<sup>92</sup> These general accusations certainly suggest that Marcion re-wrote and even added to *Luke*'s text, and this charge too can be corroborated by testimonia to specific differences between Marcion's gospel and *Luke*.

### 6.7.1 The Problem with Our Sources

As a preliminary note, we should recall the polemical aims and argumentative method of our principal sources. Tertullian sets out the plan of his work as follows:

Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 4.6.2-3<sup>93</sup>

Certainly, therefore, he erased everything contrary to his own opinion, [...] but he retained [things] in agreement with his own opinion. These we will assemble. We will embrace them if they will have supported us more [and] if they will have damaged the presumption of Marcion. Then it will be certain that the same heretical vice of blindness by which he erased [things] also he retained [things]. Such will be the purpose and form of our little work [...]

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<sup>91</sup> αἱ μὲν γὰρ αὐτῶν παρηλλαγμένως ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἐρραδιουργήθησαν καὶ ὡς οὐκ εἶχεν τοῦ κατὰ Λουκᾶν εὐαγγελίου τὸ ἀντίγραφον οὔτε ἡ τοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ χαρακτήρος ἔμφασις. Holl and Dummer, *Epiphanius II Panarion haer.* 34-64, 2:106.

<sup>92</sup> ἄλλα δὲ παρὰ τὰ γεγραμμένα προστέθεικεν Holl and Dummer, 2:105. καὶ ἔν τισι λέξεσιν ἐπιποιήτως προσθήκην ἔχουσαν, οὐκ εἰς ὠφέλειαν, ἀλλὰ εἰς ἡσσονας καὶ ἐπιβλαβεῖς ξενολεξίας κατὰ τῆς ὑγιοῦς πίστεως ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐμβεβροντημένου νοῦ † βοσκήματος. Holl and Dummer, 2:124.

<sup>93</sup> *Certe propterea contraria quaeque sententiae suae erasit, [...], competentia autem sententiae suae reseruauit. Haec conueniemus, haec amplectemur : si nobiscum magis fuerint, si Marcionis praesumptionem percusserint, tunc et illa constabit eodem uitio haereticae caecitatis erasa quo et haec reseruata. Sic habebit intentio et forma opusculi nostri, [...].* Moreschini and Braun, *Tertullien Contre Marcion Tome IV*, 88–90.

He concludes with a triumphal re-statement of this polemical objective.

Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 4.43.9<sup>94</sup>

I pity you, Marcion; you labored in vain. For the Jesus Christ in your Gospel is mine.

Tertullian thus purposed to refute Marcion on the basis of material shared between Marcion's gospel and his own copy of *Luke*. Tertullian's treatise, indeed, proceeds to argue that Jesus as presented in Marcion's gospel is the Creator's messiah, not Marcion's. It is, therefore, those readings common to Marcion's gospel and *Luke* that principally concern Tertullian. Distinctively Marcionite readings—especially material reflecting Marcion's particular theology—runs counter to Tertullian's rhetorical aims. We should not expect him, therefore, to reliably report on Marcion's creative redaction.

Where we can test Tertullian's description of Marcion's gospel against Epiphanius' more consistent reporting of omissions, Tertullian's stated objective is reflected in practice. That is to say, Tertullian usually passes over Marcion's omissions in silence even though, according to Tertullian himself, such omissions characterized Marcion's redactional procedure.<sup>95</sup> Rather, Tertullian in his systematic treatment fails to mention most of the omissions discussed by Epiphanius (and corroborated by Irenaeus and Origen). Since Tertullian wants to show that Jesus in Marcion's gospel is fundamentally the same as Jesus in the canonical *Luke*, Marcion's authorial interventions do not serve him.

In the same way, Tertullian seldom draws attention to distinctively Marcionite readings.<sup>96</sup> This does not mean that only a few really stood in Marcion's gospel. Rather, as demonstrated

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<sup>94</sup> *Misereor tui, Marcion: frustra laborasti. Christus enim Jesus in euangelio tuo meus est.* Moreschini and Braun, 528.

<sup>95</sup> There are, of course, a handful of exceptions (e.g. *AM* 4.24.4; 4.42.4).

<sup>96</sup> There are exceptions here too (e.g. *AM* 4.29.14).

below, Tertullian's discussion of the similarities between Marcion's *Gospel* and *Luke* often reveal significant differences incidentally. Tertullian's rhetorical interest in downplaying theologically Marcionite readings should, however, color our reading of his testimonia.

Epiphanius describes his own heresiological program in a fashion reminiscent of Tertullian.

Epiphanius, *Panarion* 42.9.6<sup>97</sup>

For from the uncontroversial parts of them (*Luke* and Paul) which are acknowledged by him, he will be overthrown. For from the remnants of those – discovering (material) both of the gospel and the letters – still (preserved) by him, it will be shown to the wise that Christ is not alien to the Old Testament [...]

Epiphanius, *Panarion* 42.10.3<sup>98</sup>

And thus I went all the way through (the material) in which it appears that he foolishly still kept against himself these remnants – words of the savior and the apostle.

Epiphanius, *Panarion* 42.11.2<sup>99</sup>

For I hasten to set out material from his gospel as a refutation of his foolish deceit.

Like Tertullian, therefore, Epiphanius is interested in presenting readings from Marcion's gospel that correspond to his own copy of *Luke*. Although Epiphanius reports that Marcion altered and added to the gospel (as quoted above), we should not expect either Tertullian or Epiphanius to discuss many such readings.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> ἐξ αὐτῶν γὰρ ἀναμφιβόλως τῶν παρ' αὐτοῦ ὁμολογουμένων ἀνατραπήσεται. ἐκ γὰρ τῶν αὐτῶν ἔτι παρ' αὐτῷ λειψάνων τοῦ τε εὐαγγελίου καὶ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν εὐρισκομένων δειχθήσεται ὁ Χριστὸς τοῖς συνετοῖς μὴ ἀλλότριος εἶναι παλαιᾶς διαθήκης [...]. Holl and Dummer, *Epiphanius II Panarion haer. 34-64*, 2:105.

<sup>98</sup> καὶ οὕτως ἕως τέλους διεξῆλθον, ἐν οἷς φαίνεται ἠλιθίως καθ' ἑαυτοῦ ἔτι ταῦτας τὰς παραμεινάσας τοῦ τε σωτήρος καὶ τοῦ ἀποστόλου λέξεις φυλάττων. Holl and Dummer, 2:106.

<sup>99</sup> ἐκ γὰρ τοῦ παρ' αὐτῷ εὐαγγελίου τὰ πρὸς ἀντίρρησιν τῆς πανούργου αὐτοῦ ῥαδιουργίας σπουδάσαντες παρεθέμεθα. Holl and Dummer, 2:107.

<sup>100</sup> Indeed, Tertullian and Epiphanius occasionally refer to distinctively Marcionite readings without offering any information that would enable us to actually reconstruct Marcion's text (e.g. *Luke* 7:23 in *AM* 4.18.4; *Pan* 42.11.6).

Nevertheless, Marcionite redaction is evident throughout Tertullian and Epiphanius' discussion of Marcion's gospel. Indeed, the uniquely Marcionite readings are too numerous to discuss in full. A handful of examples will suffice to demonstrate that Marcion meaningfully re-wrote the gospel.

### 6.7.2 Jesus and the God of Jewish Scripture

At *Luke* 16:17, Marcion rewrites a positive statement about Jewish scripture to refer to Jesus' own teaching.<sup>101</sup>

#### **Luke 16:17**

εὐκοπώτερον δέ ἐστιν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν παρελθεῖν ἢ τοῦ νόμου μίαν κεραίαν πεσεῖν.

It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke to fall from the law.

#### **Marcion's Gospel**

εὐκοπώτερον [...] τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν παρελθεῖν ἢ τῶν λογῶν μου μίαν κεραίαν παρελθεῖν.

It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke to pass away from my words.

While heavily dependent on *Luke*, Marcion's gospel here evinces creative re-writing. The plural "words" (λογῶν) stands in for singular "law" (νόμου). The possessive pronoun "my" (μου) is also added. In Marcion's *Gospel*, Jesus proclaims that his teachings (not the Hebrew Bible) will endure to the end.

Marcion reworked *Luke* 24:25 to the same effect.<sup>102</sup>

#### **Luke 24:25b**

Ἦ ἀνόητοι καὶ βραδεῖς τῇ καρδίᾳ τοῦ πιστεύειν ἐπὶ πᾶσιν οἷς ἐλάλησαν οἱ προφηταί.

#### **Marcion's Gospel**

Ἦ ἀνόητοι καὶ βραδεῖς τῇ καρδίᾳ τοῦ πιστεύειν ἐπὶ πᾶσιν οἷς ἐλάλησα ὑμῖν

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<sup>101</sup> Tertullian, *AM* 4.33.9. I follow the reconstruction of Dieter T Roth, *The Text of Marcion's Gospel*, New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents 49 (Lieden: Brill, 2015), 426. There are no significant differences in Jason BeDuhn, *The First New Testament: Marcion's Scriptural Canon* (Salem, Oregon: Polebridge Press, 2013), 116.

<sup>102</sup> Tertullian, *AM* 4.43.4; Epiphanius *Pan.* 42.11.6.77, 17.77; *Adamantius Dialogue* 198.5-7. I follow Epiphanius and the Greek text of the *Adamantius Dialogue* in printing ἐλάλησα ὑμῖν instead of ἐλάληθη πρὸς ὑμᾶς, reconstructed from Tertullian's locutus *ad vos*. Otherwise, I follow the reconstruction of Roth, *The Text of Marcion's Gospel*, 435. There are no significant differences in BeDuhn, *The First New Testament*, 127.

Oh foolish and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets spoke

Oh foolish and slow of heart to believe in all that I spoke to you

Here, Marcion changes the third person plural, active form of λαλέω into a first person singular, passive verb and provides an indirect object (ὕμῖν). The disciples on the road to Emmaus are castigated for neglecting Jesus' teaching (not the Jewish prophets).

The Jewish Scriptures, so prominent in the synoptic tradition, are likewise erased from Marcion's gospel at *Luke* 13:28.<sup>103</sup>

### **Luke 13:28**

ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων, ὅταν ὄψησθε Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ καὶ πάντας τοὺς προφήτας ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὑμᾶς δὲ ἐκβαλλομένους ἔξω.

There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God, but you are thrown out

### **Marcion's Gospel**

ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων, ὅταν ὄψησθε πάντας τοὺς δικαίους εἰσερχομένους ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὑμᾶς δὲ κρατουμένους ἔξω.

There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see all the righteous entering in the Kingdom of God, but you are shut out

Marcion replaces “Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets” in the kingdom at *Luke* 13:28 with “all the righteous” (πάντας τοὺς δικαίους). The eschatological kingdom, in Marcion's gospel, is not populated by the heroes of the Hebrew Bible. Additionally, Jesus' Jewish interlocutors are not “thrown out” (ἐκβαλλομένους) of the kingdom – implying that they once belonged thereto – but “shut out” (κρατουμένους) to prevent them from “entering in” (εἰσερχομένους) with the righteous.

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<sup>103</sup> Tertullian *AM* 4.30.5, Epiphanius, *Pan.* 42.11.6.40, 42.11.17.40, 42.11.17.56. I follow the reconstruction of Roth, *The Text of Marcion's Gospel*, 423; BeDuhn, *The First New Testament*, 114.

In another place, Marcion does not erase the Jewish prophets but denies their connection to Jesus.<sup>104</sup>

**Luke 10:24**

λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι πολλοὶ προφητῆται καὶ βασιλεῖς ἠθέλησαν ἰδεῖν ἃ ὑμεῖς βλέπετε καὶ οὐκ εἶδαν, καὶ ἀκοῦσαι ἃ ἀκούετε καὶ οὐκ ἤκουσαν.

For I say to you that many prophet and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, [...]

**Marcion's Gospel**

λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι προφητῆται καὶ οὐκ εἶδαν, ἃ ὑμεῖς βλέπετε.

For I say to you that the prophets did not see what you see.

The third evangelist describes the desire of prominent figures from Jewish history to see the day of the Lord's salvation. Marcion re-wrote the verse to remove the characteristically Lukan claim that Jesus' ministry was anticipated by the authors of Jewish scripture. In Marcion's gospel, rather, Jesus asserts the discontinuity between his ministry and Jewish history. This is not the kind of simple variation produced by scribal error or text critical emendation. It is, rather, a coherent (if nonetheless conservative) re-writing of the tradition.

Marcion, first, omitted "many" (πολλοὶ) before prophets.<sup>105</sup> It is now a categorical statement about the Jewish prophetic tradition. The omission of "and kings" (καὶ βασιλεῖς) might be explained by its irrelevance to the saying's purpose in Marcion's gospel or, more simply, reflect a variant reading attested in Codex Bezae and the Old Latin. Then, most importantly, Marcion re-arranged Jesus' saying. The desire to see (ἠθέλησαν ἰδεῖν) drops away. Probably also the ensuing clause describing the unfulfilled desire to hear is omitted. What remains is the simple

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<sup>104</sup> Tertullian *AM* 4.25.12. Roth, *The Text of Marcion's Gospel*, 420.

<sup>105</sup> The omission of πολλοὶ in a single 12<sup>th</sup> century miniscule (1241) is almost certainly the kind of coincidence discussed below.

assertion that prophets did not see Jesus. The apocalypse of Marcion's Jesus, the incarnation of an unknown god, is entirely unanticipated.

These four variants support the theological interest of Marcion to distance Jesus from the God of the Hebrew Bible. These are not, however, isolated incidents. Several other minor omissions (e.g. 9:31; 10:21β; 11:29γ; 16:29α) and more subtle instances of re-wording (e.g. 6:35δ; 8:21β; 8:28γ; 9:26β; 10:24β; 18:20α; 20:35a; 23:3β) reflect the same redactional *Tendenz*. We see here the same kind of ideologically coherent redaction profile that convinced the redaction critics that an author must bear the responsibility for *Matthew* as a complete work. They should lead us, similarly, to understand Marcion as an author.

### 6.7.3 Other Evidence of Creativity

Marcion was not a monomaniacal redactor. Several revisions reflect theological concerns other than distinguishing between Jesus' Father and the God of Jewish Scripture. For instance, *Luke* 10:21 contains a revision of theodical significance.<sup>106</sup>

#### **Luke 10:21**

[...] ἐξομολογοῦμαί σοι, πάτερ κύριε τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς, ὅτι ἀπέκρυψας ταῦτα ἀπὸ σοφῶν καὶ συνετῶν, καὶ ἀπεκάλυψας αὐτὰ νηπίοις· ναί, ὁ πατήρ, [...].

[...] I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and you revealed these things to infants; yes, O Father [...].

#### **Marcion's Gospel**

[...] εὐχαριστῶ σοι, καὶ ἐξομολογοῦμαι, κύριε τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ὅτι ἅτινα ἦν κρυπτὰ σοφοῖς καὶ συνετοῖς, ἀπεκάλυψας νηπίοις· ναί, ὁ πατήρ [...].

[...] I thank you, and praise, Lord of heaven, that the things which were hidden to the wise and intelligent, and revealed [them] to infants; yes, O Father [...].

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<sup>106</sup> Tertullian, *AM* 4.25.1. Epiphanius, *Pan.* 40.7.9; 42.11.6; 42.11.17 (22). Roth, *The Text of Marcion's Gospel*, 420.

Although there are a number of differences between *Luke* and Marcion's text here, the substitution of "the things that were hidden" (ἄτινα ἦν κρυπτά) for "you hid" (ἀπέκρυψας) concerns us here.<sup>1</sup> *Luke* assigns responsibility for the ignorance of Jesus' opponents to Jesus' father; but this would not do for Marcion. Jesus' father, according to Marcion, is interested in redemption, not judgement – and Marcion's gospel reflects this. The same *Tendenz* is evinced at *Luke* 11:42 where Marcion's gospel refers to "the calling" (τὴν κλήσιν) of God instead of "the judgement" (τὴν κρίσιν).<sup>2</sup>

Marcion's rewriting does not always evince some profound ideological difference with his Lukan *Hauptquelle*. Like so much of the redaction of *Mark* reflected in *Matthew* and *Luke*, some of Marcion's revision seems trivial. Marcion's lamp is set atop a lampstand not only for those who might enter (ἵνα οἱ εἰσπορευόμενοι τὸ φέγγος βλέπωσιν) as in *Luke* 11:33 but in order to illuminate everything (ἵνα πᾶσι λάμπη).<sup>3</sup> The master in the parable of the wedding banquet does not become angry (ὀργισθεὶς) as in *Luke* 14:21 but is disturbed (ἐπαρθεὶς).<sup>4</sup> Jesus' opponents in the controversy over his authority are not chief priests, scribes, and elders as in *Luke* 20:1, but Pharisees.<sup>5</sup> We need not search for some polemical program here; variation of this sort is inevitable in any creative re-telling.

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<sup>1</sup> Note also that Marcion's gospel omits καὶ τῆς γῆς. This phrase is also omitted in P<sup>45</sup> and 27\*. There is some doubt, therefore, as to whether this reading can be attributed to Marcion's redaction.

<sup>2</sup> Roth, *The Text of Marcion's Gospel*, 422.

<sup>3</sup> Tertullian, *AM* 4.27.1, *Praescr.* 26.4. I follow the reconstruction of Roth, 422. There is no significant variation in BeDuhn, *The First New Testament*, 110. MS 579 harmonizes to Matthew's καὶ λάμπει πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ, but this is not the same reading.

<sup>4</sup> Tertullian, *AM* 4.31.6. I follow the reconstruction in Roth, *The Text of Marcion's Gospel*, 425. There are no relevant differences in BeDuhn, *The First New Testament*, 115.

<sup>5</sup> Tertullian, *AM* 4.38.1. I follow the reconstruction in Roth, *The Text of Marcion's Gospel*, 430. Although he prints οἱ Φαρισαῖοι in his reconstruction, Roth casts doubt on this reading, noting that Tertullian's reference to Pharisees in another allusion to the same episode (*Bapt.* 10.1) may indicate that the Pharisees were Tertullian's own gloss. The omission of οἱ γραμματεῖς καὶ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς from 20:19 in all three of Epiphanius' continuous citations

Lastly, the myriad of minutiae attributed to Marcion should be reconsidered. Marcion will have re-written even those sections he wished to keep mostly intact. Insignificant variations, like “among them” (ἐν αὐτοῖς) for “with them” (μετ’ αὐτῶν) at *Luke* 6:17, are attributed to Marcion’s gospel but not otherwise found in the Lukan text tradition.<sup>6</sup> No special explanation is required; this sort of stylistic variation appears frequently between the synoptics.

Many of these minor variations attested for Marcion’s gospel, however, cannot be confidently assigned to Marcion’s redaction because they also appear elsewhere in the Lukan text tradition and could, therefore, have been assumed into Marcion’s gospel from his Lukan *Vorlage*. This presents a methodological problem, however. Given the magnitude of the Lukan text tradition, it is likely that almost any insignificant stylistic change made by Marcion will also be found in some manuscript. Indeed, there are places where it seems far more likely that Marcion and medieval scribes stumbled across the same re-wording than that the variant reading attested by Marcion and far-flung witnesses are genetically related. For instance, the addition of the particle οὐ in Marcion’s gospel at *Luke* 7:23 is also found in one 13<sup>th</sup> century minuscule (2643).<sup>7</sup> It is surely less likely that Marcion and this medieval scribe drew upon a common, otherwise lost text tradition than that both added the emphatic particle independently. Although it is difficult to determine which specific readings from among these countless minutiae should be ascribed to Marcion’s redactional activity, many such minor changes must have been the result of his handiwork. The evidence we have for such small differences between Marcion’s *Gospel*

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(*Pan.* 42.11.6; 42.11.17) supports Roth’s reconstruction (against Roth’s skepticism). There are no relevant differences in BeDuhn, *The First New Testament*, 121.

<sup>6</sup> Epiphanius, *Pan.* 42.11.6.4, 42.11.17.4. I follow the reconstruction of Roth, *The Text of Marcion’s Gospel*, 414.

<sup>7</sup> Epiphanius *Pan.* 42.11.6.8, 42.11.17. I follow the reconstruction in Roth, 416.

and *Luke* (e.g. *Luke* 6:17 above) should also color our conception of Marcion's compositional activity.

### 6.8 Marcion as the Corruptor of a Text Tradition?

As argued at length above, Hellenistic, Roman, Jewish, and Christian scholars do not represent themselves as altering a received text.<sup>8</sup> It is, rather, a charge that scholars wielded against professional opponents or laid at the feet of historical/mythical villains. It is against this backdrop of this scholarly conservatism that Tertullian's characterization of Marcion as an *emendator* (*AM* 4.4.5) makes sense as part of *Against Marcion's* rhetorical project. Tertullian is not interrupting his often-vicious polemic in order to admit Marcion's scholarly credentials. Rather, Tertullian is placing Marcion's work into a category according to the conventions of which Marcion would be an abject failure.

