

***Structuring Early Christian Memory:  
Jesus in Tradition, Performance, and Text***

Rafael Rodríguez

November 2007

Submitted for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Biblical Studies  
University of Sheffield  
Arts Tower  
Western Bank  
Sheffield, S10 2TN  
United Kingdom

# Structuring Early Christian Memory: Jesus in Tradition, Performance, and Text

## Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	i
<b>Thesis Abstract</b> .....	iv
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	v
<b>Abbreviations</b> .....	vi
<b>Part I: Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>1. Jesus Tradition in Memory and Performance</b> .....	2
1.1. The Source of the Problem	2
1.2. The Plan of this Project	8
1.3. Getting Underway	10
<b>2. Contemporary ‘Historical Jesus’ and Gospels Research</b> .....	11
2.1. Introduction: A Survey of Two Fields	11
2.2. Issues in Contemporary ‘Historical Jesus’ Research	11
2.2.a. Jesus, History, and the Criteria of Authenticity	12
2.2.a.i. Rules for Histor[icit]y	12
2.2.a.ii. Jesus without the Criteria	14
2.2.a.iii. Jesus Traditions: Authentic, Inauthentic, Neither, Both	17
2.2.b. Jesus and the Sapiential Turn	19
2.2.b.i. ‘Eschatology’ and the Problem of Meaning	20
2.2.b.ii. Eschatological and Sapiential Traditions	23
2.2.c. Jesus, Speech, and Script	26
2.2.c.i. Synoptic Relations: A Preliminary Disclaimer	28
2.2.c.ii. Origins of Tradition: Written versus Oral	30
2.3. Gospel Relationships in Contemporary Research	32
2.3.a. Written Gospels, Written Sources	33
2.3.a.i. The Gospel Traditions as Textual Phenomena	34
2.3.a.ii. The Redactional Development of Gospel Traditions	37
2.3.b. The Gospels as Oral-Derived Texts	40
2.4. Concluding Remarks	42
<b>Part II: A Framework for Apprehending Ancient Christian Traditions</b> .....	44
<b>3. Memory, Reputation, History</b> .....	45
3.1. Introduction: Social Memory Theory	45
3.2. Memory’s Social Matrix	45
3.2.a. Group and Individual Influences on Memory	45
3.2.b. Ideological Influences on Memory	50
3.3. Distortions of Past and Present in Social Memory	53
3.3.a. Expressions of the Past as Phenomena in the Present	54
3.3.b. Apprehension of the Present as Constrained by the Past	61
3.3.c. Past and Present: Interaction, Tension, Negotiation	64
3.4. The Social Construction of Reputation	66
3.4.a. Dynamics of Reputational Entrepreneurship	67
3.4.b. Social and Discursive Dynamics of Historical Reputation	69
3.4.b.i. Social Construction and its Constraints	70
3.4.b.ii. The Interested Use of Constructed History	72
3.4.b.iii. Reception as a Constraining Factor	73
3.4.c. The Construction of Difficult Reputations	76

3.4.c.i. Remembering and Forgetting: Villains and Failures	76
3.4.c.ii. Remembering and Forgetting: Re-creating Heroes	79
3.4.d. Reputation and Social Cohesion	80
3.5. Concluding Remarks	81
<b>4. Performance, Structure, Meaning, Text</b> .....	<b>83</b>
4.1. Introduction: Oral Traditional and New Testament Research	83
4.2. Reading, Writing, Speaking	83
4.2.a. Problems of ‘Literacy’ and ‘Orality’	84
4.2.b. The Social Functions of Literacy	89
4.2.b.i. Written Texts as Loci of Social Identification	90
4.2.b.ii. Written Texts as Cultural Symbols	91
4.2.b.iii. Written Texts as Dynamics of Power Relations	92
4.3. Performance Theory and the Jesus Tradition	95
4.3.a. Actualising Tradition in Performance	96
4.3.b. Sedimenting Performance through Time	99
4.3.c. Referencing Tradition within Performance	101
4.3.c.i. Relating Tradition and Performance	101
4.3.c.ii. Receiving Tradition within Performance	104
4.3.c.iii. Signifying Tradition through Performance	108
4.3.d. Modulating Traditional Performance into Textual Rhetoric	112
4.3.d.i. Modelling the Textualisation of Oral Traditions	114
4.3.d.ii. Turning to the Gospels as Oral-Derived Texts	116
4.4. Concluding Remarks	119
<b>Part III: Jesus’ Healings and Exorcisms in the Sayings Traditions</b> .....	<b>122</b>
<b>5. ‘What You Hear and See’: Echoes of Restoration in Jesus’ Healings</b> .....	<b>123</b>
5.1. Introduction: Jesus as Memory’s Object and Vehicle	123
5.2. John, Jesus, and Isaiah	125
5.2.a. Titles, Epithets, and Evocations of Jesus	126
5.2.b. John Has a Question	128
5.2.c. Jesus and his Reputational Narrative	130
5.2.c.i. Jesus and the <i>Messianic Apocalypse</i> (4Q521)	131
5.2.c.ii. John and the Agent of God	136
5.2.c.iii. Jesus and the ‘Blessed’ of God	139
5.3. Jesus’ Reputation in Isaian Context	140
5.3.a. Placing Jesus’ Tradents	140
5.3.b. Proposing Jesus’ Reputation	142
5.3.c. Making it Interested	145
<b>6. ‘Today this Scripture’: Reading and Referencing Israelite Tradition</b> .....	<b>148</b>
6.1. Introduction: Reconfiguring Jesus’ Appearance in Nazareth	148
6.2. Contextualising Lukan Redaction	149
6.2.a. The Roots of Luke 4.16–30 in 7.18–23	149
6.2.b. Luke 4.16–30 in Light of the Jesus Tradition	151
6.2.c. The Quest of the ‘Historical Jesus’ and Luke 4.14–30	153
6.3. Summarising Jesus in Lukan Memory	154
6.4. Jesus Preaches in Nazareth	157
6.4.a. Jesus and Isaiah	158
6.4.a.i. Text and Tradition in Ancient Christianity	160
6.4.a.ii. Jesus Reads Isaiah	163
6.4.a.iii. Isaiah as a Frame for Christian Memory	167
6.4.b. Jesus, Elijah, and Elisha	169
6.4.b.i. Elijah and Elisha in Israelite Memory	171
6.4.b.ii. Elijah and Elisha in Jesus’ Preaching	172

<b>7. 'No City or House Divided against Itself': Exorcism as Israelite Tradition.....</b>	<b>175</b>
7.1. Introduction: Mark, Q, and Beelzebul	175
7.2. Patterns of Similarities and Differences	182
7.3. Jesus, Beelzebul, and the Kingdom of God	184
7.3.a. Jesus' Opponents and Their Accusation against Him	186
7.3.a.i. Mark's ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΕΙΣ and Matthew's ΦΑΡΙΣΑΙΟΙ	186
7.3.a.ii. Jesus the Deviant Exorcist	190
7.3.a.iii. Beelzebul, the Prince of Demons	191
7.3.b. Jesus' Riposte	194
7.3.b.i. ΥΙΟΣ ΔΑΥΙΔ and Jesus' Exorcistic Activities	197
7.3.b.ii. The Spirit/Finger of God	199
7.4. Remembering Jesus' Exorcisms	206
<b>Part IV: Conclusion.....</b>	<b>212</b>
<b>8. Remembering Jesus Speaking.....</b>	<b>213</b>
8.1. Looking Back	213
8.2. Looking Ahead	221
8.3. Concluding Remarks	222
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>224</b>