Epiphanius, likewise, accuses Marcion of "falsifying" *Luke* (*Panarion* 42.9.1).<sup>9</sup> This accusation against Marcion fits a pattern in Epiphanius' heresiological polemic. Non-canonical gospels, according to Epiphanius, are not original compositions but corruptions of canonical texts. The parallel case of the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* (discussed below) should lead us to suspect that Epiphanius' characterization of Marcion's *Gospel* is an oversimplification of its literary relationship with *Luke* and bears no relationship to Marcion's own account of the gospel's composition.

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<sup>8</sup> The exceptions to this include orthographic and dialectical variants as well as diacritics and punctuation. See below for further discussion.

<sup>9</sup> Ἐλεύσομαι δὲ εἰς τὰ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ γεγραμμένα, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐρραδιουργημένα. Holl and Dummer, *Epiphanius II Panarion haer.* 34-64, 2:104.

By identifying Marcion as a textual critic, modern scholars attempt to situate his treatment of *Luke* in the literary context of second century Rome and provide, thereby, a more sympathetic portrait of the heretic than that provided by his opponents. But, without an understanding of ancient textual criticism, these scholars unwittingly recapitulate Tertullian's hostile caricature. Marcion was not a textual critic, and his gospel was not merely a corrupted version of *Luke*.

### 6.8.1 The Origins of Textual Variation

Texts change in transmission. Authors in antiquity offered different explanations for the origins of such variation: The Peisistratus legend blame a natural disaster. The pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* blame the devil. Scholars, like Galen and Origen, offer explanations more familiar to the modern reader.

Galen, in his commentary *On Hippocrates' Surgery*, lists the many causes of “error” (ἀμάρτημα) in a text (Galen, *Hipp. Off. Med.* 24; Kuhn 18b.778).<sup>10</sup> First, the author (τοῦ γράψαντος) might be responsible for a mistake. Then, Galen proceeds to list several ways in which errors might arise in transmission.

But some [errors] were made by the first copyist (τοῦ πρώτου βιβλιογράφου) because the author himself wrote his composition in unclear letters, and also unclearly, but rightly not trying to err. And some [errors occurred] because the papyrus broke off, or, on account of some other accident, a letter was lost or confused. And, perhaps, also some errors because of the well-known changing of letters as a result of certain changes between an ancient writing and a way of writing later than the ancient one. A lot of errors accrued in many copies because of all these things.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Amneris Roselli treats Galen's “typology” of textual corruption at Amneris Roselli, “Galen's Practice of Textual Criticism,” in *From Scribal Error to Rewriting: How Ancient Texts Could and Could Not Be Changed*, ed. Anneli Aejmelaeus, Drew Longacre, and Natia Mirotadze (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020), 64–66.

<sup>11</sup> τὰ δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ πρώτου βιβλιογράφου διὰ τὸ τινὰ μὲν ἀσαφέσι γράμμασι γεγραφότος αὐτοῦ τοῦ συνθέτου, οὐ χεῖρον τὰσαφῶς, ἀλλὰ στοχασάμενον ὀρθῶς οὐδαμῶς ἀμαρτάνειν, τινὰ δὲ τοῦ χάρτου κοπέντος ἢ κατὰ τινὰ ἄλλην περίστασιν ἀπολουμένου τοῦ γράμματος ἢ συγχυθέντος· ἴσως δὲ τινῶν καὶ κατὰ τὸν ὀνομασθέντα

Galen's catalog of scribal error includes misreading, deterioration of a manuscript, misidentification of a letter, and shifts in orthography. The first four are accidental changes; the last is an anachronism. But not all changes are so innocent. Earlier in the same work, Galen denounces intentional alterations (Galen, *Hipp. Off. Med.* 2; Kuhn 18b.730).

For it seems to me that, although understanding well [the passage], they re-write (μεταγράψαι) it into something clearer, being confounded by small details and not understanding it as the author intended.<sup>12</sup>

These inept readers, according to Galen, changed the text. Indeed, this accusation is not uncommon in scholarly polemic.<sup>13</sup>

The history of the Aristotelian corpus provides a useful illustration. Aristotle's works, according to Strabo and Plutarch, were not published in Aristotle's lifetime (*Geography* 13.1.54; *Life of Sulla* 26.1). Rather, the Aristotelian autographs were handed down from teacher to student until they were inherited by some "ignorant people" (ιδιώταις ἀνθρώποις).<sup>14</sup> These inheritors allowed the books to deteriorate and then sold them to Apellicon of Teos. Strabo describes Apellicon's action in this way:

"But Apellicon was a book-lover (φιλόβιβλος) rather than a philosopher (φιλόσοφος) and, as a result (διὸ), attempted a restoration of the parts that were eaten-through in order to make new manuscripts. Filling-in gaps badly, he changed the writing and published books full of errors."

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μεταγραμματισμὸν ἀμαρτηθέντων ἕκ τινων μεταβαλλόντων ἕκ τῆς παλαιᾶς γραφῆς εἰς τὴν ὑστέραν γεγραμμένην πρὸς τοῦ παλαιοῦ, πλῆθος ἀμαρτημάτων ἕκ τούτων ἀπάντων ἐν πολλοῖς τῶν ἀντιγράφων ἠθροίσθη" Kuhn 18.2 778.

<sup>12</sup> ἐπεὶ καὶ τοῦτ' ἔδοξάν μοι, καλῶς μὲν νενοηκότες, ἐπὶ τὸ σαφέστερον δὲ μεταγράψαι σφαλέντες ἐν τοῖς μικροῖς καὶ μὴ νοήσαντες, ὡς ὁ γραφεὺς βούλεται. Kuhn 18.2 730.

<sup>13</sup> See, for instance, the treatment of Galen's accusation against Artemidorus and Dioscorides of daring to change the Hippocratic text (§6.4 above).

<sup>14</sup> Horace Leonard Jones, *Strabo. Geography, Volume VI: Books 13-14.*, Loeb Classical Library 223 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929), 110.

Since Appellicon strove to restore an authorial text, his actions were text critical in nature.<sup>15</sup> Unlike the text critics surveyed above, however, Appellicon’s emendation of Aristotle’s corpus involved altering the text itself. This, on Strabo’s account, makes Appellicon a villain. Strabo says Appellicon proceeded in this fashion “because” (διὸ) he was something less than a philosopher. Indeed, Appellicon was a notorious scoundrel (Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* 5.53). Strabo and Plutarch’s account of this ignorant text critic reflects the widespread conventions about the appropriate treatment of texts. Appellicon’s attempt to restore Aristotle’s *oeuvre* by copying his own emendations into “new manuscripts” is not how scholars behave.<sup>16</sup>

Similar remarks appear in Origen’s *Commentary on Matthew*. Origen entertains the possibility that a difference between the synoptic gospels is the result of scribal interpolation (προσθεθεῖσθαι/προσερρίφθαι). There are differences between manuscripts of the same gospel, Origen explains, because careless and wicked people dare to “correct” (διορθώσεως) scripture.

Now it is clear that there are many differences between copies, either because of the carelessness of some scribes, or because of the wicked audacity of some others, or from those neglecting the correction of scripture, or from those adding or subtracting in the correction what seems good to themselves.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The historicity of this event is irrelevant. The accounts of Strabo and Plutarch are rhetorical construction and oversimplifications of history. See Hugh Lindsay, “Strabo on Appellicon’s Library,” *Rheinisches Museum Für Philologie* 140, no. 3/4 (1997): 290–98; Brad McAdon, “Strabo, Plutarch, Porphyry and the Transmission and Composition of Aristotle’s Rhetoric—a Hunch,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 36 (2006): 77–105. Indeed, Strabo goes on to implicate “book sellers and bad copyists in the corruption of the Aristotelean corpus.

<sup>16</sup> Contrast this portrait of Appellicon with parallel accounts of Andronicus’ treatment of Aristotle’s corpus. Appellicon’s library was seized by Sulla, a Roman general, and made available to Andronicus of Rhodes. Plutarch says Andronicus “published [Aristotle’s works], and drew up lists now circulating.” (26). Perrin Bernadotte, *Plutarch. Lives, Volume IV: Alcibiades and Coriolanus. Lysander and Sulla.*, vol. 80, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), 406. Porphyry also describes the editorial work of Andronicus (*Life of Plotinus* 24.2-11). These accounts come without a trace of criticism. Porphyry evidently understood this as involving re-arranging the corpus – something we do not find in the New Testament text tradition. Aristotle’s

<sup>17</sup> The editor takes the Greek to be corrupted and reconstructs it from the Latin. νοὺν δὲ δῆλον ὅτι πολλὴ γέγονεν ἡ τῶν ἀντιγράφων διαφορά, εἴτε ἀπὸ ῥαθυμίας τινῶν γραφέων, εἴτε ἀπὸ τόλμης τινῶν μοχθηρᾶς <εἴτε ἀπὸ ἀμελούντων> τῆς διορθώσεως τῶν γραφομένων, εἴτε καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν τὰ ἑαυτοῖς δοκοῦντα ἐν τῇ διορθώσει <ἢ> προστιθέντων ἢ ἀφαιρούντων.” // “*multam enim differentiam inter exemplaria invenimus, sive per negligentiam scribentium, sive ex temeritate quorundam sive propter eos qui neglegunt emendare scripturas, vel propter eos qui,*

Scholars in antiquity recognized that human actors were responsible for the variation between manuscripts of a work. They do not, however, claim responsibility for such changes themselves. Galen’s professional rivals, Strabo’s historical villain, and Origen’s wicked opponents revise manuscripts, but scholars preserve the received text alongside proposed emendations.<sup>18</sup> The blame for textual variation falls on lazy copyists, greedy book sellers, and—most importantly for the present inquiry— unethical scholars.

### 6.8.2 Tertullian’s Caricature of Marcion

It is in this context of scholarly conservatism that we should hear Tertullian’s characterization of Marcion as an *emendator* (*AM* 4.4.5). Tertullian is not conceding an honorific to his opponent amidst his heresiological harangue. Rather, Tertullian is insulting Marcion. By characterizing Marcion as a *emendator* of someone else’s book, Tertullian classifies his opponent’s behavior as a kind of textual criticism. Tertullian can count on his readers to recognize that Marcion’s behavior is not the appropriate procedure of a scholar. In substantially revising a received text, Marcion has done what—according to the conventions of ancient scholarship— no respectable scholar would do. Tertullian is saying that Marcion has behaved like Appelicon, not Aristarchus. This is not an acknowledgement of Marcion’s scholarly credentials but a polemical reclassification of Marcion’s behavior. If Marcion is considered a textual critic rather than an evangelist, he is an obvious failure.

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*quod ipsis videtur, in emendationibus vel adiciunt vel subducunt.* Klostermann, *Origenes Werke*, Leipzig: Teubner, 10.1: 387-8.

<sup>18</sup> In addition to the discussions above, see Anna Kharanauli, “Origen and Lucian in the Light of Ancient Editorial Techniques,” in *From Scribal Error to Rewriting: How Ancient Texts Could and Could Not Be Changed*, ed. Anneli Aejmelaeus, Drew Longacre, and Natia Mirotadze (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020), 15–52; Roselli, “Galen’s Practice of Textual Criticism”; Bart Ehrman, “The Theodotians as Corruptors of Scripture,” *Studia Patristica* 9 (1992): 46–51.

It is unlikely that this reflects Marcion's self-representation. Marcion probably did not characterize his own composition as participating in a set of conventions that he flagrantly disregarded. Rather, the scope and character of Marcion's redaction suggest that Marcion was participating in a different set of literary conventions.

### 6.8.3 Epiphanius and The Gospel according to the Hebrews

Epiphanius' description of Marcion's gospel as merely a corrupted version of *Luke* fits into a pattern of heresiological polemic. Epiphanius accuses the Ebionites of mutilating *Matthew* to produce the so-called *Gospel according to the Hebrews* (*Panarion* 30.3.7, 14.3). This gospel, as the surviving fragments make clear, however, is much more than a libertine copy of *Matthew*.<sup>19</sup> Epiphanius' quotation of the baptism scene reveals a creative harmonization of *Matthew* and *Luke* (30.13.3-4). Epiphanius himself admits that the Christians who use this text call it "*according to the Hebrews*" (30.3.7). There is no evidence that these Christians understood their gospel as a revised version of *Matthew*. Epiphanius' characterization of this gospel's composition as mere corruption is part of his heresiological polemic.

The description of Marcion's gospel as a mere corruption of *Luke* should be understood as belonging to this polemical pattern. It is true that Marcion's gospel was literarily dependent on *Luke*. But characterizing its composition as the corruption of a canonical gospel does not accurately represent the creative re-writing entailed in its creation nor does it reflect the perspective of those using it.

## 6.9 Marcion as Evangelist

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<sup>19</sup> I follow the analysis of Andrew Gregory, *The Gospel According to the Hebrews and the Gospel of the Ebionites*, Oxford Early Christian Gospel Texts (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017).

The earliest description of Marcion's gospel comes from Irenaeus' *Against Heresies*. Like Tertullian, Irenaeus accuses Marcion of mutilating *Luke*. Irenaeus' characterization of Marcion's self-presentation, however, suggests that modern scholarship has been beguiled by Tertullian's polemic.

He persuaded his disciples that he himself was more truthful (*veraciorem*) than those apostles who delivered the gospel — delivering to them not a gospel but a fragment of the gospel.<sup>20</sup>

Irenaeus says that Marcion represented himself as a more reliable evangelist than the apostles. Irenaeus, of course, denies that Marcion delivered a real gospel, but this denial is probably the negation of Marcion's claim to have delivered a gospel.<sup>21</sup> In other words, the earliest testimony to Marcion's gospel indicates that Marcion represented himself as an evangelist who delivered a superior gospel.

Scholars should distance themselves from the caricature of Marcion's compositional project. It is simply not credible that Marcion understood himself as practicing textual criticism in light of contemporary scholarly convention. His gospel, rather, is a re-writing of *Luke* according to the conventions of technical literature and the other synoptic gospels. Marcion's authorial creativity is evinced in his selectivity and arrangement of traditional material as much as in his ideologically coherent re-writing of *Luke*. Marcion, thus, should be counted among the synoptic evangelists.

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<sup>20</sup> *semetipsum veraciorem esse quam sunt hi qui Evangelium tradiderunt apostoli suasit discipulis suis, non Euangelium, sed particulam Euangelii tradens eis.* Rousseau, Doutreleau, and Mercier, *Irénée de Lyon. Contre les hérésies. Livre I.*, 2:350.

<sup>21</sup> Irenaeus' description of Marcion at 3.11.9 reflects Irenaeus' polemic against Marcion, not Marcion's self-representation. Etenim Marcion totum reiciens Euangelium immo vero seipsum abscidens ab Euangelio, partem gloriatur se habere Euangelii. Adelin Rousseau, Louis Doutreleau, and Charles Mercier, *Irénée de Lyon. Contre les hérésies. Livre 3.*, vol. 2, Sources chrétiennes 211 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1974), 170.

This is not to deny that there are meaningful differences among the synoptic-type evangelists. It is not necessary to maintain that Marcion and the author of *Matthew* treated their sources in the exact same manner — any more than the author of *Luke* and Tatian did. Especially notable is the lack of substantial additions made to *Luke* by Marcion. Whether drawing upon lost literary sources (like Q) or other gospels (like *Matthew*), the authors of *Matthew* and *Luke* added entire pericopes while re-writing the gospel. So too did Tatian. Nevertheless, the composition of the other synoptic gospels is the closest analog to Marcion’s re-writing of *Luke*.

The creation of Marcion’s gospel cannot be explained by any other conventional practice in Greek or Roman literary culture. Here, Galen’s description of “thoroughgoing re-preparation” of technical literature on an established *hypothesis* is worth revisiting.

“A second book written in the place of an older book is said to be ‘re-prepared’ (ἐπιδιασκευάσθαι) when they have the same *hypothesis* and most of the words — some of these [words] removed from the former composition, some added, and some subtly changed.” (*HVA* 1.4).<sup>22</sup>

Better than any other account of composition from antiquity, Galen’s description of re-writing technical literature closely resembles what must have been Marcion’s procedure.

## 6.10 Conclusion

The present chapter surveyed ancient textual criticism to argue that Marcion’s treatment of *Luke* did not comport with ancient scholarly convention. Marcion’s gospel is intimately related to *Luke* but differs qualitatively and quantitatively from ancient scholarly editions.

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<sup>22</sup> Ἐπιδιασκευάσθαι λέγεται βιβλίον ἐπὶ τῷ προτέρῳ γεγραμμένῳ τὸ δεύτερον γραφέν, ὅταν τὴν ὑπόθεσιν ἔχον τὴν αὐτὴν καὶ τὰς πλείστας τῶν ῥήσεων τὰς αὐτὰς τινὰ μὲν ἀφηρημένα τῶν ἐκ τοῦ προτέρου συγγράμματος ἔχῃ, τινὰ δὲ προσκείμενα, τινὰ δ’ ὑπελλαγμένα· Antoine Pietrobelli, ed., *Galien, Oeuvres: Tome IX, Ire Partie: Commentaire Au Regime Des Maladies Aigues d’Hippocrate: Livre I*, 1st edition (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019), 8.

Instead, Marcion exercised considerable selectivity with his source material and creatively re-arranged and re-wrote what he appropriated. The closest analogy to his compositional behavior are the synoptic evangelists. A more careful consideration of Tertullian and Epiphanius' rhetoric suggests that scholars have unwittingly embraced a heresiological caricature of Marcion's behavior. The earliest testimony to Marcion's gospel, in contrast, suggests that Marcion presented himself as an evangelist.

Marcion is significant for the present study as evidence that the conservative method of composition evinced in the synoptic gospels continued into the second century among Greek speaking Christians. In Marcion, we see an influential Roman teacher who re-writes a synoptic-type gospel into a new work for use by his own network of disciples. Marcion's gospel is not the collection of a religious community's oral traditions or the result of incremental revisions by scribes working with an open text. It is, rather, the composition of an independent religious expert competing with other teachers for disciples and an audience.

## Chapter 7

### The Gospel according to Tatian: A Teacher, His Rivals, and Gospel Rewriting

#### 7.1 Introduction

Tatian too was a synoptic-type evangelist. That is, Tatian wrote a new book on the gospel *hypothesis*, treating his sources in accordance with the conservative conventions of technical literature. Tatian's surviving work and the testimonia to his activity in Rome, therefore, provide unique insight into the historical context of synoptic-type gospel writing. The evidence for the life of Tatian directly corroborates the claim that synoptic-type gospels emerged from the competitive marketplace of independent religious experts.

#### 7.2 Tatian the Religious Expert

Almost everything we know of Tatian's early life is drawn from his *Oration to the Greeks*. He was a native of Assyria (42), born to pagan parents (29, 42), and initiated into unspecified mysteries (29.1).<sup>1</sup> Tatian boasts of his own education (1.3, 35.1, 42), probably grammatical and rhetorical (26-7).<sup>2</sup> Intriguingly, Eusebius describes Tatian as a formerly famous lecturer in the "sciences of the Greeks" (τὰ Ἑλλήνων μαθήματα) (*EH* 4.16.7).<sup>3</sup> Tatian, on his own account, became a Christian through a chance encounter with "some barbaric writings" in

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<sup>1</sup> γεννηθεὶς μὲν ἐν τῇ τῶν Ἀσσυρίων γῆ. On the designation "Assyrian" in the second century, see Nathanael J Andrade, "Assyrians, Syrians and the Greek Language in the Late Hellenistic and Roman Imperial Periods," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 73, no. 2 (2014): 299–317. On its rhetorical significance, see Laura Nasrallah, "Mapping the World: Justin, Tatian, Lucian, and the Second Sophistic," *Harvard Theological Review* 98, no. 03 (July 2005); John Eugene Fojtik, "Tatian the Barbarian: Language, Education, and Identity in the Oratio Ad Graecos," in *Continuity and Discontinuity in Early Christian Apologetics*, ed. Anders-Christian Jacobsen, Maijastina Kahlos, and Jörg Ulrich (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2009), 23–34.

<sup>2</sup> Molly Whittaker, "Tatian's Educational Background," in *Studia Patristica*, vol. 12 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1975), 57–59.