# Structuring Early Christian Memory: Jesus in Tradition, Performance, and Text

Rafael Rodríguez

## Thesis Abstract

Social memory research has complicated the relationship between past and present as that relationship finds expression in memorial acts (storytelling, music- and image-making, text-production, and so on). This relationship has emerged as a dialectic in which the phenomena 'past' and 'present' are mutually constitutive and implicating. The resultant 'messiness' directly affects the procedures and products of 'historical Jesus' research, which has especially depended upon the assumption that we can neatly and cleanly separate 'authentic' (past) from 'inauthentic' (present) traditions. This thesis establishes some problems that attend to this assumption and attempts to establish a 'historical Jesus' programme that is more sensitive to the entanglement of past and present. Social memory research has especially identified 'reputation' as a vehicle of this entanglement in the memory of specific historical persons. Therefore, 'Jesus' reputation' plays a key analytic role in this project.

Another consequence of social memory research has been the emphatic insistence that all memorial acts are culturally and socially conditioned; the meaning of 'memories', the products of memorial acts, emerges from the relationship of memorial acts and their social contexts. One aspect of the gospels' social context that has been underappreciated in most New Testament research is the contextualisation of our written gospels within the vibrant and fluid oral traditional milieux of Jesus and Israelite communities. This project examines and applies the poetics of oral traditional narrative, including the textualisation of oral tradition, to our written gospels.

The resultant theoretical perspective dramatically affects gospels and 'historical Jesus' research. Since both these fields are too vast to encompass here, this project focuses its attention on the appearance of Jesus' healing and exorcistic praxis in the sayings tradition. Afterwards, we will suggest a few areas in which critics might fruitfully pursue future research in the gospels and on the historical Jesus.

## Acknowledgements

I am indebted to too many people and organisations to adequately name them all. Here are but a few (I apologise to anyone I have overlooked). I am grateful to Tom Thatcher and Alan Kirk, the former for introducing me to social memory research and the latter for his encouragement throughout my own research. The Bible faculty at Cincinnati Christian University (especially Tom Thatcher, Jamie Smith and Jon Weatherly) have been a constant source of encouragement and support in every stage of the production of this thesis. I have benefited in innumerable ways from knowing the faculty of the Department of Biblical Studies at the University of Sheffield. I would especially like to thank James Crossley, Keith Whitelam, and Diana Edelman for their contributions to my experiences writing this thesis. Alison Bygrave and Gill Fogg likewise aided the production of this project; their knack for making the improbable look easy and the impossible come to pass is (or should be) legendary. The faculty and staff at Johnson Bible College, which was generous (or foolish) enough to hire me before I completed this thesis, have also been an important impetus to this project. Carl Bridges and Greg Linton were always available whenever I had questions or ideas I needed to bounce off someone. John and Marsha Ketchen and Judith Finchum have likewise provided near-constant pressure for me to finish; Marsha read an earlier complete draft and pointed out numerous typographical errors. The library staff at Malone College and Johnson Bible College should also be mentioned here; thank you for generously supplying books and articles without end (and without complaint).

My friends and family have also been unnaturally supportive over the last four years. Mom and Papa, thank you for being excited about my research even though I could never seem to make it interesting for you. Barry and Susan, thank you, too, for actively and unceasingly pushing me to complete this thesis even though it meant taking your youngest daughter a quarter-way round the world. I am similarly indebted to the rest of my family (biological, step, and in-law). Minna Shkul, Paul Nikkel, and Bryan Lee were especially useful for luring me away from research to attend to the lighter things of student life (perhaps I should thank the proprietors of the Devonshire Cat and the Star and Garter here). Greg and Julie Brown, Rich and Helen Hawes, Mike and Becky Jones, Geraldine Wilson (nee Pinnalawatta), Jennifer Rowson (nee Wearn), and Martyn Lorimer were all very good friends during our sojourn in Sheffield, and I am grateful for the ways in which our relationships have continued even after our return to America. The congregation of Christ Church Fulwood was likewise a vital part of making our time in Sheffield wonderful and successful, especially the worship team (and especially Group Four!). In Knoxville, TN, the congregation at Woodlawn Christian Church has supported us in multiple ways; we are honoured to be a part of your family.

I am heavily indebted to Universities UK, who graciously granted me an Overseas Research Scholarship award for the years 2003–2006, and to the University of Sheffield, who provided a scholarship for the tuition fees not covered by the ORS. Without the help of these two institutions this project would not have progressed beyond the initial stages of research.

I especially appreciate the supervision and guidance provided me by Prof. Loveday Alexander, whose interest in my research has been unflinching. I have benefited not only from her positive and enthusiastic feedback on parts of this thesis but especially from her honest and constructive criticism of this thesis's low points (and some dead ends that have not been pursued here). This project has been considerably improved because of her involvement with it; any infelicities in the following pages are the result of my own failure to heed her advice.

Finally, I must mention my wife, Andrea, for her tireless and unwavering encouragement. Thank you for believing that I could finish this thesis even when I wanted to give up. Thank you for doing whatever was necessary to free up my time to read (and too often, to buy) yet another book or write another page or attend another conference. Thank you giving me the most beautiful daughter, Janelle Helena (born Wednesday, 9 November 2005), who has delayed the completion of this project by at least eighteen months. I would surrender all my hopes and dreams for you and for her; without you I would not have any hopes and dreams. I love you.

## Abbreviations

AB	The Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
ABRL	The Anchor Bible Reference Library
AJS	<i>American Journal of Sociology</i>
AJT	<i>Asia Journal of Theology</i>
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
ARS	<i>Annual Review of Sociology</i>
ASR	<i>American Sociological Review</i>
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDAG	Bauer, W., F. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3rd edition. Chicago, 2000
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BJJ	Brown Judaic Studies
BMGS	<i>Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies</i>
BRS	The Biblical Resource Series
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CQ	<i>The Classical Quarterly</i>
CSMC	<i>Critical Studies in Mass Communication</i>
DNTB	<i>Dictionary of New Testament Background</i>
DSD	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
ET	English Translation
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FF	Foundations & Facets
<i>FFFor</i>	<i>Foundations &amp; Facets Forum</i>
<i>FMLS</i>	<i>Forum for Modern Language Studies</i>
<i>HistAfr</i>	<i>History in Africa</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
Huck	Huck, A. <i>Synopsis of the First Three Gospels</i> . 9th edition. Rev. by H. Lietzmann. Trans. by F. L. Cross. Oxford, 1959
<i>HvTSt</i>	<i>Hervormde Teologiese Studies</i>
HW	<i>History Workshop</i>
ICC	The International Critical Commentary
IJOH	<i>International Journal of Oral History</i>
IJPCS	<i>International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
IRS	Issues in Religious Studies
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JAH	<i>Journal of American History</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JGRChJ	<i>Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism</i>
JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
JPN	<i>Journal of Professional Nursing</i>
JSHJ	<i>Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period</i>
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism[
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>

<i>JSP</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
<i>LangCom</i>	<i>Language and Communication</i>
L&N	<i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains</i> . Edited by J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida. 2nd edition. New York, 1989
<i>LSJ</i>	<i>Greek-English Lexicon</i> . Edited by H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. S. Jones. Oxford and New York, 1940
LSTS	Library of Second Temple Studies
NA <sup>27</sup>	<i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> , 27th edition
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
<i>NGC</i>	<i>New German Critique</i>
NIB	The New Interpreter's Bible
NICNT	The New International Commentary on the New Testament
<i>NIDB</i>	<i>The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
<i>NLH</i>	<i>New Literary History</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NTG	New Testament Guides
NTM	New Testament Monographs
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
<i>OGIS</i>	<i>Orientis graeci inscriptiones selectae</i>
<i>OH</i>	<i>Oral History</i>
<i>OHAAJ</i>	<i>Oral History Association of Australia Journal</i>
<i>OT</i>	<i>Oral Tradition</i>
<i>OTP</i>	<i>Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i>
<i>PP</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
<i>PMLA</i>	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association</i>
<i>PT</i>	<i>Poetics Today</i>
SBL	The Society of Biblical Literature
<i>SBLSP</i>	<i>The Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>SF</i>	<i>Social Forces</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Sociological Theory</i>
<i>STRev</i>	<i>Sewanee Theological Review</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
<i>Them</i>	<i>Themelios</i>
<i>TS</i>	<i>Theory and Society</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>



# Part I:

*Introduction*

## Chapter 1

### Jesus Tradition in Memory and Performance

[Early Christians] spoke freely about Jesus. They were neither forced anxiously to read from written texts nor restricted to commenting on them. In all the documents outside the Gospels we see how freely they could speak about Jesus. Where do we find the real Jesus tradition?

Birger Gerhardsson,  
*The Reliability of the Gospel Tradition*, 61

Whether or not Mark and other Gospels existed in written form, they were performed orally and received aurally. Thus, if we are to understand them appropriately in their historical context, we must approach them with sensitivity to oral communication and to how textuality was inter-related with orality.

Richard A. Horsley,  
'Introduction' to *Performing the Gospel*, x

#### 1.1. The Source of the Problem

Gospel scholarship increasingly recognises a disturbing paradox lying at the heart of its area of inquiry: on the one hand, the field is text-based, and we intuitively perceive literary-critical tools (especially source, form, and redaction criticism) as appropriate for the tasks of reconstruction and interpretation.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, scholars increasingly recognise *oral performative contexts*, including all the vagaries associated therewith, as important factors in *how* the gospel texts generated (and invoked) the meanings they conveyed for their original audiences.<sup>2</sup> We have thus stumbled upon a disturbing insight, for New Testament scholars since before the nineteenth century have read the gospels as puzzles that preserve all the pieces or, if some have been lost, critical scholarship can discern their shape (and perhaps their pattern) from what remains. Now, however, we perceive a large gap in the middle of the puzzle, and the possibility that we may know neither the puzzle's size nor all its important themes presents itself. The current project attempts to 'feel around the edges' of that gap, not primarily in an attempt to 'fill in' the missing bits, but rather in order to understand how our ignorance of (or lack of concern for) the gap's existence has misled our efforts to interpret the traditional remains we do have.

First, however, we must recognise our complete lack of access to ancient oral performances of the gospel traditions. Even Whitney Shiner's (2003) appropriate insistence that the texts intended (and so ought) to be heard in performance does not put us in touch with the dynamics of ancient performance. Even so, the question remains: Do the synoptic gospels themselves pro-

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Stanton's robust defence of redaction criticism as the most appropriate tool, which can be supplemented but not replaced by other interpretative methods, for understanding the gospels (1994:23–53).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the essays in Horsley, Draper, and Foley 2006.

vide evidence for their performance? In this project we do not propose a model in which the Jesus tradition in oral performance necessarily resembled (or reproduced) a gospel's text or centred on a public reading of a gospel, nor do we suggest that any or all of the gospels represent the dictated text of an oral performance. Rather, we propose that performances of the Jesus tradition accrued to themselves a sense of stability and repetition by way of multiple performances through time. As a performance in the present patterned itself on a growing corpus of previous performances and installed itself within the community's collective memory, the indicative 'This is how Jesus stories *are* expressed' tended toward the imperative 'This is how Jesus stories *ought to be* expressed', and the two became one. And though each performance was a unique and autonomous event, all of them were perceived as an organic unity embodying a singular — if still multiform — tradition. They *were* the Jesus tradition.<sup>3</sup>

Oral performances evanesce, and performances of the Jesus tradition neither depended upon *script* nor left behind *transcript*.<sup>4</sup> For this reason, we advocate reading the gospel texts not simply as scripts enabling or transcripts recording performance. We cannot critically analyse performances of the Jesus tradition, as entities in their own right; neither can we escape the fundamental problem that oral performances contextualised our texts' reception. Oral performances installed the Jesus tradition in early Christian collective memory and became vital parts of the traditional milieu in which Jesus' earliest followers lived.<sup>5</sup> The dynamics of the installation of Jesus traditions in early Christian memory still require analysis, but we cannot suppose *a priori* that early Jesus traditioning was radically innovative. Rather, the Jesus tradition was *interactive*, impacting and shaping Jesus' followers *even as* they left their marks upon the content and structure of their traditions.

This installation of Jesus in his followers' collective memory binds the elusive oral performances of the Jesus tradition with the extant written gospels, and these latter necessarily form the objects of our analyses.<sup>6</sup> Once again, not that our written gospels preserve records of ~~an individual oral performance~~; rather, they stand in similar relation to the total corpus of Jesus

<sup>3</sup> Thus, though Kelber correctly rejects an evolutionary model of inevitability whereby the oral tradition progressively became the synoptic tradition, he fails to reckon with the probability that the authors of the synoptic gospels were also tradents of the oral tradition. The relationship between written gospel and oral performance is neither contradiction nor evolution but development along one (or more) of a plurality of possible trajectories (*pace* Kelber 1983:xvi–xvii). In other words, our gospels were not inevitable, but neither did they necessarily subvert the oral Jesus tradition (cf. Gerhardsson 1986:49).

<sup>4</sup> This project thus pursues a different agenda than Horsley and Draper 1999 and Shiner 2003. Both of those insightful works approach their texts (Q and Mark, respectively) as scripts enabling performance, whereas the conception here is of a text being received as an *instance of performance*. Kelber has correctly noted, 'Spoken words vanish at the moment of their utterance. For this reason alone, speaking and the principles governing oral transmission are difficult to document' (1983:1). Cf. Foley 1995a; 2002:95–108, and his references to the Ethnopoetic works of D. Tedlock and D. Hymes, for careful discussions of the difficulties of transcribing oral performance (and all the linguistic, paralinguistic, and nonlinguistic elements thereof) into written text.