<sup>3</sup> ἀνὴρ τὸν πρῶτον αὐτοῦ βίον σοφιστεύσας ἐν τοῖς Ἑλλήνων μαθήμασι καὶ δόξαν οὐ μικρὰν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀπηνεγκμένος Gustave Bardy, *Eusébe de Césarée. Histoire ecclésiastique. Livres I-IV* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1952), 192.

the course of his private study (29.1).<sup>4</sup> These “writings” evidently refer to the Jewish scriptures accompanied, as I argue elsewhere, by some kind of Christian interpretive tradition.<sup>5</sup>

At some point, Tatian came to Rome. His activities in the capital city are sometimes overshadowed by his relationship with Justin. It is true that Irenaeus and Eusebius introduce Tatian as an erstwhile disciple of Justin (*AH* 1.28.1, *EH* 4.29.3). And references in the *Oration* confirm that Tatian held the older teacher in high regard (18.2; 19.1). At the same time, there is substantial evidence that Tatian was himself a charismatic teacher who attracted his own school of followers. Rhodon, according to Eusebius, boasted that he had studied under Tatian in Rome (*EH* 5.13.8).<sup>6</sup> Moreover, Irenaeus blames Tatian’s pride in his position as a teacher for the theological speculations that characterize Tatian’s lost writings (1.28.1).<sup>7</sup> Tatian was not merely a disciple of Justin but a teacher in his own right.

The only work of Tatian to survive in a direct text tradition is his *Oration*. If we read the *Oration* as another Christian apology in the tradition of Justin and Athenagoras, we risk misremembering it as yet another defense of Christian respectability. But Tatian’s *Oration* is a very different kind of work. Unlike these apologies, the *Oration* is not addressed to an emperor or

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<sup>4</sup> συνέβη γραφασαῖς τισιν ἐντυχεῖν βαρβαρικαῖς. Molly Whittaker, ed., *Tatian Oratio Ad Graecos and Fragments*, 1 edition (Oxford : New York: Clarendon Press, 1982), 54. On such pagan encounters with scripture before Constantine, see Ian N. Mills, “Pagan Readers of Christian Scripture: The Role of Books in Early Autobiographical Conversion Narratives,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 73, no. 5 (2019): 481–506.

<sup>5</sup> Whittaker, “Tatian’s Educational Background.”

<sup>6</sup> Alison Whealey may have identified another surviving work from Justin and Tatian’s reading circle. On the basis of vocabulary and conceptual overlap with the works of Justin and the *Oration*, Whealey suggests that the “Tatian” addressed in the anonymous *On the Soul* is none other than the Assyrian teacher. A Whealey, “To Tatian on the Soul: A Treatise from the Circle of Tatian the Syrian and Justin Martyr?,” *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales* 63 (1996): 136–45.

<sup>7</sup> For the fragments of Tatian’s lost writings, see Molly Whittaker, ed., *Tatian Oratio Ad Graecos and Fragments*, 1 edition (Oxford : New York: Clarendon Press, 1982), 78–83.

magistrate. Instead, Tatian speaks to the public: “Oh Greek men” (1.1).<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Tatian’s *Oration* does not cover the traditional apologetic *topoi*. Tatian does not deny the charges of illicit behavior supposedly leveled against Christianity. Tatian does not assure his audience that Christians obey Roman law, honor the emperor, or make good citizens. Rather, Tatian interweaves an introduction to cosmogony, anthropology, and history with an attack on various domains of knowledge and advertisements for further instruction.

The *Oration*, following Michael McGehee, is better understood as a kind of *protrepticus*.<sup>9</sup> That is, the *Oration* is an advertisement designed to attract new students to Tatian’s lectures not a systematic defense of the Christian faith. The *Oration* repeatedly points listeners to Tatian’s other writings (15.2; 16.1; 40.##) and offers an “easy and full account” of the origin of languages to anyone “wishing to examine” (30.2) what Tatian repeatedly calls “our teaching” (ἡ ἡμετέρα παιδεία) (12.5, 35.2).<sup>10</sup> The *Oration*, thus, corroborates Irenaeus’ and Eusebius’ depiction of Tatian as an independent teacher in Rome. Tatian, evidently, offered lectures and books on a variety of subjects — which he calls his *paideia*.<sup>11</sup>

In the *Oration*, Tatian presents himself as “one philosophizing (ὁ [...] φιλοσοφῶν) among the Barbarians” (42.1). But what did Tatian mean by ‘philosophizing’ here? Considering

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<sup>8</sup> Μὴ πάνυ φιλέχθρως διατίθεσθε πρὸς τοὺς βαρβάρους, ὧ ἄνδρες Ἕλληνας, μηδὲ φθονήσητε τοῖς τούτων δόγμασι. Whittaker, 2.

<sup>9</sup> Michael McGehee, “Why Tatian Never” Apologized” To The Greeks,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1, no. 2 (1993): 143–58.

<sup>10</sup> ἐξετάζειν γὰρ βουλομένοις τὰ ἡμέτερα ῥάδιαν καὶ ἄφθονον ποιήσομαι τὴν διήγησιν. (30.2); Καὶ τὰ μὲν προειρημένα παραφόρων δαιμόνων ἐστὶν ἀντισοφιστεύματα, τὰ δὲ τῆς ἡμετέρας παιδείας ἐστὶν ἀνωτέρω τῆς κοσμικῆς καταλήψεως. (12.8); Μὴ γοῦν δυσχεράνητε τὴν ἡμετέραν παιδείαν, [...] (35.2) Whittaker, *Tatian Oratio Ad Graecos and Fragments*, 55, 66.

<sup>11</sup> On the interrelation of books and lectures in contemporary pedagogical practice, see H. Gregory Snyder, *Teachers and Texts in the Ancient World: Philosophers, Jews and Christians* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000).

how Tatian understood the work of contemporary philosophers may help us understand what he meant when he used this word to describe his own activity.

What are the philosophers among you doing that is great or admirable? For they leave uncovered one of their shoulders, sport long hair, grow beards, and wear the nails of beasts. [...] and making a loud noise in public advocating for yourself with plausibility — and, obtaining nothing, you attack [others] — and philosophizing (τὸ φιλοσοφεῖν) becomes for you an art (τέχνη) for profit.<sup>12</sup>

The contemporary philosopher, according to Tatian, is a kind of performer. Their work is public declamation to attract students (25.1). Dio Chrysostom's orations feature frequent descriptions of freelancers hawking books, wares, and expertise at public events (8.9; 27.5-6; 33.6-7). These include teachers in search of disciples (12.3, 5). Justin, by his own account, wore the philosopher's costume (1.1-2), and the *Acts of Justin* depicts the teacher advertising his own semi-public lectures in Rome (2).<sup>13</sup> Although Tatian criticizes philosophers as disputatious and financially motivated, the polemic and self-promotion in the *Oration* suggests that Tatian operated similarly in the public eye. This apparent hypocrisy is unremarkable: Dio Chrysostom too participated in the kind of public pontification that he himself decries (*Oration* 12). Probably Dio and Tatian would object that the quality or character of instruction was a relevant difference between themselves and those self-promoting teachers they criticize. But this is speculation. In any case, it was probably Tatian's actions as a self-promoting teacher that he describes as "philosophizing."

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<sup>12</sup> Τί μέγα καὶ θαυμαστὸν οἱ παρ' ὑμῖν ἐργάζονται φιλόσοφοι; Θατέρου γὰρ τῶν ὄμων ἐξαμελοῦσι κόμην ἐπιειμένοι πολλὴν πωγωνοτροφοῦσι. [...] ὃ τε κεκραγῶς δημοσίᾳ μετ' ἀξιοπιστίας ἔκδικος γίνῃ σαυτοῦ, κἂν μὴ λάβῃς, λουδορεῖς, καὶ γίνεταί σοι τέχνη τοῦ πορίζειν τὸ φιλοσοφεῖν. Whittaker, *Tatian Oratio Ad Graecos and Fragments*, 48.

<sup>13</sup> Harlow Gregory Snyder, "Above the Bath of Myrtinus': Justin Martyr's 'School' in the City of Rome," *The Harvard Theological Review* 100, no. 3 (2007): 335–62.

There is no conflict between Tatian's self-representation as "one philosophizing" and my claim that Tatian participated in the literary world of technical authors. As illustrated in chapter three, Hero and Ptolemy appropriated the cultural capital of philosophy for their own technical expertise. The technical disciplines, according to such teachers, succeed where philosophy fails. Xenophon depicts Socrates—the personification of philosophy for second century authors like Justin—as an advocate for the technical disciplines. And it was Xenophon's portrayal of Socrates in the *Memoirs* that Justin invoked to characterize the gospels. These were fuzzy disciplinary boundaries and many authors composed both technical and philosophical works, each according to appropriate generic conventions. Galen, for instance, argued that the true doctor was also a philosopher and wrote extensively on philosophical topics. So too Posidonius of Apameia, Arrian of Nicomedia, and others transgressed disciplinary boundaries.

The opponents attacked in the *Oration* help us to situate Tatian in his social and intellectual environment. Who were Tatian's rivals? As we have already seen, Tatian criticizes people who dress like philosophers and loudly advertise themselves in public spaces (25). Likewise, Tatian polemicizes against astrologers and astronomers (27, see also 9-11), diviners (19, see also 12), pharmaceutical experts (17, 20), doctors (17-18), geographers (20, see also 27), and grammarians (26). The domains of knowledge which Tatian subjects to scorn map on to the areas of expertise dominated by independent teachers in the ancient Mediterranean cityscape. It seems likely, therefore, that these freelance experts represent Tatian's competitors for students, patrons, and readership.

The subjects of Tatian's other writings complement this picture of Tatian as a self-authenticating expert on "religious" subjects.<sup>14</sup> In the *Oration*, Tatian refers to a planned book called "Against Those Who Espouse Things About God" where he will address pagan notions of the divine — including attacks on Christianity (40.2).<sup>15</sup> Likewise, Tatian refers to a book he had already written, called "On Animals (15.2)."<sup>16</sup> This seems to have concerned the (ir)rationality of animals and the nature of humanity by contrast. Alongside the *Oration*, these works reveal Tatian to be a teacher who claimed expertise on various subject matters that related —at least, in his doctrinal system— to matters of spirit.<sup>17</sup>

In sum, Tatian was not merely a disciple of Justin. Rather, Tatian was a fellow religious expert, competing in the crowded landscape of independent teachers. Such teachers offered instruction in philosophy as well as the technical disciplines. As a Christian teacher, then, Tatian had his own circle of disciples and advertised instruction —including his writings— to persons otherwise interested in philosophy, the sciences, and arts.

### 7.3 Tatian the Heretic?

Something changed, our sources agree, after the death of Justin. Tatian's critics accuse him of espousing heresy akin to the Valentinians, propounding the radical asceticism of the Encratites, and denying the salvation of Adam. There is, indeed, considerable evidence that Tatian had his own body of teachings, left Rome after Justin's death, and continued to teach elsewhere. But the claim that Tatian developed distinctive teachings only after Justin's demise is

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<sup>14</sup> On my use of "religious" to characterize various subjects of interest, see Chapter Three, footnote 105.

<sup>15</sup> Πρὸς τοὺς ἀποφνηαμένους τὰ περὶ θεοῦ Whittaker, *Tatian Oratio Ad Graecos and Fragments*, 72.

<sup>16</sup> Whittaker, 30.

<sup>17</sup> Tatian's other named books, *Problems* (Eusebius, HE 5.13.8) and *On Perfection according to the Savior* (Clement *Stromata* 3.12.17) concern issues of intra-mural interest and ethical practice.

probably an attempt to preserve Justin’s reputation from association with some of Tatian’s problematic ideas. And the character of Tatian’s putatively problematic ideas has long been misunderstood.

The *Oration* itself problematizes a simple correlation of the controversial elements in Tatian’s theology with the death of Justin. Although the *Oration* is difficult to date, it already reflects Tatian’s departure from Rome: Tatian refers to a past sojourn in the capital (35.1)<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, Tatian depicts Justin and himself as allies: the two teachers share certain opinions about demons (18.2) and were fellow targets of Crescens’ plot (19.1). At least from Tatian’s point of view, the departure from Rome was not a break from Justin.

On the other side of the coin, the *Oration* already reflects the asceticism which heresiologists would associate with Encratism.<sup>19</sup> Tatian groups marriage with other sexual perversions (8.1) and, elsewhere, refers to marital intercourse as “a lack of control” (ἀκράσια) (34).<sup>20</sup> A fragment of Tatian’s *On Perfection according to the Savior* preserved in a quotation by Clement of Alexandria (*Stromateis* 3.12.81.1-2) uses the same language, blaming sex within marriage—which he calls a “corruption” (φθορά)—on “a lack of control” (ἀκρασία).<sup>21</sup> This

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<sup>18</sup> Grant detects allusions to the martyrs of Vienne and Lyon (6.2), Marcus Aurelius’ salaried philosophers (19.1), and the recruitment of Dalmatian and Dardanian bandits into the Roman army (23.2). Robert M. Grant, “The Date of Tatian’s *Oration*,” *The Harvard Theological Review* 46, no. 2 (1953): 99–101. L.W. Barnard argues that the *Oration* must have been written before Justin’s death because Tatian includes himself in Crescens’ plot. L. Barnard, “Once Again, The Heresy of Tatian,” *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 19, no. 1968 (1968): 1–10. I do not find any of these compelling. The *Oration* might date anytime after the mid-150s.

<sup>19</sup> Robert M. Grant, “The Heresy of Tatian,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 5, no. 1 (April 1, 1954): 64; Barnard, “Once Again, The Heresy of Tatian,” 4–5. The parallels with Valentinianism adduced by Grant and Barnard are much less convincing.

<sup>20</sup> The latter belongs to a critique of a woman who bore thirty children. Tatian characterizes this as πολλή ἀκρασία. I agree with Grant, Barnard, and Crawford (see below) that Tatian’s language suggests that the woman did not merely engage in too much of a good thing but is, rather, an extreme example of improper behavior.

<sup>21</sup> συμφωνία μὲν οὖν ἀρμόζει προσευχῆ, κοινωνία δὲ φθορᾶς λύει τὴν ἔντευξιν. πάνυ γοῦν δυσωπητικῶς διὰ τῆς συγχωρήσεως εἶργει· πάλιν γὰρ ἐπὶ ταὐτὸ συγχωρήσας γενέσθαι διὰ τὸν σατανᾶν καὶ τὴν ἀκρασίαν, τὸν πειθησόμενον <δυσὶ κυρίοις μέλλειν δουλεύειν> ἀπεφάνητο, διὰ μὲν συμφωνίας θεῶ, διὰ δὲ τῆς ἀσυμφωνίας

fragment, therefore, corroborates the ascetic interpretation of Tatian’s comments in the *Oration*.<sup>22</sup> Evidence for asceticism in the *Oration* alongside Tatian’s positive remarks about Justin problematizes Irenaeus’ attempt to link Tatian’s distinctive teachings with a break from Justin. Tatian’s life is not easily bifurcated into (1) a period of orthodoxy coinciding with discipleship to Justin in Rome and (2) a departure from Rome coinciding with Tatian’s heterodoxy and self-appointment as a teacher.

There is, rather, evidence of conflict—or, at least, disagreement—between the two teachers before Justin’s death. Roman Hanig documents a series of differences between Justin and Tatian’s “Gottes- und Logoslehre.”<sup>23</sup> The most significant piece of evidence is Tatian’s characterization of the Logos. In his *Dialogue with Trypho*, Justin anticipates an objection by some critic who will describe the relationship of the Father to the Logos as “the Father, when he wishes, [...] makes his power (δύναμις) spring-forward (προπηδᾶν) and, when he wishes, again withdraws it into himself” (*Dialogue* 128.3).<sup>24</sup> The use of the verb προπηδάω, Hanig shows, is exceedingly rare in Christological discussions. This anticipated objection, however, almost exactly describes Tatian’s account of the Logos.

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ἀκρασία καὶ πορνεία καὶ διαβόλω.” Ursula Treu, Ludwig Früchtel, and Otto Stählin, eds., *Clemens Alexandrinus. Zweiter Band. Stromata Buch I-VI*, Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller Der Ersten Jahrhunderte 15 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1960), 232.

<sup>22</sup> This line of reasoning follows Matthew Crawford’s analysis of the quotation in Clement as part of a critique of Naomi Koltun-Fromm’s non-ascetic interpretation of the *Oration*. Naomi Koltun-Fromm, “Re-Imagining Tatian: The Damaging Effects of Polemical Rhetoric,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 16, no. 1 (2008): 1–30; Matthew R. Crawford, “The Problemata of Tatian: Recovering the Fragments of a Second-Century Christian Intellectual,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 67, no. 2 (October 1, 2016): 559–66.

<sup>23</sup> Roman Hanig, “Tatian und Justin. Ein Vergleich,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 53, no. 1 (February 1999): 33.

<sup>24</sup> οὕτως ὁ πατήρ, ὅταν βούληται, λέγουσι, δύναμιν αὐτοῦ προπηδᾶν ποιεῖ, καὶ ὅταν βούληται, πάλιν ἀναστέλλει εἰς ἑαυτόν. Philippe Bobichon, *Justin Martyr, Dialogue Avec Tryphon. Édition Critique: Introduction, Texte Grec, Traduction*, Paradosis: Études de Littérature et de Théologie Anciennes (Fribourg: Academic Press Fribourg, 2003), 530.

[...] He and the word that was in him established everything with him through the logos-power (διὰ λογικῆς δυνάμεως). And by his simple will the Logos springs forward (προπηδᾷ).”<sup>25</sup>

Tatian, thus, describes the Logos as a power (δύναμις) that springs-forward (προπηδάω) from the Father — exactly the rival account that Justin anticipated. Hanig proceeds to document a series of smaller differences between the titles used by Tatian and Justin as well as their chosen analogies for the procession of the Logos that support the inference of a real difference in theology between the two. These differences from Justin paint a portrait of Tatian as a kind of proto-Monarchian, attributing all divine activity to the Father. Justin, in contrast, recognizes the Logos as a distinct agent and criticizes explanations of the Logos as only a power of the Father. Even before Justin’s death, it seems, Tatian had distinguished his instruction from the older teacher.

This is not, however, the doctrinal divergence that prompted Irenaeus to characterize Tatian as a heretic. Rather, according to Irenaeus, Tatian “spun myths (μυθολογήσας) of certain invisible *aeons* like those of Valentinus (1.28.1).”<sup>26</sup> Notably, Irenaeus does not say that Tatian adopted the theology of Valentinus.<sup>27</sup> Rather, Irenaeus tells us that Tatian’s doctrine resembled Valentinus’ cosmology. The *Oration* and the Alexandrian fragments of Tatian’s lost works caution us against supposing too much similarity.<sup>28</sup> Robert Grant and L.W. Barnard detect subtle

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<sup>25</sup> τὰ πάντα σὺν αὐτῷ διὰ λογικῆς δυνάμεως αὐτὸς καὶ ὁ Λόγος, ὃς ἦν ἐν αὐτῷ ὑπέστησεν. Θελήματι δὲ τῆς ἀπλότητος αὐτοῦ προπηδᾷ Λόγος· Whittaker, *Tatian Oratio Ad Graecos and Fragments*, 10.

<sup>26</sup> αἰῶνάς τινας ἀοράτους ὁμοίως τοῖς ἀπὸ Οὐαλεντίνου μυθολογήσας, [...]. Adelin Rousseau, Louis Doutreleau, and Charles Mercier, *Irénée de Lyon. Contre les hérésies. Livre I.*, vol. 2, Sources chrétiennes 264 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1979), 356–57.

<sup>27</sup> Contrary to Emily Hunt’s interpretation, Clement does not contradict Irenaeus on this point. Emily J. Hunt, *Christianity in the Second Century: The Case of Tatian* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 21. Rather, Clement (*Strom* 3.92.1), Pseudo-Tertullian (*Against All Heresies* 7.1), and ps-Hippolytus (*Refutation* 8.16) all suggest that

<sup>28</sup> Hunt, 20–51.

allusions to Valentinian cosmology in the *Oration* (e.g. *aeon* at 20.2; *syzygy* at 12.1; 15.2) but, as Emily Hunt argues, this purportedly Valentinian language is either Pauline or employed in a non-Valentinian sense.<sup>29</sup> Whereas Valentinians identified the god of Jewish Scripture with an imperfect demiurge, both the *Oration* (29) and two fragments describing his interpretation of the Jewish scriptures indicate that Tatian identified the one and supreme deity with the God of Jewish Scripture. One fragment from Didymus reports that Tatian reasoned from *Psalms* 119:91 that God controlled the passing of time (Didymus the Blind, *On Zechariah* 4.10). A second fragment from Jerome reports that Tatian cited *Amos* 2:12 as an interdiction from God — applicable to Christians— against drinking wine (*On Amos* 2.12). Tatian’s exegesis of both passages is premised on identifying the God whom Christians worship with that of Jewish scripture. The ignorant demiurge responsible for creation is not an incidental element in Valentinian theology. Tatian’s commitment to the God of Jewish scripture means that his doctrine cannot have been especially similar to that propounded by his Valentinian contemporaries.