<sup>5</sup> How could it be otherwise, lest we suppose that the Jesus tradition was performed and immediately released from memory, forgotten, and without impact upon the community and its members, only to be performed again and, eventually, written down?

<sup>6</sup> Dunn (e.g., 2003b; 2004; 2005a) has emphasised the impact Jesus made on his followers, and he has approached the Jesus tradition looking for the various ways that impact — or, more accurately,

dividual oral performance; rather, they stand in similar relation to the total corpus of Jesus tradition (an admittedly theoretical construct) as those performances and thus exhibit similar characteristics. Jesus in early Christian collective memory, which, as we will see,<sup>7</sup> bears in itself the same unpredictable patterns of fixity and fluidity that characterise the relation of any oral performance *vis-à-vis* the totality of the oral-traditional corpus,<sup>8</sup> serves as the thread of continuity that binds oral performances together and to the written gospel traditions.

Insofar as *Jesus* is installed in collective memory, the oral performance of the Jesus tradition mediates the *history* of Jesus, his followers' recollections of his teachings, his actions, and his interactions with those around him, and the impact he had on them as his followers. Thus the value of Samuel Byrskog's recent turn to contemporary oral historiography in his analysis of the relation between Jesus and the extant gospel traditions:<sup>9</sup> inasmuch as the gospels represent *history*, they represent *oral history*. Perhaps here lies a root of the modern difficulty in identifying the gospels as historical texts (or at least in agreeing on what such an identification means).<sup>10</sup> Unlike the form critics, who posed the question of historicity in terms of dispassionate, objective reporting versus persuasive, kerygmatic proclamation, Byrskog affirms that '*oral history is not produced at a distance but exists between the past and the present, relating to both; it is part of the past as well as the life story of the informant*' (2000:107; original italics).<sup>11</sup> At the very least the evangelists and other Jesus tradents believed the historical truth of their traditions, even if 'historical truth' would have meant something different to them than to us. But we cannot assume either that they were completely or mostly wrong or that they were infallibly right, for even the construction of such binary categories misrepresents the information contained in the gospels and the questions this project hopes to ask of them. Jesus' followers spoke of Jesus and did so with the awareness that the events of his life belonged to the past, but they could not but speak of him in the present, and the oral history of Jesus and the gospel traditions were forged in this nexus of past and present.<sup>12</sup>

---

those impacts — became textualised in the synoptic tradition. My reference to the 'installation' of Jesus in his followers' collective memories is similar in concept but attempts to foreground the ways in which the impact (= significance) of Jesus upon his followers is itself a discursive process and not an analytical category to be reified and extrapolated from the extant texts about Jesus.

<sup>7</sup> See the theoretical discussion in Chapter 3, as well as the application of social memory theory to Jesus' healings and exorcisms in the sayings tradition in Part III, below.

<sup>8</sup> See Chapter 4, below.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Byrskog 2000.

<sup>10</sup> Even Gerhardsson, who strongly affirms the historical reliability of the gospel traditions (cf. 2001), acknowledges that 'it will not do . . . to think of our Gospels as copies of a complete and mechanically unaltered recording of Jesus' teaching and of the firsthand reports of witnesses' (1977:41).

<sup>11</sup> While the primary difference between oral and written history must centre on the issue of sources (i.e., what makes a historical account 'oral' or 'written' is not primarily its mode of presentation but rather its use of oral sources [interviews, testimony, etc.] or written sources [memoranda, written communications, etc.]), Part II argues that every historical account, written or oral, mediates between the past and present. Written historical accounts, too, are 'not produced at a distance', even though many, especially modern historiography, attempt to portray themselves as distanced, reserved, objective.

<sup>12</sup> Here the question of the gospels' authorship becomes less critical than frequently thought. The distinction between eyewitness testimony to Jesus and the testimony of those who passed on Jesus stories without ever having seen or heard him directly begins to blur when we take into account the social aspects

More importantly, at least for our attempt to account for ancient oral performance, literary approaches to the gospels treat the written texts as if they themselves *are* the gospel tradition.<sup>13</sup> This chapter's first epigraph, however, suggests the possibility that our extant gospels comprise only one part of the Jesus tradition, and the various ways in which the written texts resonated within the larger tradition *in toto* critically affect our attempts to understand the texts and their mediation of the historical Jesus. While the texts may preserve our primary remains of the early Jesus traditions, they operated within extensive traditional milieux that determined the meanings they generated in communal oral readings and performances.<sup>14</sup> If we can anticipate the discussion in Chapter 2:<sup>15</sup> we do not propose oral sources *between* gospel texts but rather oral tradition and performance *enveloping* and *contextualising* the texts themselves. In this light the gospels are not literary editions or redactions of, or reactions to, each other. Our texts actualise the tradition itself. The gospels, each of them individually and all of them collectively, *are* the Jesus tradition.

Gerhardsson has rightly noted, 'What we have for sure from Early Christianity is the writings preserved in the New Testament. On the other hand, Early Christianity was something more than texts and text production' (1990:497). This 'something more' may prove critical, on closer inspection, for our understanding of the texts, the communities that produced them, and the people/events to which they testify.<sup>16</sup> Gerhardsson's differentiation between 'inner' and 'outer' tradition, and the recognition of verbal, behavioural, institutional, and material tradition as distinct but interdependent expressions of outer tradition, immediately makes visible the point that the written gospel texts are not the comprehensive, totalising expression of the Jesus tradi-

---

of oral history and collective memory (*pace* Bauckham 2006). Regarding oral history: 'One transmits not merely material of an impersonal character, but *experiences what the witnesses have seen and heard*' (Byrskog 2000:107; emphasis added); regarding collective memory: 'Being social presupposes the ability to experience things that happened to the groups to which we belong long before we even joined them as if they were part of our own personal past' (E. Zerubavel 2003:3).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. §2.3.a., below.

<sup>14</sup> We have already rejected the idea that the texts were scripts enabling (or transcripts recording) subsequent oral traditional performances. For the remainder of this project, whenever 'performance of a text' is referred to it should be clear that what is being envisaged need not include the presence of a manuscript, open and available for the performer/'reader' to consult as he performs. This may have been the case, but it was certainly possible for early Christian tradents to perform gospel traditions, and even a gospel itself, without actual recourse to a physical text (or the signs inscribed therein). See Shiner 2003:4, 103–125.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. §2.3.a.i., below.

<sup>16</sup> In a similar vein Pauline scholars do well to remember that Paul's interaction with his churches was not limited to his written communications to them, to which we still have access. Thus the claim sometimes made that Paul hands on very little Jesus tradition as such is, more precisely, the observation that *Paul's letters* hand on very little Jesus tradition. But the letters themselves exhibit a focus upon the person of Jesus as the Christ and, especially, the significance of his death and resurrection, and James Dunn in particular has suggested against the plausibility of Paul founding communities centred on Jesus' identity as the Christ, his death, and his resurrection without also passing on a substantive corpus of Jesus tradition (1997:182–206, esp. pp. 189–195). For an insightful discussion of 'testimony' as an epistemological and hermeneutical category, cf. Bauckham 2006:472–508.

tion.<sup>17</sup> We ought to realise that even the *verbal* tradition transcended and enveloped its expression in written texts.<sup>18</sup>

Thus we find ourselves in a perplexing situation: The oral traditions of Jesus' earliest followers, and the development of those traditions into the mid- and late-first century CE, appear *both* unrecoverable *and* of critical importance for our analyses of what traditional remains do survive (our written gospels). We neither have access to ancient oral performances of the Jesus tradition, to know such basic things as the length and organisation of the material performed, the verbal and sequential relationships between traditional units in performance,<sup>19</sup> the dynamics of performer-audience interactions, etc., nor can we pretend that such performances did not exist. The written gospels did not constitute the traditional milieu in which the earliest Christian movements developed; the gospels' audiences apprehended the texts within those milieux. This project intends to explore the plausibility and significance of this observation.<sup>20</sup>

We have thus far emphasised dynamics of stability, fixity, and continuity versus variability, fluidity, and development within oral-traditional milieux, but we must recognise these same dynamics as characteristic of the textual, chirographic expressions of the Jesus tradition.<sup>21</sup> Not that oral and written traditions were fixed-but-fluid in the same ways; in fact, oral and textual

---

<sup>17</sup> Notice the cautionary comment by Innes: 'Ultimately, oral tradition, unlike writing, can be radically reshaped by changes in social, political and cultural contexts, and can fall into oblivion without acts of conscious destruction. It needs a mnemonic, a social focus for memory. *The attractive scope of theories about remembered formulae underpinning poetic tradition should not lead us to underestimate the variety of mechanisms by which stories can be transmitted over time without writing*, and the different functions which oral traditions can fulfil' (1998:34; my emphasis). Written texts, too, could be 'radically reshaped' in our cultural milieu, both as a result of scribal transmission and of shifting interpretative frameworks (cf. Jaffee's discussion [2001:8] of 'text-interpretive tradition', as well as Stock 1983; Thatcher 1998; Ehrman 1993; 2005).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Foley 2002:23–26.

<sup>19</sup> I prefer to speak of 'traditional units' (or units of tradition) as opposed to 'pericopae' simply to avoid the form-critical implication that such units necessarily circulated independently. It is undeniable that individual traditional units could be moved about and sequenced according to various and multiple (which is not to say infinite) schemes, but this does not in itself evince the corollary that Jesus' tradents necessarily transmitted these units separately and without relation to one another (cf. also Boomershine 1987:62). Though the evidence of Rom. 12.9, 14, 17, 20; Jas. 2.11, 13; and esp. Acts 20.35; 2 Pet. 1.17–18 shows that individual traditions could be *transmitted* independently, this does not necessitate that they were *received* apart from the larger Jesus tradition (cf. §§2.3.; 4.3.c., below). Here Loveday Alexander's distinction (1986:68) between 'biographical anecdotes' and 'biography as such' is helpful; the form-critical perspective on 'pericopae' assumes that early Christian communities had an interest in the former but not in the latter. Instead, we should recognise that Acts and the New Testament letters provide evidence of 'biographical anecdotes' that serve other purposes, while the gospels provide evidence of interest in 'biography as such'. Cf. also L. Alexander 2006:20. (This distinction, of course, is analytic rather than actual; 'It is these "biographical" anecdotes that form the backbone of the ancient biographical tradition' [L. Alexander 2006:24].)

<sup>20</sup> Todd Klutz also insists on reading the exorcism stories of Luke-Acts in a more carefully reconstructed approximation of their original context (2004:4–5), though he is not focussing on the oral-performative dynamics we highlight here. Even so, his emphasis on 'sociostylistics', in which 'stylistic analysis of any given text gives careful attention not only to the linguistic structures of the text itself but also to the various kinds of extratextual forces that constrained and shaped the text's production in the first place' (2004:16), is similar to our concern, where the 'extratextual forces' to which we are drawing attention are specifically oral-performative forces.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Doane 1991:82–83; 106, fn 13 for a discussion of the term 'chirographic'.

traditions could develop in different ways.<sup>22</sup> But first-century CE Jews and Christians (if we can maintain those distinctions of convenience for just a moment) conceptualised ‘text’ much less rigidly than we do. Jaffee’s observation with respect to rabbinic literature applies equally to the gospels:

The line between the authorial creator of a book, its scribal copyists, and its interpretive audience was a rather blurry one and was often crossed in ways no longer retrievable by literary criticism of the surviving texts. To the degree that a book *was* its oral declamation and aural appropriation (rather than its mere material copy), the manuscript substrate of the book often bore the influence of the performative contexts in which it was shared. (Jaffee 2001:18; original italics)

Boomershine has highlighted the issue of the fluidity of traditions embodied within a plurality of written texts. He suggests that the use of written texts in the creation of other texts, and thus (inter)dependence between them, is not restricted to copying (in the case of similarities) and editing (in the case of differences). Instead, fixity and fluidity between texts *were part and parcel of the way written texts were accessed in a traditional milieu in the first place*. In deconstructing the opposition between the oral and the written gospel proposed by Kelber (1983), Boomershine rejects Kelber’s distinction between sound and silence: ‘The gospel continued to be read aloud. The transition from the oral to the written gospel in Mark’s context was not a transition from sound to silence but from sounds recomposed by a storyteller to sounds read from a manuscript’ (1987:61). Surely we ought not assume that, after the first gospel was written, access to the gospel traditions shifted from *storytelling* to *reading aloud*; storytellers could perform the tradition without the manuscript in front of them and even without ever having had exposure to a written text.<sup>23</sup>

‘Memory’, as well as reading aloud, overcomes the sound/silence dichotomy. ‘The basic change’, says Boomershine, ‘between the memorization of oral traditions and the memorization of manuscripts is the much higher degree of word for word memory in manuscript memorization. However, *the memorization and recomposition of manuscripts is an entirely different process from the editing of documents*’ (1987:61–62; emphasis added). Boomershine is certainly correct,<sup>24</sup> but he has over-emphasised memory-as-memorization and obscured the varied ways in which memory itself is variable and dynamic.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, we can affirm his larger point: written tradition,

---

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Fentress and Wickham 1992:9.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. fn 14, above.

<sup>24</sup> On what basis can we deny the possibility that any of the evangelists were familiar with and, perhaps, dependent upon written sources but accessed those sources without actually gazing upon them as material objects in the composition of their own texts? Even Talbert’s claim that ‘divergent wording is no obstacle to our viewing the Synoptic Problem as a literary one’ (1978:95) is not an argument that the relationships between the synoptics is literary, and in fact Talbert leaves unasked the very important question Boomershine is raising: What do we mean by ‘literary’? Thus the question raised in §2.3.a.i., below: Can we envisage the synoptic gospels being *both* literarily interdependent *and* oral traditional?