Matthew Crawford, however, argues that Irenaeus’ charge of heresy should not be dismissed too quickly.<sup>30</sup> In a discussion of marriage, Clement of Alexandria agrees with Tatian in distinguishing law from gospel but “not in [his] desire to abolish the law as (if) of another God (ὡς ἄλλου θεοῦ)” (*Stromata* 3.12.82.2).<sup>31</sup> Crawford reasons that Clement’s description of

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<sup>29</sup> Grant, “The Heresy of Tatian”; R. M. Grant, “Tatian (OR. 30) and the Gnostics,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* XV, no. 1 (1964): 65–69; Barnard, “Once Again, The Heresy of Tatian”; Hunt, *Christianity in the Second Century: The Case of Tatian*, 20–36.

<sup>30</sup> Crawford, “The Problemata of Tatian,” 545–52.

<sup>31</sup> χωρίζει δὲ καὶ τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνδρα καὶ τὸν καινὸν ὁ Τατιανός, ἀλλ’ οὐχ ὡς ἡμεῖς φαμεν· παλαιὸν μὲν ἄνδρα τὸν νόμον, καινὸν δὲ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον συμφωνοῦμεν αὐτῷ καὶ αὐτοὶ λέγοντες, πλὴν οὐχ ἢ βούλεται ἐκεῖνος καταλύων τὸν νόμον ὡς ἄλλου θεοῦ· Treu, Früchtel, and Stählin, *Clemens Alexandrinus. Zweiter Band. Stromata Buch I-VI*, 233.

Tatian's teaching is probably drawn from "some other portion of the treatise by Tatian that [Clement] has before him."<sup>32</sup> This is possible, but it creates certain difficulties: Clement is the only heresiologist to suggest that Tatian assigned the Jewish law to another God. It is difficult to imagine that Irenaeus failed to mention this aspect of Tatian's heresy. Moreover, Clement's claim conflicts with the *Oration* and the testimonia of Didymus and Jerome in which Tatian identifies the creator in Jewish scripture with the Father of Jesus.

The passage quoted from Tatian's work which Clement is here interpreting does not hint at a demiurge or distinct law giver. Rather, Tatian argues that sexual desire is service to Satan and abstinence is service to God. A simpler explanation may be that Clement's accusation represents the unacceptable conclusion of Clement's *reductio ad absurdum*.<sup>33</sup> The God of Jewish scriptures, Clement argues in the preceding lines, created humans to reproduce sexually. Tatian's attribution of sexual desire to Satan, Clement reasons, amounts to the identification of Satan with the God of Israel. According to this line of interpretation, Clement does not claim that Tatian actually distinguished the God of Christianity from the God of Jewish scripture, but that Tatian's account of sexual desire is tantamount to such a rejection.

The second piece of evidence for Tatian's heresy is Clement and Origen's critique of Tatian's interpretation of *Genesis* 1:3 (*Eclogae Propheticae* 38-9; *On Prayer* 24.5). Tatian, reportedly, interpreted the statement "Let there be light" (probably with the jussive  $\text{יְהִי}$  in view) as expressing "a wish" (εὐκτικόν).<sup>34</sup> Origen adds that Tatian justified this interpretation of

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<sup>32</sup> Crawford, "The Problemata of Tatian," 546.

<sup>33</sup> Crawford himself recognizes that this is the form of Clement's argument. Crawford, 546.

<sup>34</sup>  $\mu\eta$  συνιδὸν δὲ ὁ Τατιανὸς τὸ „γενηθήτω“ οὐ πάντοτε σημαίνει τὸ εὐκτικὸν ἀλλ' ἔσθ' ὅπου καὶ προστακτικὸν, ἀσεβέστατα ὑπέιληφε περὶ τοῦ εἰπόντος „γενηθήτω φῶς“ θεοῦ, ὡς εὐξαμένου μᾶλλον ἢ περὶ προσταξάντος γενηθῆναι τὸ φῶς· Paul B. Koetschau, *Origenes Werke; Volume 2, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller 3* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 2013).

*Genesis* with “since [...] God was in darkness.”<sup>35</sup> The Alexandrians understood Tatian’s interpretation as an affirmation a higher god to whom the creator might pray. But this is not suggested by the language of the excerpt. On the contrary, Origen quotes Tatian referring to the creator as simply “God.” This would be a curious way of referring to an imperfect demiurge whom Tatian wished, *ex hypothesi*, to distinguish from the supreme deity. This would also contradict the *Oration*’s account of creation (5). It is not clear why Tatian insisted on reading “Let there be...” as an expression of desire or what was the relationship between this and primordial darkness, but nothing in Tatian’s text as represented by Clement and Origen suggests the existence of a demiurge.

There is a third piece of evidence which explains why heresiologists as well as Tatian’s Alexandrian readers were so ready to attribute polytheism to Tatian. Following the discussion of *Genesis* 1:3, Clement adds that Tatian believed there was an “appointed power” (δυνάμις [...] τεταγμένη) that both punished women for their hair and empowered Samson through his hair. Crawford notes the suggestive resemblance between the “hair-δυνάμις” in Clement’s fragment and the use of δυνάμις-language in the *Oration* to describe God’s activity (outlined above).<sup>36</sup> It is notable that Origen introduces this passage to illustrate the polytheism underlying Tatian’s interpretation of *Genesis* 1:3. But if we understand δυνάμις here in the same sense that Tatian used it in the *Oration*, it becomes clear that Origen misunderstood Tatian’s theology. These powers are not separate gods but energies of the one, true God.

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<sup>35</sup> [...] ἐπεὶ, ὡς φησιν ἐκεῖνος ἀθέως νοῶν, ἐν σκότῳ ἦν ὁ θεός. Koetschau.

<sup>36</sup> Crawford, “The Problemata of Tatian,” 551.

Irenaeus' allegations of Valentinian-esque cosmology, the *Oration's* proto-Monarchianism, and Clement and Origen's suspicion of Tatian's exegesis can be reconciled if we suppose that Tatian explained God's activity in nature and history as the work of identifiable but not substantially independent powers. The "logical" (λογική) and hair powers were, presumably, two among innumerable powers by which God sustained the cosmos and intervened in human affairs. This is consistent both with Tatian's Jewish monotheism and the accusation that Tatian, like Valentinus, multiplied heavenly entities. It is always possible that our sources for Tatian's theology are simply inconsistent, reflecting an evolution in Tatian's theological convictions — as, indeed, Crawford speculates. Nevertheless, a multiplicity of powers that subsist in one God seems to account for all the relevant sources.

Irenaeus' portrayal of Tatian as a student of Justin who developed his own, heretical body of doctrine after Justin's death is, therefore, not supported by the available evidence. More likely, Tatian and Justin were two independent religious experts with substantially similar but distinct bodies of teaching. Tatian draws attention to where his teaching agrees with Justin; Justin critiques Tatian without mentioning him. Subsequent heresiologists with more exacting standards for "orthodoxy" found Tatian's doctrine deficient and posited a break between Tatian and the venerable Justin at the moment of the latter's death.

#### **7.4 Reconstructing the *Diatessaron***

Tatian's gospel, like Marcion's, must be reconstructed from the quotations of other authors. No copies survive. The putative "Dura Fragment" of Tatian's *Diatessaron* is probably a

witness to some other, otherwise unknown, synoptic-type gospel.<sup>37</sup> Scholars of the *Diatessaron* have one advantage: While reconstructions of Marcion’s gospel must rely on the commentary of his opponents, Tatian’s gospel may be reconstructed from mostly sympathetic commentators.

It is a curious fact of reception history that no one before Eusebius mentions Tatian's gospel.<sup>38</sup> As we have seen, treatments of Tatian before Eusebius focus on theology, cosmology, and ethics — not his literary output. Tatian’s books are quoted where relevant to the point at hand but no author before Eusebius attempts to characterize his *oeuvre*. Probably, therefore, the silence of these earlier authors is not significant.<sup>39</sup>

Eusebius of Caesarea provides the earliest description of Tatian’s gospel — which he calls “the [Gospel] through the Four” or *Diatessaron*.<sup>40</sup> Eusebius describes this work as a “combination” (συνάφειά) and “collection” (συναγωγή) of the gospels (*EH* 4.29.6). A Syriac translation adds to Eusebius’ description that “this is [the gospel] of the mixed (ܐܚܨܬܐܝܢܐ), identifying Tatian’s *Diatessaron* with a well-known work in the Syriac Church.<sup>41</sup> The *Doctrine*

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<sup>37</sup> Ian Mills, “The Wrong Harmony: Against the Diatessaronic Character of the Dura Parchment,” in *The Gospel of Tatian: Exploring the Nature and Text of the Diatessaron*, ed. Matthew R Crawford and Nicholas J Zola, *The Reception of Jesus in the First Three Centuries* (T&T Clark, 2019), 145–70. See also my critique of the use of the Old Syriac gospels to identify a Tatianic feature in the Dura fragment in Ian N Mills, “The Old Syriac Gospels as a Witness to Tatian’s Diatessaron? The Text Critical Use of a Rival Tradition,” in *At One Remove: The Text of the New Testament in Early Translations and Quotations*, ed. Hugh Houghton and Peter Montoro (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2020), 43–64.

<sup>38</sup> Naomi Koltun-Fromm raises this as an objection Tatian’s authorship. Koltun-Fromm, “Re-Imagining Tatian.”

<sup>39</sup> “Dass abendländische Hareseologen, welche Tatian's nur flüchtig und seiner literarischen Thätigkeit gar nicht gedenken, auch über das Diatessaron schweigen, darf nicht betont werden.” Theodor Zahn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons und der altkirchlichen Literatur: Tatian’s Diatessaron*, vol. 1 (Erlangen: Andreas Deichert, 1881), 8.

<sup>40</sup> On this title, see Matthew R. Crawford, “Diatessaron, a Misnomer? The Evidence from Ephrem’s Commentary,” *Early Christianity* 4, no. 3 (2013): 362–85.

<sup>41</sup> Norman McLean, Adalbert Merx, and William Wright, eds., *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius in Syriac*, 1st Gorgias Press ed. (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2003), 243. The *Hist. Eccl.* translation into Syriac is usually dated no later than 420. Gustave Bardy, *Histoire Ecclésiastique 4. Introduction. Index.*, ed. Pierre Périchon, Sources Chrétiennes 73 (Paris: Ed. du Cerf, 1960), 132; McLean, Merx, and Wright, *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius in Syriac*, ix; Crawford, “Diatessaron, a Misnomer?,” 374 n.35. The Old Syriac gospels are called “the





sequential commentary on the text, including frequent (though brief) citations. This *Commentary* is, therefore, our most significant source for reconstructing Tatian's gospel.

In the passage discussed above, Theodoret claims that Tatian omitted Jesus' genealogies and anything else that affirmed orthodox (as defined by Theodoret) Christology. The first detail apparently corresponds to the base text of the Ephremic *Commentary* as suggested by its silence on the genealogies. Indeed, this *Commentary* on Tatian's gospel is the only ancient commentary on *Matthew* or *Luke* that does not treat the genealogies.<sup>48</sup> Agapius of Hierapolis, who also provides a unique (though fragmentary) citation from the *Diatessaron*, apparently corroborates this omission (*Universal History*, 7.4/7.2.1).<sup>49</sup> The omission of the genealogies, therefore, substantiates the identification of Tatian's gospel known to Theodoret and the base text of the Ephremic *Commentary*.

The second half of Theodoret's charge, however, is surprising. Naomi Kolton-Fromm observes that the accusation of heresy leveled against Tatian (i.e. denying the humanity of Christ) is unprecedented.<sup>50</sup> Neither Irenaeus nor any other heresiologist accuses Tatian of

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<sup>48</sup> Theodore of Heraclea, Fragments 1-2 in Joseph Reuss, *Matthäus-Kommentare Aus Der Griechischen Kirche*, Texte und Untersuchungen 61 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957), 55–56. Hilary of Poitiers, *On Matthew* 1.1 (SC 254:90-92). Apollinaris of Laodicea, Fragments 1-2 in Reuss, 1–2. Chromatius of Aquileia, *Tractate on Matthew* 1.1 (CCL 9a:193-193). John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew 1-4 (PG 57:13-55). Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 1.9-11 (PL 26:21-24). Theodore of Mopsuestia, Fragment 1-3 in Reuss, 96–97. Theodore the Monk, Fragments 1-5 in Reuss, 136–37. *Incomplete Work on Matthew*, Homily 1 (PG 57:612-630). Fortunatianus, *Commentary on the Gospels*, M.long.1; L. praef. Origen of Alexandria, Fragments of *On Luke* 73-74. *Homilies on the Gospel of Luke* 28. Ambrose of Milan, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke* 3 (PL 15:1589-1612). Cyril of Alexandria, *Homilies on Luke*, 1 from Syriac, MS. 12,154.

<sup>49</sup> Agapius and Louis Cheikho, *Agapius Episcopus Mabbugensis Historia universalis.*, CSCO 65 (Beryti/Parisiis/Lipsiae: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1912), 264.

<sup>50</sup> Kolton-Fromm, "Re-Imagining Tatian," 21.





gospel harmony with Tatian's *Diatessaron* and included it in his Latin New Testament.<sup>57</sup> Unfortunately, this work is not simply a Latin translation of Tatian's gospel. The Fuldensis harmony is Jerome's Vulgate translation of the individual gospels arranged into a single narrative sequence. Moreover, the harmony begins with the Lukan preface (instead of the Johannine prologue) and contains elements, like Jesus' genealogy, omitted from Tatian's *Diatessaron*. A comparison of the inter-pericope sequence in Codex Fuldensis with the Ephremic commentary and the Arabic *Diatessaron* reveals that Tatian's gospel was, indeed, an ancestor of this Latin harmony, but it has been subject to comprehensive revision — often called “vulgatization.”<sup>58</sup> I have argued elsewhere that this revision of the Fuldensis gospel harmony produced novel harmonizations of the gospel text, not found in Tatian's work.<sup>59</sup> This problematizes any attempt to use Fuldensis to reconstruct elements of Tatian's gospel other than its inter-pericope sequence.

The harmony in Codex Fuldensis or, perhaps, its close relative gave rise to a vast, western harmonistic tradition. This includes not only Latin gospel harmonies but Dutch, Venetian, German, and French harmonies. An earlier generation of scholars, exemplified by William Petersen's monograph on Tatian's *Diatessaron*, believed these vernacular harmonies preserved Tatianic features not found in Fuldensis.<sup>60</sup> Ulrich Schmid's definitive study of the Latin harmony tradition and articles on the vernacular harmonies showed that the whole western

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<sup>57</sup> Ulrich Schmid, “Before and After: Some Notes on the Pre- and Post-History of Codex Fuldensis,” in *The Gospel of Tatian: Exploring the Nature and Text of the Diatessaron*, ed. Matthew R Crawford and Nicholas J Zola, The Reception of Jesus in the First Three Centuries (T&T Clark, 2019), 171–90.

<sup>58</sup> See the synopsis in Louis Leloir, *Le témoignage d'Éphrem sur le Diatessaron*. (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1962), 2–11.

<sup>59</sup> Mills, “The Wrong Harmony: Against the Diatessaronic Character of the Dura Parchment,” 156–63.

<sup>60</sup> William L. Petersen, *Tatian's Diatessaron: Its Creation, Dissemination, Significance, and History in Scholarship*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae, v. 25 (Leiden ; New York: E.J. Brill, 1994).

harmonistic tradition is derived from the vulgatzized text found in Codex Fuldensis.<sup>61</sup> As such these harmonies are useless for reconstructing the text of Tatian's gospel.

The Arabic *Diatessaron* remains the least well-understood daughter version of Tatian's gospel. Probably, it was translated from a Syriac exemplar in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>62</sup> Eight manuscripts survive from the 12<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>63</sup> Augustino Ciasca and A.S. Marmardji edited a handful of manuscripts, but the field awaits a critical edition.<sup>64</sup>

The prefaces and colophons found in these manuscripts identify the Arabic gospel text as a translation from a Syriac version of Tatian's *Diatessaron*. The commonalities in sequence between the Ephremic *Commentary*, the Fuldensis harmony, and the Arabic *Diatessaron* suggest that, indeed, this Arabic text has some important relationship to Tatian's gospel. At the same time, the text of the Arabic *Diatessaron* often contradicts the Ephremic commentary. It is now widely recognized that, like the harmony in Codex Fuldensis, the text of the Arabic *Diatessaron* has been assimilated to local texts.<sup>65</sup> Without a better understanding of the history of the Arabic

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<sup>61</sup> Ulrich B. Schmid, "In Search of Tatian's Diatessaron in the West," *Vigiliae Christianae* 57, no. 2 (2003): 176–99; Ulrich Schmid, "Genealogy by Chance! On the Significance of Accidental Variation (Parallelisms)," in *Studies in Stemmatology II*, ed. A. A. den Hollander, Margot van Mulken, and Pieter Th van Reenen (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004), 127–43; Ulrich Schmid, *Unum ex quattuor: eine Geschichte der lateinischen Tatianüberlieferung* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2005); August den Hollander and Ulrich Schmid, "The 'Gospel of Barnabas', the Diatessaron, and Method," *Vigiliae Christianae* 61, no. 1 (2007): 1–20; Ulrich Schmid, "The Diatessaron of Tatian," in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis*, by Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes, 2nd ed., New Testament Tools, Studies, and Documents (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 115–42.

<sup>62</sup> Peter Joesse, "An Introduction to the Arabic Diatessaron," *Oriens Christianus* 83 (1999): 98–117.

<sup>63</sup> For a catalog of manuscripts, see Giuliano Lancioni, "The Arabic Diatessaron Project: Digitalizing Encoding Lemmatization," *Journal of Religion, Media and Digital Culture* 5, no. 1 (2016): 205–27.

<sup>64</sup> On the problems with these editions, see Joesse, "An Introduction to the Arabic Diatessaron," 80–85. Augustino Ciasca, *Diyāṭāsārīn Alladhī Jama'ahu Ṭaḏiyānūs Min Al-Mubashshirīn al-Arabi'ah Seu Tatiani Evangeliorum Harmoniae Arabice* (Romae: Ex typographia Polyglotta, 1888); A. S Marmardji, *Diatessaron de Tatiën: texte arabe établi, trad. en français, collationné les anciennes versions syriaques, suivi d'un évangélaire distessarique syriaque* (Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique, 1935).

<sup>65</sup> Tjitze Baarda, "An Archaic Element in the Arabic Diatessaron? (T<sup>A</sup> 46:18 = John XV 2)," *NovT* 17 (1975): 151; repr. in *Early Transmission of Words of Jesus: Thomas, Tatian, and the Text of the New Testament*, ed. J. Helderman and S. J. Noorda (Amsterdam: VU Boekhandel/Uitgeverij, 1983), 173; Tjitze Baarda, "To the Roots of

*Diatessaron*, its use to reconstruct the language of Tatian's gospel (as opposed to its narrative sequence) is problematic.

## 7.5 The Language of Tatian's Gospel

That Tatian's *Diatessaron* once existed in both Greek and Syriac is uncontroversial. Since it is improbable that a Latin translation was produced directly from Syriac in 6<sup>th</sup> century Capua, the gospel harmony in Codex Fuldensis suggests that, even should we grant that Tatian's gospel was composed in Syriac, a Greek intermediary probably existed. On the other hand, most of Tatian's reception is in Syriac. The *Commentary* on the *Diatessaron* contrasts the base text of "the Gospel" with "the Greek" (*Comm.* 2.17; 5.2; 10.14; 15.19; 19.17). The commentator, therefore, knew the former in Syriac. Likewise, the Arabic *Diatessaron*, according to Jooose, reflects the spelling and syntax of a Syriac *Vorlage*.<sup>66</sup> Although Tatian's gospel survives in Latin and Arabic daughter versions, these are descended from Greek and Syriac sires.

In what language, then, did Tatian compose his gospel? The *Oration* and Tatian's lost works were composed in Greek. And, so far as we know, every other first and second century gospel was written in Greek. At the same time, most of the evidence for the reception of the *Diatessaron* (excluding Eusebius and Theodoret) is in Syriac. And, indeed, Tatian's critique of the Greek system of verbal tenses suggests that the native Syrian had facility in a Semitic language (*Oration* 26). The Greek authors called Tatian "the Syrian" (Clement, *Stromata* 3.12.81.1) and Syriac authors called him "the Greek" (Theodore Bar Koni, *Liber Scholiorum*, Siirt Recension 8.39). Similarly, the judgement of modern scholarship on Tatian's *Diatessaron* is

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the Syriac *Diatessaron* Tradition (T<sup>A</sup> 25: 1-3)," *NovT* 28 (1986): 3; Jooose, "An Introduction to the Arabic *Diatessaron*," 120.