<sup>25</sup> That is, we ought not assume that the arrival of Mark’s gospel effected a shift from ‘memorization of oral traditions’ to ‘memorization of manuscripts’. As this project will attempt to argue, such a shift is motivated by an elevation of Mark’s *text* as *the* authoritative/canonical expression of the tradition rather than by the mere appearance of that text on papyrus or parchment. Inasmuch as this elevation has not occurred in the earliest reception history of the text, Mark’s gospel was apprehended as *one example* (among

like (and certainly no less than) oral tradition, is itself caught within the interacting ebb and flow of stability and malleability, each implicated in the other, so that stability does not equal preservation and malleability does not equal redaction. Fixity and fluidity belong together; both characterise aspects of the continuity and development of gospel traditions.

### 1.2. The Plan of this Project

The remainder of Part I provides a brief survey of contemporary 'historical Jesus' research (from 1985 to the present), particularly with respect to three issues vital for the project of reconstructing images of the 'historical Jesus'. First, we assess the question of the place of 'criteria of historical authenticity' in this research, examining their function and the results critics can reasonably expect from their use. Second, we examine the rift between those who propose an eschatologically orientated Jesus against those who insist on a sapiential figure. Third, we discuss the increasing awareness in Jesus research of the dynamics of oral tradition and how that awareness can generate an approach to interpreting and assessing the gospel traditions and the access they grant to the 'real' Jesus of Nazareth. After we have surveyed 'historical Jesus' research, we turn our attention to problems that have plagued gospels research on account of our conceptualisation of 'Jesus traditions' as written, textual phenomena. Here we conceptualise the gospels as 'oral-derived texts', a concept we explicate more fully in Chapter 4.

If Part I traces the rough outlines of the problem this project hopes to address, Part II establishes the perspective from which we hope to achieve some progress *vis-à-vis* this problem. Chapter 3 surveys the inter-disciplinary discussion of social memory theory. This discussion, rooted in the work of Maurice Halbwachs, examines the role of social frames in shaping and directing the memory of individuals within the context of a larger group. Similarly, and especially with respect to the works of Barry Schwartz, this discussion has reversed the terms and examined memory itself as a social frame affecting and constraining social and political discourse. Thus we propose a model whereby past and present relate to each other in terms of an interactive, dialectic process in which social actors seek to understand both past and present in terms of the other. The past exhibits a continuity related to the continuity of social groups through time; succeeding generations cannot reconstruct the past without reference to previous generations' memories. Even so, as new issues, problems, and situations arise and challenge the stability of the social order, new aspects of the past become relevant and others wane in significance, so that images of the past fluctuate. We then examine 'reputation' as a specific instance of the more general term 'the past'. Reputations of historical figures vary across social boundaries and through time, but that is *not* to say that the same figures are unrecognisable in other groups or epochs. This perspective has important consequences for 'historical Jesus' programmes, which we attempt to carry through to our discussion in Part III.

---

others) of the Jesus tradition in performance. Certainly Matthew and Luke, according to the Two-Source Hypothesis, constitute evidence that Mark's *text* was not originally perceived as sacrosanct.



Before we turn to the Jesus tradition itself, Chapter 4 raises the question of oral tradition and oral-derived texts. Unlike social memory theory, which has only recently been applied to New Testament studies,<sup>26</sup> oral traditional research has been waxing for over twenty years. As such, we first address confusions that research has introduced into discussions of ‘orality’ and ‘oral cultures’ (as well as of ‘literacy’). We can then discuss the relationship between oral performance and textual expression, and we can especially appreciate the ‘weight’ of the diachronic experience of oral performance bearing upon subsequent performances and the reception of written texts under the ‘pressure’ of that weight. Written texts, then, are synchronic expressions of the tradition that incorporate in their synchrony the tradition’s diachrony. Thus we have to explore the ways extratextual tradition enables our texts to generate meaning within the interactional context of oral performance. Turning to the work of John Miles Foley, we will see that meaning is not *contained within* so much as it is *invoked by* the text. The text, rather than dictating the tradition’s meaning to the earliest Jesus communities, *became the means by which that meaning was accessed*. As critical historians we must be aware of the mechanisms embedded within the text by which it refers to its larger extratextual context.

Part III approaches the tradition of Jesus’ healing and exorcistic activities embedded in the sayings tradition from the perspective we established in Part II. Chapter 5 examines the tradition in Matt. 11.2–6//Luke 7.18–23, the story of John the Baptist’s question to Jesus, σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἢ ἕτερον προσδοκῶμεν; and Jesus’ apparently circuitous answer. Jesus’ response draws upon various Isaianic traditions of restoration (scattered throughout what is critically known as Deutero-Isaiah), though the precise relations between these texts and Jesus’ response have proved elusive. We will move the discussion beyond the consideration of *texts* to examine Jesus’ response in light of Israelite *tradition*. This leads to a refined understanding of Jesus’ earliest followers’ assessment of Jesus and his significance and offers at least the possibility of glimpsing something of Jesus’ own self-assessment. Though conclusions regarding Jesus’ view of himself must remain tentative, the way is opened up, hermeneutically speaking, to interpret this passage coherently within the context of Jesus’ Galilean activities (and not simply as an aspect of early Christian propaganda).

Chapter 6 turns to the much-discussed appearance of Jesus in Nazareth and his reception there as it appears in Luke 4.14–30. Though discussion of this tradition has centred on questions of Luke’s source, creativity, and purpose, our efforts focus on Luke’s actualisation of tradition that has a plausible claim to precede Luke’s writing. That is, the tradition in Luke 4.16ff., though distinct from that in 7.18–23, exhibits a similar *ethos* and may provide a glimpse into how Luke was able to work within the stable core of the Jesus tradition to address a new concern: to narrate the advance of the gospel from Jesus and his Galilean/Judean contexts to

---

<sup>26</sup> Cf. the essays in Kirk and Thatcher 2005b; Horsley, Draper, and Foley 2006; see also Gerhardsson 2005; Dunn 2005a; Bauckham 2006.

the ἐκκλησία and its wider Mediterranean, Greco-Roman contexts. The question here, as in Chapter 5, does not focus on issues of ‘authenticity’ or ‘inauthenticity’, as if categorising our texts as one or the other represented a significant advance in knowledge. Rather, we focus on contextual questions: What might our passage mean in the context of Jesus’ activity? Granted that Luke utilised traditional materials when writing/performing Luke 4.14–30, how did he manipulate those traditional accounts to pursue his own agenda? And, finally, how has Luke’s performative/authorial activities preserved pre-formed images (reputations) of Jesus even as he transformed Jesus’ reputation in his gospel (and in Acts).

Chapter 7 turns to the controversy generated by Jesus’ exorcistic activities and the response of those who opposed him (esp. Matt. 12.22–28//Mark 3.20–26//Luke 11.14–20). Despite the perspective generated by the widespread reading of these texts in terms of the sociology of deviance, critical analyses have nevertheless focussed on Jesus as an *individual* deviant and missed many of the wider socio-political dynamics that generated the so-called Beelzebul controversy and continued to characterise Jewish-Christian polemics long after the traditions were expressed in our written texts. Jesus’ response to his opponents in terms of ‘the Spirit/finger of God’, generally attributed to Q 11.20 (though cf. §7.1, below), embeds his exorcistic activities within Israelite tradition. Thus Jesus can understand his exorcisms — a comparatively recent innovation in Second-Temple Judaic socio-politico-theology — in terms continuous with genuinely ancient aspects of his traditional milieu. This is not merely ‘invention of tradition’, neither is it simply the ‘homeostatic’ relationship between the past and the present characteristic of traditional societies.<sup>27</sup> Instead, Jesus’ turn to the past (Israelite tradition) to express the significance of the present (his exorcisms) illustrates one of the powerful ways ancient persons could orientate themselves in a foreign and overwhelming present in the familiar and comforting images of a cherished past. Of course such ‘keying’ of past and present also served discursive and polemical purposes in the present,<sup>28</sup> but that does not negate the quality of the past *as past* as a resource to be shaped and used in the present.

### 1.3. Getting Underway

One last point: This project proposes a hypothesis and attempts to test that hypothesis. Part III is the ‘experiment’ that tests, verifies, and/or modifies the perspective developed in Part II. Our goal is *not* an exegesis of the healings/exorcistic traditions, either *in toto* or as represented in the sayings tradition. Rather, we are trying to flesh out a method to pursue historical-critical and hermeneutical questions regarding the gospels and their witness to the historical Jesus. *That* is what this project is about; the sayings that refer to Jesus’ healings and exorcisms are merely the field in which we localise the global questions (regarding Jesus and the gospels’ interpretations) and pursue them in detail.

---

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Goody 1968.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. §3.3.a. for a discussion of keying and framing as processes of social memory.

## Chapter 2

### Contemporary 'Historical Jesus' and Gospels Research

What novelty the present study has lies in its rejection of a large number of current clichés dealing with history or the history of Jesus.

Ben F. Meyer,  
*The Aims of Jesus*, 21

It is imperative to pay singular attention to the texts in their present form. This is not denying that the gospels represent literary compositions with deep and tangled diachronic roots in oral and written traditions. But the point the narratological explication of the gospels is making is that there are overarching plot constructions, numerous subplots, thematically inspired figurations and compositional arrangements of various kinds that effect a reconfiguring of the traditional legacy.

Richard A. Horsley,  
'The Verbal Art in Q and Thomas', 27–28

#### 2.1. Introduction: A Survey of Two Fields

We can say, with very little exaggeration, that scholars have approached 'historical Jesus' research and gospels research as distinct, if overlapping, areas of inquiry. This is evident, for example, in the dominant narrative chronicling the development of 'historical Jesus' research, which has characterised the period between Schweitzer's *Von Reimarus zu Wrede* (1906) and Käsemann's *Das Problem des historischen Jesu* (1953) as the 'No Quest'.<sup>1</sup> In other words, for a period in which gospels research was clearly thriving, asking new questions and developing new methods to pursue answers, scholars widely accept that Jesus research was nowhere to be found. These must be two separate (or at least separable) fields of scholarship. Despite the current state of affairs, in which both the 'historical Jesus' and the (intra- and extracanonical) gospels are dynamic, vibrant fields of research, they nevertheless proceed surprisingly independently. While this situation may be justifiable, this project (and the current chapter in particular) attempts to situate itself firmly within both areas of inquiry. Hopefully this will shed some light on problematic procedures and conclusions in both fields and lead to further understanding of the historical Jesus as well as of the accounts of his life and teaching.

#### 2.2. Issues in Contemporary 'Historical Jesus' Research

Book-length surveys of 'historical Jesus' research are widely available;<sup>2</sup> time and space constrain us to a much more limited task. We focus on three key problems facing Jesus research

---

<sup>1</sup> This narrative has come under recent criticism; e.g., Porter 2004b.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Borg 1991; 1994; Powell 1998; Witherington 1995. More recently, Dunn's review, though impressive in scope, exhibits significant problems, not least that his organising schema ('The Flight from Dogma' [2003b:25–65] and 'The Flight from History' [2003b:67–97]) does not helpfully organise the data of the history of 'historical Jesus' research. For example, Dunn mentions Kähler under 'The

from 1985 to the present.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the remainder of §2.2. we will address (a) the question of criteria in 'historical Jesus' research, (b) the question of sapiential versus eschatological perspectives of Jesus, and (c) the question of oral versus written traditions in reconstructions of the 'historical Jesus'. Other issues (e.g., Jesus' Jewishness, the disjunction between Jesus' and his followers' theology, etc.), which themselves deserve attention, are excluded simply on the basis of space constraints.

### 2.2.a. Jesus, History, and Criteria of Authenticity

Though a number of critics provide careful discussions of the criteria and their utilisation,<sup>4</sup> others seem quite content to invoke the criteria haphazardly, particularly when one of them supports a point made on other grounds.<sup>5</sup> This is particularly problematic, especially since even very careful discussions have not alleviated the philosophical and historiographical problems plaguing invocations of the criteria.<sup>6</sup> Even so, we can appreciate why scholars propose and utilise criteria of authenticity, even if the results fall well short of what has been (at least implicitly) promised. We consider the nature and function of the criteria now.

#### 2.2.a.i. Rules for Histor[icit]y

Two factors drive the quest for criteria of authenticity. First, inasmuch as historiography must be a critical enterprise, the historian's stance *vis-à-vis* her sources is typically sceptical. Critics have variously defined 'scepticism' as a hermeneutical principle, from Wright's 'hermeneutic of love' (1992:63–64), which espouses a stance of questioning that seeks to understand the text on its own terms, through Meier's 'unpapal conclave' (1991:1–2, *passim*), which seeks a consensual statement on what historians can say without ideological interference (either religious, variously conceived, or irreligious), and on to the Jesus Seminar's stance that 'supposedly historical elements in these narratives must therefore be demonstrated to be so' (Funk, Hoover, *et al.* 1993:5). Given this diversity of perspectives, even if we could secure 'objective' criteria of historical authenticity, we would still have problems determining the application of those 'objective' criteria. This is no small problem, as Meier demonstrates with considerable success.<sup>7</sup> At the

Flight from Dogma', while critics significantly more committed to historical-critical method (e.g., Käsemann, Bornkamm, Vermes, E. P. Sanders, *inter alios*) appear in the discussion of 'The Flight from History'!

<sup>3</sup> The choice of 1985 as a starting point is, like starting points in general, arbitrary; it was in 1985 that Robert W. Funk founded the Jesus Seminar and E. P. Sanders's *Jesus and Judaism* was published. This in many ways makes for an abrupt and uncomfortable entrance into the history of historical Jesus research, and we will make every effort to be sensitive to the development of this body of research prior to 1985. Others (e.g., Patterson) have also identified the 1980s as 'a decade of rejuvenated historical interest in Jesus' (2001b:69; Patterson, not surprisingly, focuses on the founding of the Jesus Seminar).