<sup>66</sup> Jooose, "An Introduction to the Arabic *Diatessaron*," 73, 100.

split between Greek and Syriac composition. William Petersen and JP Lyon argue for a Syriac origin while Ulrich Schmid and Matthew Crawford contend that Tatian composed his gospel in Greek.<sup>67</sup>

It was in the Grecophone cities of the Roman empire that Tatian advertised his instruction and polemicized against doctors and astrologers. If the conservative treatment of source material in the synoptic tradition (including Tatian) can be explained by the evangelists' participation in the literary conventions of technical writing, we would expect to find that Tatian composed his gospel in Greek. There is, indeed, evidence to support this conclusion.

The Ephremic *Commentary on the Gospel* cites “the Greek” or “the Greek gospel” in five places. In a 2015 article, Matthew Crawford argued persuasively that these citations, along with a citation of “the Greek” in Ephrem’s *To Hypatius*, refer to a Greek text of Tatian’s gospel.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, a reference to “the Greek” is a perfectly conventional way for Syriac commentators to refer to a Greek text of the work under discussion (e.g. Isho’dad of Merv, *Commentary on Matthew* 16:18).<sup>69</sup> It is, however, a wholly inadequate way of referring to substantially different works, such as the individual gospels (as earlier scholars supposed).<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> William L. Petersen, “New Evidence for the Question of the Original Language of the Diatessaron,” in *Studien zum Text und zur Ethik des Neuen Testaments: Festschrift zum so. Geburtstag von Heinrich Greeven*, ed. Wolfgang Schrage and Joseph Verheyden, BZNW 47 (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), 325–43; Petersen, *Tatian’s Diatessaron*, 428; Jeffrey Paul Lyon, *Syriac Gospel Translations: A Comparison of the Language and Translation Method Used in the Old Syriac, the Diatessaron, and the Peshitto* (Peeters, 1994), 15; Schmid, “The Diatessaron of Tatian,” 115; Matthew R. Crawford, “The Diatessaron, Canonical or Non-Canonical? Rereading the Dura Fragment,” *New Testament Studies* 62, no. 02 (2016): 256 n.9.

<sup>68</sup> Matthew R. Crawford, “The Fourfold Gospel in the Writings of Ephrem the Syrian,” *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies*. 18 (2015): 25–37.

<sup>69</sup> Margaret Dunlop Gibson, ed., *The Commentaries of Isho’dad of Merv*, vol. 1, *Horae Semiticae* 5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), 66.

<sup>70</sup> Burkitt, *Evangelion Da-Mepharreshe*, 2:190; Vööbus, *Studies in the History of the Gospel Text in Syriac*, 38–39; Leloir, *Le témoignage d’Éphrem sur le Diatessaron.*, 72–73.

Crawford’s argument can be strengthened by considering the language Syriac authors use when they are, in fact, comparing a reading from the *Diatessaron* with a *tetraevangelion*. Notably, they never call the latter ‘the Greek.’ Rather, Rabbula (Canon 43), Andrew of Samosata (*Letter to Rabbula* 4), Bar Bahlul (*Lexicon*, ܠܘܟܘܢܐ), and Bar Salibi (*Commentary on Matthew* 27) distinguish the fourfold gospel (or one of its constitutive members) from the *Diatessaron* by the appellation “separated gospels.” Isho’dad of Merv, similarly, contrasts a Syriac reading in the *Diatessaron* with what is found in “the Syriac” (ܠܘܟܘܢܐ) — namely, the reading found in Old Syriac (and Peshitta) copies of *Luke* (*Commentary on Matthew* 21:1).<sup>71</sup> The simplest interpretation is that “the Greek” in the Ephremic *Commentary* refers to variant readings in Greek copies of Tatian’s gospel.

Crawford substantiates this interpretation of “the Greek” with an analysis of the variant readings attested by (ps-)Ephrem. Crawford’s most compelling case study is the citation from Tatian’s gospel corresponding to *Matthew* 28:18.

<b>Ephremic “Gospel”</b>	<b>Ephremic “Greek”</b>	<b>Greek <i>Matthew</i></b>	<b>Peshitta <i>Matthew</i></b>
ܘܕܘܢܐ ܠܝ ܒܝ ܐܘܢܝ ܐܘܠܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܐ ܠܘܟܘܢܐ ܠܘܟܘܢܐ ܠܘܟܘܢܐ	ܘܕܘܢܐ ܠܝ ܒܝ ܐܘܢܝ ܐܘܠܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܐ ܠܘܟܘܢܐ ܠܘܟܘܢܐ ܠܘܟܘܢܐ ܠܘܟܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܐ	Ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς	ܠܘܟܘܢܐ ܠܘܟܘܢܐ ܠܘܟܘܢܐ ܠܘܟܘܢܐ ܠܘܟܘܢܐ
Given to me by my Father is all authority which is in heaven and on the earth	Given to me by my Father is all authority as that which is in heaven and also on the earth	Given to me is all authority in heaven and on the earth	Given to me is all authority in heaven and on the earth

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<sup>71</sup> Gibson, *The Commentaries of Isho’dad of Merv*, 1911, 2:134–35. See my treatment of this passage in Ian N. Mills, “Zacchaeus and the Unripe Figs: A New Argument for the Original Language of Tatian’s *Diatessaron*,” *New Testament Studies* 66, no. 2 (April 2020): 208–27.

There is very little difference between the two texts presented in the Ephremic *Commentary*. The variation that apparently justifies the commentator’s citation of both readings is an “as (ܘܦܪܘܢ) [...] also (ܘܟܘܢ) [...]” correlative found in “the Greek.” The sense of this reading is unclear.<sup>72</sup> It is, rather what the Commentator’s “Gospel” and “Greek” share that interested Crawford. Both the Tatian’s gospel and “the Greek” add the phrase “by my Father” into language drawn from *Matthew*. This reading is not found anywhere in the Greek or Syriac text tradition for *Matthew*. This is compelling evidence in favor of identifying “the Greek” as a Greek version of Tatian’s gospel.

If we accept this identification of a Greek *Diatessaron* in the text of the Commentary, we can compare the Greek and Syriac text of Tatian’s gospel in a handful of places to evaluate which was written first. According to Syriac priority, Tatian composed his gospel in Syriac on the basis of Greek manuscripts of John and, then, Tatian’s gospel was translated back into Greek.

Syriac Priority

Greek Gospels → Syriac *Diatessaron* → Greek *Diatessaron*

Greek Priority

Greek Gospels → Greek *Diatessaron* → Syriac *Diatessaron*

Although our data is limited, there is evidence that makes Syriac priority difficult to maintain and, consequently, supports Greek priority.

The most compelling case study is *John 17:5* in *Commentary 19.17* (Armenian).<sup>73</sup>

### Ephremic “Gospel”

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### Ephremic “Greek”

<sup>72</sup> It may simply be a blundered attempt to render a καὶ... καὶ/δε correlative.

<sup>73</sup> The Syriac for this section does not survive, so we must work from the Armenian alone. Notably, this is not an Armenian addition but a lacunose portion of the Syriac text. Leloir, *Saint Ephrem Commentaire De L’Evangile Concordant: Version Armenienne*, 1953, 277; Leloir, *Saint Ephrem Commentaire De L’Evangile Concordant: Version Armenienne*, 1954, 199–200.

Եւ այն զի ասէ

Տուր ինձ փառս առ ի քէն յայնմանէ,  
որ ետուր ինձ  
մինն աշխարհ եղեալ էր

And that one says,  
Give me glory in your presence from that  
which you gave me  
before the world had become

զի և ընթերցուածն ունի և յայտնապէս  
[յայտնապէս] իսկ ասէ.

Փառաւոր արա զիս, ասէ, փառաւրն այնքիկ  
զոր ունեի ես առաջի քո  
մինչ չև էր աշխարհ

For also the reading in the Greek has and  
Glorify me, it says, with that glory  
which I possessed in your presence,  
before the world was

**Greek *John* (NA<sup>28</sup>)**

δόξασόν με σύ, πάτερ,  
παρὰ σεαυτῶ τῆ δόξῃ ἣ εἶχον  
πρὸ τοῦ τὸν κόσμον εἶναι  
παρὰ σοί

Glorify me, Father, with  
yourself, with the glory which  
I had with you before the  
world came into being

**Sinaitic Palimpsest**

ԺԱԿ ԿԱՅԵ Լ ԵՄ ԿԵՄ ԶԿՈ  
Լ ԺԱՄԱՌ ՕՄ ԲՈ ԿԻՈԼ ԲՈ ԵԿ  
ԿԵԼ ԿՕՄ ԿԵԼ

And also now, give me the  
glory, my Father from your  
presence, which you gave me  
before the world was.

Preliminarily, it should be noted that the Greek and Syriac *Diatessaron* agree against the entire Syriac and Greek gospel tradition in omitting “Father.” In another context, this might be attributed to loose citation habits, but the Commentator is here following minor differences between versions and omits it twice. Although less impressive than Matthew 28:18 (considered above), this too supports identifying the Commentator’s “Greek” with Tatian’s gospel.

The most important feature of this passage, however, is a series of minute agreements between the Greek *Diatessaron* and Greek manuscripts of *John* against the Syriac *Diatessaron*. The Syriac *Diatessaron*, for instance, translates “glorify me” (δόξασόν με) with “Give to me glory” (Տուր ինձ փառս), probably reflecting ԿԱՅԵ Լ ԵՄ in the lost Syriac original (as also

found the Old Syriac). This is a fine translation of the Greek, but it replaces the imperative of “to glorify” (δοξάζω) with the imperative of “to give” (ܕܡܘܢ) and the noun “glory” (ܕܘܟܘܪܐ).

The reading found in the Syriac *Diatessaron* could be translated back into perfectly good Greek.<sup>74</sup> If the Greek *Diatessaron* is a translation of the Syriac *Diatessaron* (as entailed by the theory of Syriac priority), we would expect δός (or δίδου) μοι τὴν δόξαν (cf. *John* 9:24). The Greek *Diatessaron*, however, does not appear to be a translation of the Syriac text. Rather, it preserves the precise construction found in Greek manuscripts of John: “glorify me” (Φωτισθητε μοι ὑμεῖς). Without any difference in meaning, the Greek *Diatessaron* corresponds to the Greek of *John* against the Syriac *Diatessaron* (and Old Syriac).

We find the same pattern with the second verb in this passage. The Syriac *Diatessaron* renders “which I had” (ܗܝ ܗܝܚܘܢ) from *John* with “which you gave me” (ܗܝ ܒܘܢܝܬܐ ܗܝܘܕܐ), probably reflecting ܐ ܕܘܚܘܢܐ in the lost Syriac original (as also found in the Old Syriac). The Syriac *Diatessaron*, here, changes the subject from Jesus’ first person to the second person and replaces the verb “to have” with “to give.” Again, this could be translated into perfectly good Greek.<sup>75</sup> If the Greek *Diatessaron* were a translation of the Syriac *Diatessaron* we would expect to find ἢ ἔδωκάς (or δέδωκάς) μοι. Instead, the Greek *Diatessaron* preserves the precise construction found in Greek manuscripts of *John*: “which I had” (ὅτι ἐγὼ ἔδωκα). The Greek *Diatessaron* corresponds to the Greek of *John* against the Syriac *Diatessaron* (and Old Syriac).

This creates a serious difficulty for the supposition of Syriac priority. The precise agreement of the Greek *Diatessaron* with Greek manuscripts of *John* against the Syriac

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<sup>74</sup> The verb δίδωμι with δόξα as its direct object appears twice in *John* 17.

<sup>75</sup> The phrase ἔδωκάς/δέδωκάς μοι follows a relative pronoun seventeen times in *John* 17.

*Diatessaron* cannot plausibly have arisen from a Greek translator working with Tatian's gospel in Syriac. Such a translator would have to carefully check Tatian's Syriac against the Greek text of *John* in order to correct these two minutiae while failing to correct the Tatianic omission of "Father." Here, as elsewhere, Greek priority presents a simpler explanation.<sup>76</sup>

Lastly, appeals to the Greek text in the Ephremic *Commentary* indicate that this version held some authority among Syriac speaking Christians. It is hard to imagine this would be true if Syriac Christians believed that the *Diatessaron* was composed in Syriac and only subsequently translated into Greek. Rather, the Ephremic *Commentary* is evidence that the Greek *Diatessaron* was an authoritative gospel text in the Syriac speaking church alongside its Syriac translation.<sup>77</sup> It is no wonder, then, that Tatian was remembered in Syriac literature as "the Greek."

Tatian's gospel, like the other synoptic-type gospels, was probably composed in Greek. There is no reason, therefore, to set this work apart from the rest of his literary output as an independent religious expert in the Greek speaking world. Tatian, I argue below, imitated the conservative conventions well-attested in Greek and Latin technical literature in re-writing the gospel.

## 7.6 Tatian the Harmonist?

Scholars of early Christianity have long characterized Tatian's *Diatessaron* as a "gospel harmony." Tatian, on this account, interwove passages from earlier gospels to create a kind of

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<sup>76</sup> For another argument in favor of Greek priority, see Mills, "Zacchaeus and the Unripe Figs."

<sup>77</sup> This is corroborated by Isho'dad of Merv's attribution of a variant reading at *Luke* 19:4 to the *Diatessaron* and "Greek manuscripts" (ܩܪܝܢܐ ܕܗܘܪܝܢܐ) (*Commentary* on Matthew 21:1) Gibson, *The Commentaries of Isho'dad of Merv*, 1911, 2:134–35. Since the reading in question is not found in any Greek manuscript of *Luke* and ܩܪܝܢܐ ܕܗܘܪܝܢܐ is not Isho'dad's usual language for citing readings from the Greek text of a gospel, this is probably another attestation of the Greek *Diatessaron* circulating among Syriac speaking Christians.

reference work that was generically distinct from the gospels he drew upon. Some have uncritically assumed that a “harmony” was, indeed, a working category of literature in the second century. As I argue below, this is not supported by the evidence. Others have defended the use of the category “harmony” to characterize Tatian’s work.<sup>78</sup> Charles Hill, for example, points to Loraine Boettner’s *A Harmony of the Gospels* (1979) as a useful analogy for understanding the nature of Tatian’s work.<sup>79</sup> Boettner constructed this harmony for his students at Pikeville College and, in its preface, repudiates any attempt to replace the canonical scriptures. Tatian, suggests Hill, may have been like Boettner, constructing a pedagogical tool to study scripture.

Boettner, of course, wrote almost two-thousand years after Tatian. The canon of Christian scripture had long been settled in 20<sup>th</sup> century Kentucky. The ‘harmony’ was an established category for Boettner, received from a Christian tradition that understood the gospels as four overlapping, perfectly compatible, and individually inviolable narratives. But was “harmony” a category available to Tatian? And to what extent do the cultural differences between Tatian’s second century Rome and Boettner’s 20<sup>th</sup> century Kentucky vitiate Hill’s analogy?

One searches in vain for a “harmony” in the Greek literature available to Tatian. Rudolf Pfeifer’s *History of Classical Scholarship*, Eleanor Dickey’s *Ancient Greek Scholarship*, James

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<sup>78</sup> See also Nicholas Perrin, “What Justin’s Gospels Can Tell Us about Tatian’s: Tracing the Trajectory of the Gospel Harmony in the Second Century and Beyond,” in *The Gospel of Tatian: Exploring the Nature and Text of the Diatessaron*, ed. Matthew R. Crawford and Nicholas J. Zola (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2019), 93–110. Perrin’s argument, however, assumes that Justin composed his own gospel harmony. There is no evidence for any such work apart from the harmonizing features in Justin’s free citations of the gospels.

<sup>79</sup> C. E. Hill, *Who Chose the Gospels?: Probing the Great Gospel Conspiracy*, Reprint edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 109–12.

E. G. Zetzel’s *Critics, Compilers, and Commentators*, and Stephanos Matthaios’ “Greek Scholarship in the Imperial Era and Late Antiquity” do not describe anything like a harmony.<sup>80</sup> Scholars and poets produced epitomes, synopses, anthologies, and compilations of multiple works but there is nothing like Boettner’s harmony. No scholar artfully interwove Arrian and Plutarch’s lives of Alexander or combined Xenophon and Plato’s Socratic *Apologies*. Authors, of course, drew on multiple sources to create novel works of literature, but the products were not generically distinct works for reference or pedagogy. Rather, they were considered works of authorship in their own right.

A harmony, moreover, is not how Tatian’s gospel is described by its ancient readers. As Matthew Crawford observed, most Syriac authors know Tatian’s *Diatessaron* as only “the gospel.”<sup>81</sup> This is the only title known to Aphrahat and the Ephremic commentator, for example. Eusebius, however, refers to Tatian’s gospel as τὸ διὰ τεσσάρων (*Ecclesiastic History*, 4.29.6).<sup>82</sup> William Petersen and Matthew Crawford propose emending the text to read “τὸ διὰ τεσσάρων [εὐαγγέλιον],” on the basis of the Latin and Syriac.<sup>83</sup> This reflects a correct understanding of the Eusebian title, but the emendation is unjustified.

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<sup>80</sup> Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1968); Eleanor Dickey, *Ancient Greek Scholarship: A Guide to Finding, Reading, and Understanding Scholia, Commentaries, Lexica, and Grammatical Treatises, from Their Beginnings to the Byzantine Period*, Annotated Edition (New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Stephanos Matthaios, “Greek Scholarship in the Imperial Era and Late Antiquity,” in *Brill’s Companion to Ancient Greek Scholarship (2 Vols.)*, Brill’s Companions to Classical Studies (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2015), 184–296; James E. G. Zetzel, *Critics, Compilers, and Commentators: An Introduction to Roman Philology, 200 BCE-800 CE* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

<sup>81</sup> Crawford, “Diatessaron, a Misnomer?” The notable exception is the *Doctrine of Addai*.

<sup>82</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea, *Histoire Ecclésiastique. Texte Grec.*, ed. Gustave Bardy, vol. 1, Sources Chrétiennes 31 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1952), 213–14; Eduardus Schwartz, *Eusebius Werke 2.1: Die Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 2.1, Christlichen Schriftsteller Der Ersten Drei Jahrhunderte (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1903), 392.

<sup>83</sup> Crawford, “Diatessaron, a Misnomer?,” 362–63, 379; Petersen, *Tatian’s Diatessaron*, 36.

**Greek**<sup>84</sup>

ὁ μέντοι γε πρότερος αὐτῶν  
 ἀρχηγὸς ὁ Τατιανὸς  
 συνάφειάν τινα καὶ  
 συναγωγὴν οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως τῶν  
 εὐαγγελίων συνθείς, Τὸ διὰ  
 τεσσάρων τοῦτο  
 προσωνόμασεν, ὃ καὶ παρὰ  
 τισιν εἰς ἔτι νῦν φέρεται·

But the first leader of them,  
 Tatian, composed a certain  
 combination and collection of  
 the gospels — I don't know  
 how. He named this "*The  
 Through the Four*," which  
 even until now is possessed by  
 some.

**Latin**<sup>85</sup>

verumtamen prior eorum  
 auctor Tatianus conlationem  
 quandam faciens  
 euangeliorum nescio quomodo  
 conposuit euangelium unum  
 ex quattuor, quod Diatessaron  
 nominavit, quod etiam nunc  
 habetur a multis

However, the first founder,  
 Tatian, making a certain  
 collection of gospels — I  
 don't know how— composed  
 one gospel from four, which  
 he called *Diatessaron*, which  
 still now is held by many.

**Syriac**<sup>86</sup>

ܘܥܡܪܝܬܐ ܘܥܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܢܐ  
 ܘܥܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܢܐ  
 ܘܥܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܢܐ  
 ܘܥܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܢܐ  
 ܘܥܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܢܐ

And this Tatian was the first  
 of them, he compiled and  
 mixed and made a gospel. And  
 he called it, *Diatessaron*. And  
 this is *of the mixed*, and this is  
 among many until today.

The Syriac and Latin translations of Eusebius do not simply attest εὐαγγέλιον omitted from the title Τὸ διὰ τεσσάρων. Rather, these versions take different approaches to clarifying Eusebius' cluttered prose. Rufinus' Latin makes "one gospel from the four" the direct object of the sentence's main verb (συνθείς/conposuit). The following clause, then, gives the work's title. The Syriac, similarly, adds "a gospel" as the direct object of the sentence's verbs. Both versions acknowledge Tatian's work as the production of a new gospel, but neither add "gospel" to the title itself.

Nevertheless, Petersen and Crawford have accurately understood the title. Eusebius' τὸ διὰ τεσσάρων implies an elided—not scribally omitted—εὐαγγέλιον. This use of τὸ in the title

<sup>84</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea, *Histoire Ecclésiastique. Texte Grec.*, 1:213–14; Schwartz, *Eusebius Werke 2.1: Die Kirchengeschichte*, 2.1:392.

<sup>85</sup> Theodor Mommsen, ed., *Die Lateinische Uebersetzung Des Rufinus*, Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller, 9.3 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1909), 393.

<sup>86</sup> McLean, Merx, and Wright, *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius in Syriac*, 243.

of a gospel referring to an unexpressed εὐαγγέλιον is well-attested in Eusebius (e.g. *Eccl Hist* 6.25.3). Epiphanius, one of Eusebius' early readers, understood the title in this way. He echoes Eusebius, saying "it is said that *The Gospel through the Four* was made by [Tatian]."<sup>87</sup>

This interpretation, moreover, is suggested by Eusebius' use of this same title for another work. In his *Letter to Carpianus*, Eusebius calls Ammonius' synoptic tables "Τὸ διὰ τεσσάρων [...] εὐαγγέλιον" (1). In another article, Crawford argues that, on analogy with descriptions of Origen's *Hexapla*, the descriptor τὸ διὰ τεσσάρων is appropriately applied to a columnar synopsis (like Ammonius' work) but inappropriate for Tatian's continuous, narrative gospel.<sup>88</sup> Probably, therefore, the title known to Eusebius attached itself to Tatian's work sometime due to the latter's superficial similarity to Ammonius' project.

The description of Tatian's gospel by Theodore Bar Koni (8<sup>th</sup> century) must be noted here. In the eighth book of his *Scholion*, Theodore Bar Koni raises the question, "Why were only four evangelists accepted?"<sup>89</sup> He answers that in order to avoid a multiplication of gospels, the many apostles selected two evangelists from the twelve disciples and two from the seventy. "And finally," Theodore continues uninterrupted, "came Tatian the Greek."<sup>90</sup> Tatian, according to Theodore, shared the apostle's concern to avoid redundancy and, therefore, compiled one book from the four gospels. Theodore, thus, acknowledged the four-gospel canon. At the same

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<sup>87</sup> λέγεται δὲ τὸ διὰ τεσσάρων εὐαγγέλιον ὑπ' αὐτοῦ γεγενῆσθαι. Karl Holl and Jurgen Dummer, *Epiphanius II Panarion haer. 34-64*, vol. 2, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1980), 204–5.

<sup>88</sup> Matthew R. Crawford, "Ammonius of Alexandria, Eusebius of Caesarea and the Origins of Gospels Scholarship," *New Testament Studies* 61, no. 01 (January 2015): 1–29.

<sup>89</sup> A Scher, *Theodorus Bar Koni. Liber Scholiorum, II (Syr. II, 66)*, CSCO Scriptorum Syri 69; 26 (Louvain: Peeters, 1912), 159.

<sup>90</sup> Scher, 159.

time, Theodore listed Tatian as a fifth and final evangelist who shared the same motive as the canonical authors.

In sum, there is no evidence for a literary category analogous to our “harmony” in Greek or Roman antiquity. Rather, Tatian’s work was known to his early Syriac readers only as “the gospel.” Eusebius and his readers viewed Tatian’s work through canonical lenses but still acknowledged it as a “gospel.” Contemporary literary culture and the testimonia to Tatian’s work, therefore, do not support regarding the *Diatessaron* as a generically distinct ‘harmony.’ We turn, finally, to the text of Tatian’s gospel.

### **7.7 Tatian the Evangelist**

Studies of Tatian’s compositional method have emphasized the creative freedom with which he re-wrote his sources. Like all the synoptic evangelists, Tatian was more conservative than contemporary Greek authors — barring the technical writers discussed in chapter three. Nevertheless, Tatian did not merely combine the gospels, preserving their precise wording and the relative order of stories from his sources. Rather Tatian treated earlier gospels as the raw material for a new gospel. I highlight, here, three studies that illustrate Tatian’s authorial intervention in his re-writing of the gospel *hypothesis* before adding new evidence to corroborate the same conclusion.

In “The Narrative Chronology of Tatian’s Diatessaron,” James Barker considers Tatian’s re-arrangement of pericopes drawn from other gospels.<sup>91</sup> The synoptic gospels place Jesus’ action in the temple at the end of his ministry (*Mt* 21:12-17//*Mk* 11:15-19//*Lk* 19:45-48). The

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<sup>91</sup> James W. Barker, “The Narrative Chronology of Tatian’s Diatessaron,” *New Testament Studies* 66, no. 2 (April 2020): 288–98.

fourth evangelist places the same event near the beginning of the narrative (2:13-16), during the first of three Passovers narrated in this gospel (2:13-3:21, 6:1-15, 12:1-19:42). If Tatian were a harmonizer who viewed the gospels as authoritative, we would expect him either to choose one sequence over the other or to preserve both. But Tatian did something else entirely.

On the basis of an agreement between the Arabic, Fuldensis, and (where extant) the Ephremic *Commentary*, Barker shows that Tatian placed the temple incident at the second of three Passover festivals.<sup>92</sup> This narrative sequence is entirely original and required a change in the relative order of events.

**John**

Passover 1: Temple Incident (2:13-22)

Passover 2: Feeding of the 5,000 (6:1-15)

Sukkoth (7:1-52)

Passover 3: Jesus' Passion (12:1-19:42)

**Tatian**

Passover 1: Feeding of the 5,000  
(*Commentary* 12.1-5, Arabic *Diatessaron* 18, Fuldensis 81)

Sukkoth (*Commentary* 14.28-29, Arabic *Diatessaron* 28, Fuldensis 105)

Passover 2: Temple Incident (*Commentary* 15.23, Arabic *Diatessaron* 30, Fuldensis 118)

Passover 3: Jesus' Passion (*Commentary* 18-21, Arabic *Diatessaron* 39-42, Fuldensis 117-171)

As argued at length in chapter four, this is the kind of variation that does not appear in the textual transmission of the synoptic gospels. It suggests, rather, the intervention of an authorial hand. Moreover, Tatian does not assimilate the synoptics toward *John* or *John* toward the synoptics —

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<sup>92</sup> A partial chart (omitting Ephrem) is found at Barker, 295.

as might be expected if he considered these books sacrosanct authorities. Instead, Tatian produced a gospel with a novel narrative sequence.

This is an obvious but not isolated example. Barker notes a similar instance of Tatian's creative re-ordering that immediately follows the Festival of Booths. Tatian, here, gathered four stories about wealth from throughout the synoptic gospels: the Parable of the Rich Fool (Lk 12:13-21, the rich young ruler (Mt 19:16-30//Mk 10:17-31//Lk 18:18-30), the Parable of Lazarus and Dives (Lk 16:19-31), and the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard (Mt 20:1-16).<sup>93</sup> These are plucked from their disparate locations and gathered together into an original and thematically unified narrative series.

Matthew Crawford highlights a similar kind of creativity in Tatian's rewriting of Jesus' rejection at Nazareth.<sup>94</sup> The authors of *Matthew* and *Mark* describe Jesus' return to his hometown roughly halfway through his ministry (Mt 13:53-58//Mk 6:1-6). The third evangelist, however, moves this programmatic episode to the beginning of his gospel (Lk 4:14-30). Tatian, Crawford argues, did not select one or preserve both but, instead, re-wrote the synoptic material to create two distinct episodes: one positive reception at Nazareth and one controversial.

The first and wholly positive episode combines *Luke's* description of Jesus reading from the book of Isaiah (Lk 4:14-22) with the call for repentance from *Mark* and *Matthew* (Mt 4:17//Mk1:15) at the Lukan location. On this, the Arabic *Diatessaron* (5.33-43) and Codex Fuldensis (17-18) are in striking agreement.<sup>95</sup> The Ephremic *Commentary* is frustratingly laconic

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<sup>93</sup> Barker, 295–96.

<sup>94</sup> Matthew R Crawford, "Rejection at Nazareth in the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke—and Tatian," in *Connecting Gospels: Beyond the Canonical/Non-Canonical Divide*, ed. Francis Watson and Sarah Parkhouse (Oxford University Press, 2018).

<sup>95</sup> Crawford, 11–13.

at this point but corroborates the daughter versions by quoting *Mark* 1:15 at the Lukan location for Jesus' preaching in Nazareth (5.13-14). Notably, these sources for Tatian's gospel contain no hint of the controversy that follows Jesus' preaching in all three synoptics.

The second episode, by way of contrast, brings together the controversial elements from all three synoptics at the Matthean/Markan location. Roughly halfway through Jesus' ministry, the Ephremic *Commentary* (11.23-27) introduces a new conflict with a description of Jesus' preaching from *Matthew* (13:54) followed by the Lukan description of Jesus' entry into the synagogue (4:16), people's rejoinder "physician heal yourself" (4:23), and attempt to throw Jesus from a cliff (4:29). Interwoven in this controversy, however, is the Matthean charge of a lack of faith (13:58) and the Markan description of Jesus' inability to perform miracles (6:5). The daughter versions, *Fuldensis* (72-78) and the Arabic *Diatessaron* (16.24-17.36), corroborate the location and narrative contours of this episode in Tatian's gospel.

Tatian's re-writing of the Rejection at Nazareth is not the work of a mere compiler or harmonist. Tatian recognized the three synoptic episodes as parallel and, instead of harmonizing *Luke* to *Matthew* and *Mark* (or vice-versa), dismantled and reassembled all three versions into two unique stories. In Tatian's gospel, Jesus' ministry begins with a well-received sermon at a Nazareth synagogue. Here Jesus reads from the book of Isaiah and claims to be the fulfillment of prophecy. Then, later in his ministry, Jesus returns to a Nazareth synagogue, finds himself unable to perform miracles, criticizes his audience for their lack of faith, and narrowly escapes an attempt at murder. If the Arabic *Diatessaron* can be trusted where the *Commentary* is silent, Tatian's re-writing also involved fresh composition. Most notably, Jesus' audience in the second

episode is described as envious and dismissive (17.39).<sup>96</sup> Tatian's treated his sources not as authoritative or sacrosanct but as raw materials for a new gospel.

Francis Watson, finally, draws our attention to a notable omission at the beginning of Tatian's gospel.<sup>97</sup> As discussed above, Aphrahat, the Ephremic *Commentary*, and Dionysius Bar Salibi agree that Tatian's gospel began with the Johannine prolog. The Arabic *Diatessaron*, likewise, opens with *John* 1:1-5. Tatian, thus, omitted the Lukan preface.

What is the significance of this omission? If the *Diatessaron* were a reference tool for already authoritative books, we would expect it to preserve the diverse elements of the separate gospels. The excision of both the Matthean and Lukan genealogies (discussed above) already makes it clear that Tatian felt no obligation to preserve every pericope from his sources. Still Tatian is strikingly conservative in his re-use of source material, and there is nothing in the nature of a harmony to prevent Tatian from preserving the Lukan preface. Indeed, Codex Fuldensis—which assimilates Tatian's gospel to Jerome's *Vulgate*—places it at the head of the gospel harmony. Boettner's harmony, alternatively, places it after the Johannine prologue.

Why, then, did Tatian—despite his programmatic conservatism—omit this feature of *Luke*? The answer, of course, is that Tatian was authoring a new gospel, and the Lukan prolog reflected the compositional context of a different gospel with a different author.<sup>98</sup> Tatian drew

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<sup>96</sup> See Crawford's discussion at Crawford, 25–26. Baarda famously reconstructed an additional scene of Jesus flying from the mountain from the description of this episode by Ephrem, Aphrahat, and others. Tjitze Baarda, “The Flying Jesus’ Luke 4:29-30 in the Syriac Diatessaron,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 40, no. 4 (1986): 313. Given the lack of any relevant quotations from the *Diatessaron*, this is more likely a shared exegetical tradition than a feature of Tatian's text.

<sup>97</sup> Francis Watson, “Towards a Redaction-Critical Reading of the Diatessaron Gospel,” *Early Christianity* 7, no. 1 (2016): 95–112.

<sup>98</sup> Watson argues that Tatian omitted the preface because it legitimized the plurality of gospels. Watson, 100. This is a misreading of the preface which, rather, criticizes the third gospel's evangelical predecessors.

upon *Luke* as a literary source for the events of Jesus' life but did not seek to reproduce the third gospel as an authoritative text in his *Diatessaron*.

There is hitherto unrecognized evidence to corroborate this interpretation. The Johannine epilogue attributes the fourth gospel to the disciple whom Jesus loved (21:24).<sup>99</sup>

This is the disciple testifying concerning these things and writing these things. And we know that his testimony is true.

This passage led Christian readers to attribute the fourth gospel to the beloved disciple, whom readers of the synoptics identified with John, son of Zebedee.

The Ephremic *Commentary* cites Peter and Jesus' discussion of the beloved disciple (21:19-23). The commentator draws from this an affirmation of Jesus' power over death. No mention is made, however, of the contents of verse 24. The value of the Arabic *Diatessaron* for this portion of Tatian's gospel is dubious given its divergence from the Ephremic *Commentary*. Nevertheless, the Arabic too omits 21:24 (55).<sup>100</sup> The Fuldensis harmony cites the entirety of *John* 21 exactly as it appears in Jerome's vulgate — including verse 24 (180-181).<sup>101</sup> As per usual, however, Fuldensis is useless for reconstructing Tatian's actual text. The *Commentary*'s silence and the omission from the Arabic *Diatessaron* provide some evidence for the omission of 21:24 from Tatian's gospel.

There is, however, better evidence for Tatian's omission of this verse. If Tatian reproduced *John* 21:24, it would attribute his *Diatessaron* to the beloved disciple under discussion by Jesus and Peter. But we know that early readers did not believe this. In fact,

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<sup>99</sup> For a fuller discussion of this attribution, see chapter four.

<sup>100</sup> Ciasca, *Ḍiyāṭāsārūn Alladhī Jama'ahu Ṭaḏiyānūs Min Al-Mubashshirīn al-Arabi'ah Seu Tatiani Evangeliorum Harmoniae Arabice*, 98–99.

<sup>101</sup> Ranke, *Codex Fuldensis*, 163–64.

Aphrahat attributes “the gospel” to Jesus himself (*Dem.* 4.10; 8.3; 14.9; 21.1; 23.1; 23.53).

Likewise, the Ephremic commentator speaks only of “the evangelist” (ܐܘܘܢܘܠܘܨܝܘܬܐ) as the author of Tatian’s gospel (1.7, 2.1, 7.15, 9.14a). Lastly, Victor of Capua, who was responsible for the production of Codex Fuldensis, describes his discovery of the harmony in this way.

When by chance one gospel composed of the four came into my hand and the title being absent, I could not discover the name of the author, I diligently investigated who, with no little labor in study, brought back our Lord and Savior’s deeds and words into the order in which they seemed to have followed selecting from the discrete gospels.<sup>102</sup>

Like the other synoptic-type gospels (including Marcion’s) but unlike *John*, Tatian’s gospel was formally anonymous. This means that Tatian must have omitted 21:24 even though he included the discussion leading up to it.

This subtle omission fits with the omission of the Lukan preface. Tatian is not combining earlier gospels as individually authoritative books but using them as literary sources for the gospel *hypothesis*. It is only natural that Tatian would exclude elements of his sources that reflected different compositional contexts or authorial claims.

## 7.7 Conclusion

Tatian, a former lecturer in the Greek sciences, was an independent teacher in search of disciples. Although we might characterize his expertise as religious, his professional rivals included doctors, astrologers, and other experts in technical disciplines. Tatian’s *paideia* included lectures as well as his own compositions. It is powerful corroboration of my thesis,

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<sup>102</sup> *Cum fortuito in manus meas incideret unum ex quattuor evangelium compositum et absente titulo non invenirem nomen auctoris, diligenter inquirens quis gesta vel dicta domini et saluatoris nostri evangelica lectione discreta in ordinem quo se consequi videbantur non minimo studii labore redegerit, [...].* Ranke, 1–2.

therefore, that Tatian composed a synoptic-type gospel according to the conservative conventions of those same technical disciplines.

Matthew Crawford describes the difficulty of situating Tatian's gospel in its contemporary literary context.

“Tatian's respect for the exact wording of his sources is broadly parallel [to Marcion's], but one searches in vain for a rationale that can account both for the degree to which he follows his sources and the radical revisions he makes of them. This, it seems to me, is a problem lying at the heart of Diatessaronic studies, and a solution for it remains to be found.”<sup>103</sup>

Crawford's problem, though articulated with respect to Tatian, applies equally well to the treatment of *Mark* by the authors of *Matthew* and *Luke* — as argued in chapter two. Crawford assumes that Marcion's behavior is explained by his self-understanding as an ancient textual critic but, as argued in chapter six, this will not do either. What can account for the conservatism of the synoptic-type evangelists as well as their “radical” revisionism?

Tatian furnishes our clearest view of a synoptic-type evangelist in their social and intellectual context. The compositional conventions evinced in Tatian's work were shaped by would-be technical experts who strove simultaneously to demonstrate their command of a discipline and set themselves apart as worthy of attention. Like technical books on medicine or mechanics, Tatian's gospel passed on the established knowledge of his discipline by carefully reproducing the foremost works on the relevant *hypothesis*. At the same time, Tatian distinguished himself as a teacher by creatively re-writing the gospel according to his own tenets.

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<sup>103</sup> Crawford, “The Problemata of Tatian,” 569–70.

## Conclusion

*Matthew* 23:8-10

You should not be called, “Rabbi,” for there is one who is your teacher, and you are all brothers. And do not call any one of you upon earth, “Father,” for there is one who is your heavenly Father. And do not be called “Teacher” because there is one who is your teacher, Christ.

What kind of audience needs to be told not to style themselves ‘Rabbi’ or ‘Teacher’?

Who might aspire to the honorific ‘Father’? It is unlikely that these titles held much temptation for the unlettered parishioner. How many of Celsus’ “foolish and low [...] slaves, women, and children” (Origen, *Contra Celsum* 3.49) thought of themselves as “Rabbi” or “Father”? More probably, these aspirations were characteristic of the sort of young men and women who sought out teachers like Marcion and Tatian. Tatian was a student of Justin, and Rhodon was a student of Tatian. Marcion’s students, Apelles and Lucian, established their own reading circles with their own disciples. These verses from *Matthew* are better understood as the self-effacement of a would-be teacher directed to his ambitious students. Jesus —as mediated by this evangelist— is the only true teacher.

The conservatism with which the synoptic evangelists re-wrote their sources, I argue, reflects their appropriation of a compositional procedure that was alien to contemporary historiography but well-known in the pedagogical sub-culture of the technical disciplines. The first and second centuries, observes Heidi Wendt, saw a burgeoning of independent religious experts. These freelance teachers styled their domains of expertise as “arts” and, consequently, modeled their literature on the technical disciplines. Synoptic-type gospels are the product of Christian teachers competing for an audience in this educational marketplace.

How this compositional convention developed in the technical disciplines is not difficult to understand. Such conservatism allows the author/teacher to demonstrate their expertise by re-presenting what counts as knowledge for their discipline. At the same time, it allows them to revise, suppress, and innovate within that tradition. Some teachers flag their interventions (e.g. Hero's *Automata*) while others present their revisions as part of the tradition (e.g. Arrian's *Ars Tactica*). Both strategies are evident in the synoptic-type gospels. The Lukan preface and Marcion's *Antitheses* are explicit about their author's interventions. *Matthew* and Tatian's *Gospel*, in contrast, present their rewriting of the *hypothesis* without acknowledging their creative revisions. The latter strategy allows the evangelist to re-cast their work as simply "the gospel," the definitive treatment of that *hypothesis*.

Technical literature is consistently agonistic. As we have seen, the point of re-writing a work on an established *hypothesis* is to improve on one's predecessors. More specifically, technical works that are written according to the conservative procedure treated above invariably aim to replace their predecessors. Galen describes this procedure as "writing a second book in place (ἐπὶ τῷ) of the first" (*On Hippocrates' 'Regimen in Acute Diseases' 1.4*).<sup>1</sup> The reader of Hero's *Automata* does not need Philo's work on the same *hypothesis*. Rather, Hero claims to preserve the best of Philo's work, revised and re-arranged for greater clarity. In the preface to his *Ars Tactica*, Aelian is explicit about his desire to displace his predecessors.

The Greek theory of tactics which began in the time of Homer, Emperor Caesar Augustus, son of Trajan, was written by many before us who do not have what we deem

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<sup>1</sup> Ἐπιδιασκευάσθαι λέγεται βιβλίον ἐπὶ τῷ προτέρῳ γεγραμμένῳ τὸ δεύτερον γραφέν [...]. Antoine Pietrobelli, ed., *Galen, Oeuvres: Tome IX, Ire Partie: Commentaire Au Regime Des Maladies Aigues d'Hippocrate: Livre I*, 1st edition (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019), 8.

skill in the sciences. Being persuaded, I planned to compose (συντάσσω) this *Theory* so that those after us will heed our composition instead of its predecessors (Preface, 1).<sup>2</sup>

Aelian claims that his mastery of the sciences allowed him to produce a work superior to any of its predecessors. Future readers, he hopes, will read his book instead of theirs.

A little later in his preface, Aelian explains what this superiority consists of.

For, clearly, I assert that from now on those who read this book rather than its predecessors will be instructed on account of the arrangement in which each thing is clearly explained (Preface 5).<sup>3</sup>

Aelian's description of his authorial interventions echoes the language of Hero's *Pneumatics* and *On Stationary Automata* (discussed in chapter three). Like other technical authors, Aelian acknowledges the conservatism of his re-writing. Indeed, it is this conservatism with a body of disciplinary knowledge that makes it plausible for Aelian to displace earlier works.

In the same way, the reader of *Matthew* does not need *Mark*. The best of the older gospel, the evangelist would claim, is preserved in the new. The material taken from *Mark* is revised, rearranged, and supplemented according to a subsequent teacher's understanding of the gospel *hypothesis*. The third evangelist does the same. This author, like Aelian, provides a brief explanation of his project. In the stereotypical language of technical prefaces, the author of *Luke* criticizes earlier evangelists and boasts in his research (παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς) and re-arrangement (καθεξῆς) of the gospel. The treatment of *Mark* by the authors of *Matthew* and *Luke* are an effort to render the older gospel obsolete.

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<sup>2</sup> Τὴν παρὰ τοῖς Ἑλλήσι τακτικὴν θεωρίαν ἀπὸ τῶν Ὀμήρου χρόνων τὴν ἀρχὴν λαβοῦσαν, αὐτόκρατορ Καῖσαρ υἱὲ θεοῦ Τραϊανὲ σεβαστέ, πολλοὶ τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν συνέγραψαν οὐκ ἔχοντες, ἦν ἡμεῖς ἐν τοῖς μαθήμασιν ἐπιστεῦθημεν ἕξιν ἔχειν. Ἐμαυτὸν δὲ πείθων ἠβουλήθη ταύτην συντάξαι τὴν θεωρίαν, ὅτι τοῖς ἡμετέροις οἱ μεθ' ἡμᾶς πρὸ τῶν ἀρχαιοτέρων προσέξουσι συγγράμμασιν. Hermann Köchly and W Rüstow, *Asclepiodotos' Taktik. Aelianos' Theorie Der Taktik*, Griechische Kriegsschriftsteller, 2.1 (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1855), 236.

<sup>3</sup> σαφηνείας τε γὰρ ἕνεκα διαβεβαιούμενος λέγω τοὺς ἐντευξομένους τῆδε τῆ συγγραφῆ ἔνθεν μᾶλλον ἢ παρὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων στοιχειωθήσεσθαι καὶ τοῦ κατὰ τάξιν ἕκαστα δεδηλωσθαι. Köchly and Rüstow, 236.

This understanding of the synoptic tradition allows a new appreciation of the works attributed to Marcion and Tatian. Marcion's *Gospel* is not a mutilation or scholarly edition of *Luke* but a re-writing of the third gospel according to the technical conventions familiar to an independent religious expert. Marcion's followers did not use his *Gospel* alongside *Luke* (or any of the other gospels circulating in Rome). At least for his admirers, Marcion succeeded at displacing his *Hauptquelle*.

In the same way, Tatian's *Gospel Diatessaron* is not a harmony (understood as a kind of scholarly tool) but a new gospel creatively re-written from the raw material of his predecessors. Tatian, another independent teacher, belongs to the tradition of re-writing synoptic-type gospels. The early reception of this gospel indicates that it too succeeded at displacing other gospels (Theodoret, *Haer. Fab. Comp.* 1.20).<sup>4</sup>

Why, then, did people keep writing gospels? The authors of *Matthew* and *Luke* could have distributed copies of *Mark*. Marcion and Tatian could have promoted their predecessors' works. But who would study with a mere copyist? These teachers, rather, made their own contribution to what Justin called the "science" (ἐπιστήμη) or "art" (τέχνη) of "divine and human matters" (*Dialogue with Trypho* 3.5). This approach to gospel writing preserved the best of their intellectual tradition, advanced their own understanding of the discipline, and displaced the work of rivals.

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<sup>4</sup> See my argument in Ian N. Mills, "Tatian's Diatessaron as 'Canonical' Gospel: Walter Bauer and the Reception of Christian 'Apocrypha,'" *Studia Patristica*, 2021.

## Appendix

### A Theoretical Postscript: On Authorship

Nobody owns the word ‘author.’ To say (with Michel Foucault) that ‘authorship’ is historically conditioned does not set it apart from the rest of our language.<sup>1</sup> Since the uses of a word are constituted by the conventions of constantly re-negotiated communalects, it is hardly noteworthy that any particular conception of ‘authorship’ is a social construct.<sup>2</sup> To offer a lexical definition is only to articulate one’s own understanding of the term’s use within a target speech community.<sup>3</sup> Given the prevalence of ‘authorship’ language in everything from ancient historiography to the book contracts coveted by ancient historians, there is good reason to believe that this term has considerable communicative utility. Hindy Najman, for instance, finds it useful to clarify that Moses is portrayed in *Jubilees* as a “writer” and “scribe” but not an “author.”<sup>4</sup> Although these terms have no precise corollaries in *Jubilees*, the distinction does

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<sup>1</sup> Michel Foucault, “Qu’est-Ce Qu’un Auteur,” *Bulletin de La Société Française de Philosophie* 63, no. 3 (1969): 81–88. Foucault (or, at least, his readers) would have us not only recognize that conceptions of ‘authorship’ are historically conditioned but speak instead of an ‘author-function’ – that is, the role that beliefs about an ‘author’ serve in various discourses. This is, indeed, a useful analytic distinction. Just as well, one might speak of a ‘stop sign-function’ – that is, the role that beliefs about a ‘stop sign’ play in various discourses. This is a no less useful analytic distinction for certain lines of inquiry. Nevertheless, talk of a ‘stop sign-function’ need not displace all talk about ‘stop signs.’ So too, the recognition that different readers across time and space assign different significances to ‘the author’ need not displace all talk of ‘authors.’ For a more helpful account of the role of ‘the author’ in interpretation, see Toril Moi, *Revolution of the Ordinary: Literary Studies after Wittgenstein, Austin, and Cavell* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018), 196–210.

<sup>2</sup> I use ‘communalect’ and ‘speech/linguistic community’ in the qualified sense articulated in Daniel Lassiter, “Semantic Externalism, Language Variation, and Sociolinguistic Accommodation,” *Mind & Language* 23, no. 5 (2008): 607–33. Indeed, my approach to language throughout this study is indebted to Lassiter’s proposed reconciliation of semantic externalism with internalist/individualist/mentalist accounts.

<sup>3</sup> Although I accept Lassiter’s criticisms of reifying ‘speech communities,’ some sort of specification seems indispensable as a heuristic device. Indeed, the most imprecise of conventional categorizations (‘language’ and ‘dialect’) carve out useful groupings of the dialect continua. Any effort at describing a linguistic community (such as a target audience) must rely on additional, over-general, and inevitably blurry abstractions. In this spirit, I imagine my primary audience as the anglophone academy in the twenty-first century – more particularly scholars in the humanities. On lexical definitions, see Richard Robinson, “Lexical Definition,” in *Definition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963).

<sup>4</sup> Hindy Najman, *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 60.

descriptive work for Najman's account of *Jubilees*. So too 'authorship' language has considerable communicative utility for describing the origins of gospel literature.

It is no objection that ancient Greek lacks a singular term for 'authorship.' Anachronism and etic descriptions are not themselves problematic.<sup>5</sup> The Australian aboriginal Guugu Yimithirr has no word for 'left' or 'right.' It is one of many languages that employs geographic rather than egocentric coordinates.<sup>6</sup> The English sentence: "Guugu Yimithirr is written from left to right." is, nevertheless, accurate.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, it is helpful to speak of "economic inflation" during the crisis of the third century even though third century Roman literature evinces no corollary vocabulary.<sup>8</sup> Historians studying gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity do not confine themselves to the "straightjacket of actor's categories."<sup>9</sup> Neither need scholars of ancient literature avoid anachronism.

All anachronism, of course, is not created equal. Vicious anachronism, according to Nick Jardine, is the application of a category absent a material, social, or representational condition presupposed by that category.<sup>10</sup> If, for example, copyright law was a necessary condition for

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<sup>5</sup> Historians as dissimilar as Richard Evans, Bruce Lincoln, and David Brakke argue for the indispensability of self-consciously anachronistic "interpretive categories." Richard J. Evans, *In Defense of History*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 72–73, 77–80; Bruce Lincoln, "Theses on Method," *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 8, no. 3 (1996): 227; David Brakke, *The Gnostics: Myth, Ritual, and Diversity in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, Mass.; London, England: Harvard University Press, 2010), 16–18.

<sup>6</sup> Guy Deutscher, "Does Your Language Shape How You Think?," *The New York Times*, August 26, 2010, sec. Magazine, <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/29/magazine/29language-t.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Guugu Yimithirr was not written until the aboriginal population encountered British colonizers in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Still today, native speakers of Guugu Yimithirr write from left to right with Latin characters.

<sup>8</sup> Arthur Nussbaum, "The Meaning of Inflation," *Political Science Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (1943): 86–93.

<sup>9</sup> For instance, Rebecca Futo Kennedy et al. refer to their use of "race and ethnicity" as "intentional anachronism." Rebecca Futo Kennedy, *Race and Ethnicity in the Classical World: An Anthology of Primary Sources in Translation* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2013), xiii–xv. Nick Jardine, "Uses and Abuses of Anachronism in the History of the Sciences," *History of Science* 38 (2000): 265.

<sup>10</sup> Jardine, "Uses and Abuses of Anachronism in the History of the Sciences." Technically, this describes Jardine's neologistic "anachronism" of which 'anachronism' is only one species. Vicious anachronism further requires that the absent condition be explicable in terms of the time at which the behavior or event occurred. See the discussion of 'anachronism' at Jardine, 253.

‘authorship’ as we use the term, it would be viciously anachronistic to speak of ‘authors’ before the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Whether it is, in fact, viciously anachronistic to speak of ‘authorship’ in the Roman empire during the first and second century is treated at length in Chapters Two and Four above. The ordinary use of ‘authorship’ language articulated below, I conclude, is an adequate description of the social conventions that constituted literary property in the first and second century. ‘Authorship,’ therefore, is anachronistic in only the most trivial sense.

### A.1 Defining ‘authorship’

The term ‘author’ conventionally refers to the person responsible for a creative expression. This account of authorship owes a great deal to U.S. copyright law, not as an authority which governs ordinary usage but as one point of reference to guard against an arbitrary or tendentious definition.<sup>11</sup> Substantially similar accounts of ‘authorship’ are used in common and civil law societies worldwide.<sup>12</sup> Quite apart from legal formulations,

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<sup>11</sup> An ‘author’ in U.S. case law refers to a human person who creates an original and creative work. Important early articulations include *Trade-Mark Cases*, 100 U.S. 82 and *Burrow-Giles Lithographic Company v. Sarony*, 111 U.S. 53 (1884). The requirement for creativity and originality were importantly clarified in *Feist Publications, Inc., v. Rural Telephone Service Co.*, 499 U.S. 340 (1991). The requirement for a human creator was clarified in *Naruto v. Slater, No. 16-15469* (9th Cir. 2018). The most important exception to this traditional “creator-as-author” model is the “work made for hire” doctrine whereby the employer (not the creator) is “deemed-to-be-author.” The groundwork for this exception was laid in *Bleistein v. Donaldson Lithographing Co.*, 188 U.S. 239, 248 (1903) and then codified in section 26 of the Copyright Act of 1909. See the helpful discussion in Xinqiang (David) Sun, “Authorship in China (and Beyond): Authorship and Related Issues Under the Chinese Copyright Law of 1990,” *Houston Law Review* 54, no. 2 (2016): 477–84. Following Peter Jaszi, I understand this as an economically motivated inconsistency with ordinary uses of ‘authorship’ as otherwise articulated in US Law. Peter Jaszi, “Toward a Theory of Copyright: The Metamorphoses of ‘Authorship,’” *Duke Law Journal* 1991, no. 2 (1991): 485–91.

<sup>12</sup> Jane Ginsburg distills the common features of ‘authorship’ used in anglophone and European law to “a human being who exercises subjective judgment in composing the work and who controls its execution.” Jane C. Ginsburg, “The Concept of Authorship in Comparative Copyright Law,” *DePaul Law Review* 52, no. 4 (2003): 1063–92. Elizabeth F. Judge and Daniel J. Gervais similarly conclude that “originality” in international law is rooted in “creative choices” most clearly explicated in *CCH Canadian Ltd. v. Law Society of Upper Canada*. This Judge and Gervais summarize as “requir[ing] non-mechanical, non-trivial skill and judgement.” Elizabeth F. Judge and Daniel J. Gervais, “Of Silos and Constellations: Comparing Notions of Originality in Copyright Law,” in *Intellectual Property Protection of Fact-Based Works*, ed. Robert F. Brauneis (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2009), 35–106. Dennis S. Karjala and Keiji Sugiyama argue that Japanese Copyright Law differs little in its fundamentals (although evinces a subtly higher threshold for ‘creativity’). Dennis S. Karjala and Keiji Sugiyama, “Fundamental

‘responsibility’ is operative in definitions of ‘authorship’ propounded by the *Modern Language Association*, the U.S. National Academies, and other prominent institutions.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, ‘creativity’ is a distillation of the requirement for “originality,” “subjective judgement,” or the contribution of “important intellectual content” variously expressed in the literature.<sup>14</sup>

A host of ambiguities attend each term in my definition of ‘authorship.’ I make no effort, however, to enumerate necessary and sufficient conditions in a way that would neatly categorize all marginal cases. That is not how language works. Boundary cases are unavoidable and no objection to a category’s usefulness.<sup>15</sup> ‘Authorship,’ like most terms in ordinary language, is a “fuzzy concept,” but no less useful on account of it. Further clarification of three key terms in this definition will demonstrate the term’s utility and prevent predictable misunderstandings in the application of ‘authorship’ language to gospel literature.

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Concepts in Japanese and American Copyright Law,” *The American Journal of Comparative Law* 36, no. 4 (1988): 613–79. Although principally concerned with the inconsistencies arising from “works made for hire” (see my fn. 11), Xinqiang (David) Sun notes that ‘authorship’ in modern Chinese Law differs little under ordinary conditions from German and Japanese copyright law. Sun, “Authorship in China (and Beyond),” 471–76.

<sup>13</sup> The Modern Language Association of America, *MLA Handbook*, 8th ed. (The Modern Language Association of America, 2016), 22. The Chicago Manual of Style offers no definition of authorship. National Academy of Sciences (US) et al., “Authorship Practices,” in *On Being a Scientist: Responsible Conduct in Research* (National Academies Press (US), 1995), 13–15. Perhaps the most influential definition of authorship in anglophone academia is that propounded by the *International Committee of Medical Journal Editors*. ICMJE, “Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals” (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors., 2017), 2, <http://www.icmje.org/icmje-recommendations.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> I provide a fuller account of ‘creativity’ below. On the crucial role of ‘originality/creativity’ in determining authorship in U.S. case law, see especially *Feist Publications, Inc., v. Rural Telephone Service Co.*, 499 U.S. 340 (1991). The language of “subjective judgement” is borrowed from Ginsburg, “The Concept of Authorship in Comparative Copyright Law Annual Center for Intellectual Property Law & (and) Information Technology (CIPLIT) Symposium.” See also, the “process condition” discussed below and in Elliot Samuel Paul and Dustin Stokes, “Attributing Creativity,” in *Creativity and Philosophy*, by Matthew Kieran and Berys Gaut (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), 193–209. The requirement for a contribution of “important intellectual content” is the second component of the *ICJME* definition (further discussed in footnote ##14).

<sup>15</sup> Outside of highly specialized communalects, non-rigid/imprecise categories are the norm. A particularly helpful discussion is Toril Moi’s treatment of Derrida’s exploitation of “rigid” concepts in Moi, *Revolution of the Ordinary*, 64–87.

First, the term ‘expression’ reflects my understanding of texts as the product of communicative actions.<sup>16</sup> On this account, merely identifying an object as ‘textual’ presupposes a personal agent.<sup>17</sup> The responsibility constitutive of ‘authorship,’ therefore, inheres in actions, not objects. Texts have various significances for readers but only agents make communicative actions. One consequence of this clarification is that two indistinguishable series of markings, sounds, or other media of communication may have different authors.<sup>18</sup>

Second, the expression for which an author is held responsible is not necessarily co-extensive with any given work, text, or artefact.<sup>19</sup> An author might be responsible for only part of

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<sup>16</sup> This modest claim belongs to a tradition in the philosophy of language that looks back to Ludwig Wittgenstein through the work of J.L. Austin, Stanley Cavell, and Toril Moi. “To say that texts are actions and expressions is to remind us of the obvious: that sentences, utterances, texts don’t generate themselves; that they are spoken or written by someone at a particular time, in a particular place; that words reveal the speaker; that once words are uttered they can’t be undone; that utterances, like other actions, have consequences, ripple effects spreading far beyond the original moment of utterance.” Moi, 196. U.S. Copyright Law requires the instantiation of this expression in a tangible medium. It seems to me that this is a condition of enforceability that may or may not reflect ordinary uses of the term “author.” Since all the media under consideration for this study are, in fact, tangible, I set aside this questionable condition as irrelevant.

<sup>17</sup> This is most succinctly argued in Stanley Fish, “Opinion | Intentional Neglect,” *The New York Times*, 2005, sec. Opinion, <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/19/opinion/intentional-neglect.html>. A similar line of argument in Steven Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels is beset by a number of problems, not the least of which is their reductive account of the many meanings of ‘meaning’ and their claim to undermine “theory” itself. Steven Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels, “Against Theory,” *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 4 (1982): 723–42. See the critique and rehabilitation of their argument in Jeffrey Goldsworthy, “Moderate versus Strong Intentionalism: Knapp and Michaels Revisited Editors’ Symposium: What Is Legal Interpretation,” *San Diego Law Review* 42, no. 2 (2005): 669–84. Also helpful for his response to certain popular objections to ‘authorship’ and ‘intention’ is E. D. Hirsch Jr, “In Defense of the Author,” in *Validity in Interpretation*, ed. E. D. Hirsch (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 1–23. This essay, however, is plagued by Hirsch’s irrelevant fixation on “objectivity” and the normative use of appeals to intention. Much more helpful is Toril Moi’s exposition of the role of the author and their intention(s) within interpretation. Moi, *Revolution of the Ordinary*, 197–210. For a defense of intentional language, John Farrell, *The Varieties of Authorial Intention: Literary Theory beyond the Intentional Fallacy* ([Cham, Switzerland]: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 21–100.

<sup>18</sup> In an even more extreme case, a single artefact could, without alteration, be re-authored by different people (or, more commonly, by the same person).

<sup>19</sup> Here and throughout, the terms ‘work’ and ‘expression’ must be distinguished. I adopt the definitions of ‘work,’ ‘text,’ and ‘artefact’ articulated in MJ Driscoll, “The Words on the Page: Thoughts on Philology, Old and New,” in *Creating the Medieval Saga: Versions, Variability and Editorial Interpretations of Old Norse Saga Literature*, ed. Judy Quinn and Emily Lethbridge, Viking Collection v. 18 (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2010), 93–95. This differs from Karen King’s terminology in Karen L. King, “‘What Is an Author?’ Ancient Author-Function in the Apocryphon of John and the Apocalypse of John,” in *Scribal Practices and Social Structures among Jesus Adherents*, ed. William E. Arnal et al., 2016, 20. For a schematization of the varieties of co-authorship, see fn. 23.

a work while the whole is authored by another, co-authored by both, or effectively unauthored.<sup>20</sup> For example, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley is the author of the lost 1816 Ur-Text as well as the extant base text of the 1816/1817 “Last Draft” of *Frankenstein*.<sup>21</sup> After producing the “Fair Copy,” Mary gave permission to her husband, Percy Shelley, to revise the text without her involvement. At this point, Percy composed a long paragraph printed in the first chapter of the 1818 First Edition.<sup>22</sup> Percy is, therefore, the sole author of that paragraph. He is not, as a consequence of that intervention, the author of the whole 1818 text. Rather, the text of the 1818 First Edition is, according to Laura Biron’s schematization of co-authorship, multiply authored.<sup>23</sup>

Third, I do not use ‘creativity’ as a normative category.<sup>24</sup> Rather, I adopt Michael Wreen’s “explicitly value neutral” account of ‘creativity’ as connoting production that involves

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<sup>20</sup> An individual may bear some responsibility for the contents of a book in several ways without being its author. The least complex examples are copyists, editors, and compilers. Although these same actors may also be authors, the copyist’s treatment of a text (defined functionally) is non-authorial. More complicated are the author’s relationship to approved emendations to their own text. The answer here—as in most boundary cases—will depend on the motives of the inquiry after ‘responsibility.’ Problems involving overlapping domains of authorship will be further discussed below.

<sup>21</sup> The novel *Frankenstein* is a paradigmatic ‘work’ with multiple ‘texts’ (see fn. 19) Many of these ‘texts’ of *Frankenstein* exist in multiple artifacts (e.g. the 1818 edition), while others exist in only a single ‘artifact’ (e.g. the “Last Draft”).

<sup>22</sup> Charles E. Robinson, “Frankenstein: Its Composition and Publication,” in *The Cambridge Companion to ‘Frankenstein’* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 18. Charles E Robinson, *The Frankenstein Notebooks. Part One: Draft Notebook A* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1996), lxxxviii–lxxxix, 17.

<sup>23</sup> Laura Biron proposes three categories of co-authorship: “transformative authorship,” “multiple authorship,” and “collaborative authorship.” Laura Biron, “Creative Work and Communicative Norms: Perspectives from Legal Philosophy,” in *The Work of Authorship*, ed. Mireille van Eechoud (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014), 37–38. I consciously neglect adjudicating the authorship of passages added by Percy into the Revised Last Draft and then incorporated into the 1817 Fair Copy and 1818 First Edition with Mary’s input and approval. On Biron’s schema, these are probably collaboratively authored. The text of the 1818 edition is, therefore, both multiply and collaboratively authored without contradiction. In any case, they are marginal cases and attribution(s) of authorship in such cases will depend on why any given speaker is interested in assigning responsibility. Intriguingly, Mary re-wrote Percy’s paragraph in the 1831 Third Edition. Although she preserves much of Percy’s wording, Mary re-authored his passage.

<sup>24</sup> “Creative”, of course, has value laden uses (as reflected, especially, in psychological literature), but these are easily disambiguated from the simpler notion of ‘creativity’ relevant to an explanation of ‘authorship.’ To claim that Donald Trump authored a particular tweet is not to attribute any genius, virtue, or even valuable innovation to the president. This value-neutral sense of ‘creativity’ is satisfactorily outlined by Michael Wreen (further discussed below) and advocated in Alison Hills and Alexander Bird, “Creativity without Value,” in *Creativity and Philosophy*, by Matthew Kieran and Berens Gaut (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), 95–107.

non-negligible novelty.<sup>25</sup> This novelty condition, of course, does not demand creation *ex nihilo*, but rather, as rigorously analyzed by Margaret A. Boden, typically consists of the “novel combination of old ideas.”<sup>26</sup> Additionally, Wreen notes, ‘creativity’ connotes some minimal degree of intentionality in the productive process.<sup>27</sup> An appropriately minimalistic formulation of this “process condition” is formulated by Eliot Samuel Paul and Dustin Stokes as “involv[ing], in some non-trivial way, the agency of the creator.”<sup>28</sup>

These conceptual analyses of ‘creativity’ find unlooked-for support in the actual practices of copyright adjudication. The U.S. legal system, according to Eva Subotnik, has employed two effective proxies for identifying ‘creativity’: comparison and narrative.<sup>29</sup> The proxy of comparison entails evaluating the similarity of the product to relevant *comparanda* (and, in certain cases, to an underlying subject).<sup>30</sup> The proxy of narrative, on the other hand, entails

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<sup>25</sup> Wreen explicates three co-centric concepts of creativity: mere creation, novel creation, and “valuational” novel creation. For the limited purposes of defining authorship, I adopt the second usage without denying that the first and third also reflect ordinary uses of the term. Michael Wreen, “Creativity,” *Philosophia* 43, no. 3 (2015): 891–913.

<sup>26</sup> Novelty, of course, is context relative (e.g. the same novel solution can be independently discovered multiple times). Boden’s distinction between psychological and historical creativity is widely recognized as providing a useful schematization of the comparative domains for evaluating novelty, reflecting two different conceptions of ‘creativity.’ Given the corpus in view, I rely on the “historical” conception. For a criticism of the historical/psychological creativity distinction, however, see Dustin Stokes, “Minimally Creative Thought,” *Metaphilosophy* 42, no. 5 (2011): 658–81. Boden’s more demanding (valuational) account of creativity is not relevant to the identification of authorship. See the discussion in footnote 25. Margaret A. Boden, ed., “What Is Creativity?,” in *Dimensions of Creativity*, A Bradford Book (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996), 75.

<sup>27</sup> Wreen, “Creativity,” 897–99.

<sup>28</sup> Paul and Stokes, “Attributing Creativity,” 197. To speak of ‘agency’ as a necessary condition of creativity does not assume a fully formed conception of the final product (one of the strawmen demolished by William Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley). See the critiques of “The Intentional Fallacy” and its reception in Moi, *Revolution of the Ordinary*, 200–205; Farrell, *The Varieties of Authorial Intention*, esp. 40–46. Various accounts of intentionality offer appropriately sparse theories of agency for determinations of authorship.

<sup>29</sup> Eva E. Subotnik, “Originality Proxies: Toward a Theory of Copyright and Creativity,” *Brooklyn Law Review* 76, no. 4 (2011 2010): 1513–17. Subotnik argues that invoking ‘ontology’ to determine ‘originality’ is incoherent.

<sup>30</sup> Subotnik, 1523–27.

determining whether the production of this expression involved “decision making.”<sup>31</sup> Subotnik’s schematization of the legal means by which contested issues of authorship have been adjudicated neatly corresponds to the conditions of ‘novelty’ and ‘agency’ articulated in the philosophical reflections on ‘creativity’ surveyed above.

Applying these two conditions for ‘creativity’ to ancient historiography requires only a little translation. Historians routinely evaluate the novelty of an expression by comparison with a reconstructed *Vorlage*. Likewise, redaction criticism is the business of reconstructing narratives of production. Historians must evaluate the requirement for minimal agency in light of their theory of composition. If the historian concludes that the best explanation for a textual variant is *parablepsis* occasioned by *homeoteleuton* (i.e. an eye-skip), for example, they have no warrant for suspecting creative redaction. Alternatively, Ulrich Schmid argues that much of the meaningful variation in the New Testament textual tradition is the result of reader’s notes mistakenly incorporated into the text by subsequent copyists.<sup>32</sup> The reader is the author of the note itself but both reader and copyist are engaged in something other than editing the gospel.

Probably no account of a concept like ‘creativity’ can unambiguously resolve all problem cases. It is not difficult to imagine ever more complicated scenarios that blur the working categories of ordinary language. But this is no impediment to our use of fuzzy concepts like ‘author’ in everyday life. An understanding of ‘creativity’ as characterizing production that

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<sup>31</sup> Subotnik, 1517–23. On “subjective judgment” as a sufficient process condition for the kind of creativity relevant to determining authorship, see also Ginsburg, “The Concept of Authorship in Comparative Copyright Law Annual Center for Intellectual Property Law & (and) Information Technology (CIPLIT) Symposium,” 1066.

<sup>32</sup> Ulrich Schmid, “Scribes and Variants – Sociology and Typology,” in *Textual Variation: Theological and Social Tendencies?*, ed. David C. Parker (Piscataway, NJ, USA: Gorgias Press, 2008), 1–24; Ulrich Schmid, “Conceptualizing ‘Scribal’ Performances: Reader’s Notes,” in *The Textual History of the Greek New Testament*, ed. Klaus Wachtel and Michael W. Holmes, Text-Critical Studies 8 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 49–64.

involves novelty and personal agency is sufficient to disambiguate ‘authorship’ from the related behaviors with which ‘authorship’ is sometimes confused or conflated in discussions of the corpora considered in this study. In sum, if a text is dissimilar from its source material (novelty) *and* its production entailed decision making (agency), it is ‘creative.’

The preceding is a descriptive account of ‘authorship’ language in my target speech community. The term author, I argue, is conventionally used to refer to the person(s) responsible for a creative expression. The clarification of this contested term will, I hope, permit the disambiguation of those compositional procedures evinced in the direct and indirect text traditions of the gospels.

## **A.2 ‘Authorship’ as Vicious Anachronism?**

Is it viciously anachronistic to speak of authors in the first and second centuries? Peter Botha, Karen King, and Bruce Malina draw upon Foucault’s historicization of ‘authorship’ to critique New Testament scholarship.<sup>33</sup> Anachronism, they argue, distorts our understanding of ancient book culture and, therefore, early Christianity. That is, a modern conception of ‘authorship’ wrongly predicates certain features to first and second century persons or texts. These criticisms represent a serious challenge to an analysis of gospel authorship, and I treat them individually below. The concept of ‘authorship,’ I argue, is anachronistic only in the most trivial (and non-vicious) sense.

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<sup>33</sup> Pieter JJ Botha, “Authorship in Historical Perspective and Its Bearing on New Testament and Early Christian Texts and Contexts,” *Scriptura* 102 (2013): 495; King, “‘What Is an Author?’ Ancient Author-Function in the Apocryphon of John and the Apocalypse of John”; Bruce J Malina, “Were There ‘Authors’ in New Testament Times?,” in *To Set at Liberty: Essays on Early Christianity and Its Social World in Honor of John H Elliot* (Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014), 262–71.

Romantic authorship, so say the heirs of Foucault, is a product of 18<sup>th</sup> century political, economic, and material conditions.<sup>34</sup> The individual genius standing behind a text and apart from tradition is a “relatively recent invention,” first imagined in European modernity.<sup>35</sup> And so, it may be. Foucault can keep his notion of ‘authorship;’ it is not mine. Attributing ‘responsibility’ to an individual does not imply their radical independence. Deeming an expression ‘creative’ does not deny its continuity with tradition. If that is the ‘Romantic author,’ I am concerned with something else.

Drawing upon Foucault’s critique, Botha claims that our notion of ‘authorship’ is “determined by printing, literary property, censorship, and income.”<sup>36</sup> I do not wish to police definitions and will not argue that Botha is wrong.<sup>37</sup> Certainly, early Christians did not employ the printing press and, probably, no one profited from *Matthew*’s circulation. I only object that this is not a very interesting observation. In contrast, there is an enduring controversy since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century whether an individual can be held responsible for creatively transforming written and oral Jesus traditions into the *Gospel according to Matthew* (see Chapter

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<sup>34</sup> On problems with the coherence of Foucault’s argument, see Peter Lamarque, “The Death of the Author: An Analytical Autopsy,” *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 30, no. 4 (1990): 319–31. I am concerned here with scholars who have used Foucault’s analysis to critique New Testament studies. See also Seán Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 89–93.

<sup>35</sup> Martha Woodmansee, “The Genius and the Copyright: Economic and Legal Conditions of the Emergence of the ‘Author,’” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 17, no. 4 (1984): 426.

<sup>36</sup> Botha, “Authorship in Historical Perspective and Its Bearing on New Testament and Early Christian Texts and Contexts,” 496.

<sup>37</sup> Botha does not, of course, insist that this is the only permissible definition of ‘authorship.’ He would have us, rather, reform our notion of ‘authorship’ when referring to antiquity. According to Botha, an ‘author’ “is essentially a craftsman, [...] master of a body of rules [...] for manipulating traditional materials [...]” Botha, 506. According to the sense in which that characterization is true, it describes all language users and is, therefore, unobjectionable.

Four). Understanding ‘authorship’ as articulated above allows us to address these substantive questions with familiar language.

Botha and King rightly emphasize the collective effort typical of book production in antiquity.<sup>38</sup> Authors like Pliny the elder —whose representativeness is certainly suspect— had readers, notetakers, scribes, copyists, editors, peer reviewers, and (sometimes) publicists. Publication involved dissemination through informal networks and oral performance.<sup>39</sup> King, therefore, proposes we “suspend” our use of ‘author’ until we have “reform[ed]” our historical imagination to reflect “ancient material and social practices.”<sup>40</sup> Meanwhile, King recommends we speak of a “composer,” “inscriber,” “reader,” etc. This terminology better acknowledges the collective effort —often including the exploited labor of enslaved people— that was ancient book making.

There is much of value here. Book production —like any human activity— was embedded in social, economic, and material realities that are similar and dissimilar to current practice(s) in innumerable ways.<sup>41</sup> William Johnson’s study of Roman reading culture, for

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<sup>38</sup> Botha, 499–506; King, “‘What Is an Author?’ Ancient Author-Function in the Apocryphon of John and the Apocalypse of John,” 16–17, 20.

<sup>39</sup> Classic studies of publication in the ancient world include B. A. van Groningen, “ΕΚΔΟΣΙΣ,” *Mnemosyne* 16, no. 1 (1963): 1–17; Raymond J. Starr, “The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World,” *The Classical Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (1987): 213–23. On early Christian book circulation, see Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven, Conn., and London: Yale University Press, 1995); Kim Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters: Literacy, Power, and the Transmitters of Early Christian Literature* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). I have argued elsewhere that Christians had some success promoting their books beyond their immediate ideological and social networks in Ian N. Mills, “Pagan Readers of Christian Scripture: The Role of Books in Early Autobiographical Conversion Narratives,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 73, no. 5 (2019): 481–506.

<sup>40</sup> King, “‘What Is an Author?’ Ancient Author-Function in the Apocryphon of John and the Apocalypse of John,” 20.

<sup>41</sup> Myles McDonnell argues compellingly that composing and correcting works *sua manu* was not unusual for even the most elite authors — and, presumably, all the more for “sub-elites.” Writing in one’s own hand was expected for personal correspondence but attested also for literary composition. Myles McDonnell, “Writing, Copying, and Autograph Manuscripts in Ancient Rome,” *The Classical Quarterly* 46, no. 2 (1996): 469–91. See the forthcoming work by Nicholas Elder for a review of evidence that ancient authors often composed by hand.

instance, furnishes several examples of “super-elite” authors depending on enslaved persons, friends, merchants, and an admiring public to research, write, and distribute their work. For Pliny the younger, Johnson argues, reading and writing was (or, at least, ought to be) embedded in a number of semi-public social practices.<sup>42</sup> Pliny gives *apologiae* for public (and semi-public) recitations and often refers to the contributions made by audiences and *amici* to his own work (e.g. 7.17.7; 8.21.4-5). In a similar vein, Galen laments that a wealthy Roman has not invested in training scribes and lectors to share with his intellectual community (*Aff. Dig.* 5.48).<sup>43</sup> King encourages us to let Johnson’s study shape how we imagine ancient composition and publication.

The arguments of Botha and King, however, exaggerate the discontinuities between ancient and contemporary authorial practices.<sup>44</sup> Today, an academic monograph will be read at different stages by colleagues, friends, partners, advisors, students, publishers, external reviewers, editors, and copyeditors. Along the way, parts of the book will be performed orally for academic conferences and department colloquia. The book will be revised in light of reactions to these performances as well as feedback from those within their social and professional networks. Some books may be published in second and third editions, continually revised in light of its reception. None of this prevents us from speaking of authors today.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> William A. Johnson, *Readers and Reading Culture in the High Roman Empire: A Study of Elite Communities*, 1 edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 32–62.

<sup>43</sup> Johnson, 93–94.

<sup>44</sup> For a parallel line of argument concerning “orality,” see Mark Goodacre, *Thomas and the Gospels: The Case for Thomas’s Familiarity with the Synoptics* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 128–34.

<sup>45</sup> Not all authors today are themselves responsible for inscribing their text. Kate Bowler developed carpal tunnel in graduate school and composed the text of her dissertation-turn-monograph by dictation for her parents to transcribe. Kate Bowler, *Everything Happens for a Reason: And Other Lies I’ve Loved* (Random House Publishing Group, 2018), 18–19.

If we imagine the ‘author’ alone and isolated, hiding their work from the world until they print and publicize it themselves, then our notion of ‘authorship’ certainly needs reformation. But this notion mischaracterizes ‘authorship’ today as much as antiquity. Indeed, it is commonplace for the heirs of Foucault to remark that the radical individuality and absolute novelty imputed to ‘Romantic authorship’ has never been true for authors of anytime.<sup>46</sup> I agree. As Erlend Lavik argues compellingly, ‘Romantic authorship’ is not even a fair description of the author-function in Romantic literature.<sup>47</sup> The ‘Romantic author’ is a polemical punching-bag, not a reasonable gloss for contemporary notions of ‘authorship.’

We want a word for Pliny’s role in the production of the *Natural History*. King’s ‘composer,’ so far as I can tell, is what I would call an ‘author.’ That is to say, ‘authorship’ language picks out the person responsible for a particular aspect of a literary work. Although other roles may involve their own kinds of “creative expression” (and, in their own ways, be authorial), we do not conventionally attribute to them responsibility for that “creative expression” that constitutes an authorial text of a written work.<sup>48</sup> Let us not forget the bookbinder or the copyist; but there is an inescapable analytic utility to speaking of ‘authors’ as well.

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<sup>46</sup> Botha, “Authorship in Historical Perspective and Its Bearing on New Testament and Early Christian Texts and Contexts,” 496 fn. 1.

<sup>47</sup> Erlend Lavik, “Romantic Authorship in Copyright Law and the Use of Aesthetics,” in *The Work of Authorship*, ed. Mireille van Eechoud (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014), 45-93.

<sup>48</sup> This is not to deny that the other roles ever involve creative expression — and, therefore, can themselves be acts of authorship. Typically, these authorial acts are easily disambiguated. A bookbinder working upon Shelley’s *Frankenstein* may, by a creative combination or re-deployment of methods, be an author of that arrangement (which is simultaneously its own work, text, and artefact -- see fn. 19). That does not make the bookbinder the author of the work *Frankenstein* or the printed text in question. Editors are much more often authors but — just like the bookbinder above — the work/text they author is not identical to the work/text they edit. Strictly speaking, the phrase “by convention” is redundant since that is the only way in which words (including but not limited to contested terms like “author”) are ever meaningful. I include it here only to remind the reader — at this especially controversial juncture — that I am not adjudicating anything like an ontology of ‘authorship.’

Finally, Bruce Malina’s critique touches most directly upon my own account of ‘authorship.’ Malina draws on Martha Woodmansee’s analysis of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century “writer” to argue that first century readers would not regard individuals (like Paul and the evangelists) as “distinctly and personally responsible for [their] creation.”<sup>49</sup> The writer is either divinely inspired or a mere craftsman, “manipulating strategies for achieving goals dictated by his audience.”<sup>50</sup> In either case, the writer is only “a vehicle or instrument,” whereas responsibility for the text belongs either to a god or the writer’s audience.<sup>51</sup> Malina contrasts the writer’s freedom from responsibility with the authorial notion of “intellectual property.” Without such modern notions, Malina and Botha agree, antiquity had no concern for ‘plagiarism’ or correct authorial attribution.<sup>52</sup> The author-function of first and second century book culture, according to Malina, did not entail an author’s “responsibility” for the content of their work.

Even if Malina were correct —and I have argued at length in Chapter ## that he is not— this is no challenge to a self-consciously anachronistic use of ‘authorship’ language. Historians have no obligation to accept an actor’s disavowal of responsibility. For ‘authorship’ to be viciously anachronistic, it would need to be demonstrated that would-be authors in the first and

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<sup>49</sup> Malina, “Were There ‘Authors’ in New Testament Times?,” 263.

<sup>50</sup> Malina, 263.

<sup>51</sup> Malina, 264.

<sup>52</sup> Botha, “Authorship in Historical Perspective and Its Bearing on New Testament and Early Christian Texts and Contexts,” 504, 507; Malina, “Were There ‘Authors’ in New Testament Times?,” 263.

second century were, in fact, not responsible for their creative compositions.<sup>53</sup> Malina may affirm this latter proposition, but his essay offers no justification for that claim.<sup>54</sup>

“The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there.”<sup>55</sup> These three New Testament scholars have urged historians to recognize meaningful differences between ancient and modern institutions and practices – especially concerning book culture. We should heed their warnings. Nevertheless, historians are interested in describing the past and have only our own language to do it with. Carefully defined, ‘authorship’ language does not introduce vicious anachronism into historiography on the Mediterranean world of the first and second centuries.

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<sup>53</sup> Denying the application of any of the terms in the proposed definition to persons of the first and second century would render ‘authorship’ viciously anachronistic. ‘Creativity’ is the other obvious target. A scholar may deny that literary composition in antiquity involved creativity and, therefore, charge me with vicious anachronism. It would not be enough, however, to demonstrate that authors and ancient readers did not themselves claim to exercise “creativity” in the composition of written works (which is, anyways, untrue). Rather, the critic would be obliged to demonstrate that these would-be authors did not, in fact, exercise any “creativity.”

<sup>54</sup> If textual objects are, indeed, constitutively actions (See fn. ), all texts are attributable to someone. One possible exception is the verbal tic pronounced by a person with Tourette syndrome. The tic – often homophonic with utterances in the person’s communalect(s) – is involuntary (sic). Specifically, the content of the tic is non-elective. Probably, therefore, the verbal tic is better analyzed as a non-textual artifact, easily confused with a human utterance. For a similar analysis, see Farrell, *The Varieties of Authorial Intention*, 31.

<sup>55</sup> This is the opening line of Leslie Poles Hartley, *The Go-Between* (London: H. Hamilton, 1953).

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