<sup>4</sup> For discussions of criteria and their use in Jesus research, cf. Meyer 1979:76–94; Stein 1980; Boring 1988; Meier 1991:167–195; Theissen and Winter 1997; Eve 2005; *inter alios*. Crossan's discussion (1991:xxviii–xxxiv) is not primarily concerned with the traditional criteria but is pursued for largely the same purposes.

<sup>5</sup> E.g., Sanders 1985:268, where the criterion of dissimilarity, which lacks any programmatic force in Sanders's book, is invoked to support the authenticity of Matt. 8.22/Luke 9.60. Cf. also Fredrikson 1988; 1999.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. in particular Eve 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Meier 1991:167–195.

broadest level we need to ask, Must a tradition 'pass muster' to be granted a place in our reconstructions of the 'historical Jesus', or must it fail the test to be excluded? These represent very different standards of judgement with dramatic consequences for our images of the 'historical Jesus'.<sup>8</sup> The quest for criteria is largely, therefore, the quest for an 'appropriately sceptical' historical-critical perspective.

Second, the perception that the gospels are 'hybrid texts', combinations of history and theology, drives the quest for criteria of authenticity.<sup>9</sup> As such, Jesus research attempts to isolate historical kernels from the texts and leave behind the husks of the early communities' (or the evangelists') theologies. For example,

All critical scholars agree that the gospels contain both historically reliable material based on memories about Jesus, and historically unreliable material based on his followers' interpretations of his life, death, and teaching. The task of historical criticism is to analyze this complex blend of memory and interpretation in order to distinguish what should be attributed to the historical Jesus and what should be attributed either to progressive elaboration by the rank and file of early Christians who passed on the stories about him, or to the focused creativity of the individual gospel writers. (Miller 2001b:2)

Jesus scholars employ the criteria in their attempts to perform this task with, ideally, a modicum of objectivity. Even so, as already suggested, the ideal of objectivity is still an ideal; the appeal for and appearance of objectivity has become increasingly spurious.<sup>10</sup> Even Meier's strikingly even-handed and cautious work, which claims repeatedly to restrain itself to 'a certain "low-level" of interpretation' (1994:14, fn 6),<sup>11</sup> exhibits numerous presuppositions and predispositions and trades in scholarly (i.e., personal) decision-making. Meier's treatment of the historical evidence is none the worse for all of this, but neither is it any more 'objective'. Finally, as will be discussed below, serious problems plague the assumption that the traditions preserved within our texts can

---

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Meyer 1979:86–87.

<sup>9</sup> Among myriad possible examples, cf. Crossan 1973:5: 'Since creative reinterpretation by the primitive church is the presupposition of the whole problem, a rigorous negativity must be invoked to separate what Jesus said or did from what the tradition records of his words and deeds. One must look especially for divergence between this earliest form and the general attitude of the primitive church. Only when such can be discerned can one be methodologically sure that it stems from the historical Jesus and not from the creativity of the church.' In the last three decades, of course, scholars have acknowledged that we cannot treat 'the general attitude of the primitive church' as a known entity to be subtracted from the gospels to reveal Jesus pure and uninterpreted.

<sup>10</sup> The term 'spurious' comes from Crossan 1991:xxxiv. There is a certain tension here; on the one hand, Crossan writes, 'I knew, therefore, before starting this book that it could not be another set of conclusions jostling for place among the numerous scholarly images of the historical Jesus currently available' (1991:xxviii). The irony, of course, is that that is exactly what his book is. On the other hand, it is doubtful that Crossan, who elsewhere claims 'I am concerned, not with an unattainable objectivity, but with an attainable honesty' (1991:xxxiv), ever seriously thought it could be otherwise. Is the implication, then, that other attempts at the 'historical Jesus' failed to reach the standard of 'attainable honesty'? Cf. Funk (1996:3) for a similar 'aspiration to honesty'.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. also Meier 1991:10–11. Meier's concession ('To be sure, *A Marginal Jew* works with presuppositions, but they are the general presuppositions of historiography' [1994:14, fn 6]) is insufficient, especially in that there are no recognised (and therefore negligible) 'general presuppositions of historiography'. All of this mitigates the force of his statement, in the same note, that '*A Marginal Jew* attempts as much as possible to let any overarching interpretation of Jesus and his work emerge gradually and naturally out of the convergence of the data judged historical. In particular, *A Marginal Jew* does not intend to impose on the data any predetermined interpretive grid, be it political, economic, or sociological.'

be separated categorically as 'authentic' or 'inauthentic'; indeed, real questions attend to whether these terms have any probative meaning in the first place.

But even if the criteria of historical authenticity do not deliver on their promise of objectivity in sifting through the gospel traditions,<sup>12</sup> do they retain any value as a check against rampant subjectivity? As we will see shortly, the empirical evidence of their use in diverse reconstructions of the 'historical Jesus' suggests even this is doubtful. If anything, the criteria are useful insofar (and only insofar) as they provide the most transparent glimpses onto how particular Jesus scholars conceive of their historiographical tasks. For instance, Meier's preference for and frequent appeal to the criterion of multiple attestation suggests his satisfaction to conceptualise the 'historical Jesus' as the product of testimony from apparently independent sources.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, Funk's heavy reliance on a criterion of dissimilarity, which seeks to distinguish Jesus from the Jewish-Galilean milieu in which he lived and from the interests and concerns of those who followed after him, rests upon two assumptions: (a) that the 'historical Jesus' was (and must be kept) distinct from each and every one of his contemporaries, and (b) that he was (and must be kept) distinct from who his later followers thought he was.<sup>14</sup> In other words, the criteria of authenticity function as vehicles of our subjectivities rather than checks against them. Inasmuch as they provide handles on our presuppositions they retain some value, but they do not help scholars distinguish 'authentic' from 'inauthentic' traditions. As Dunn has recently noted, 'the lengthy debate from the 1960s onwards about appropriate criteria for recognition of the actual words of Jesus has not been able to produce much agreement about the criteria, let alone their application. All this is seen as simply demonstrating the inadequacies of the historical method as traditionally conceived' (Dunn 2003b:97).

### **2.2.a.ii. Jesus without the Criteria**

As suggested above, not every Jesus critic sets out to reconstruct the 'historical Jesus' by first enumerating and discussing the criteria by which her work will proceed. These scholars are not 'uncritical' (or, worse, 'dishonest') about how they categorise traditions as 'authentic' or 'inauthentic'. Rather, an alternative method of constructing one's image of Jesus begins with a conscious rejection of reliance upon criteria and the atomistic categorisation of individual units of tradition as 'authentic' or 'inauthentic'. Two approaches have generally been taken.

---

<sup>12</sup> Allison (1998:6) is worth quoting here: 'Whether or not one shares my misgivings about dissimilarity, coherence, and embarrassment, it is certain that they and other criteria have not led us into the promised land of scholarly consensus. If our tools were designed to overcome subjectivity and bring order to our discipline, then they have failed.'

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Eve 2005; Crossan's programmatic 'bracketing of singularity' is similar, though his judgement regarding which sources are 'independent' is generally viewed as highly problematic.

<sup>14</sup> 'We are faced with a double distinction. We must compare and contrast Jesus with his contemporaries in order to distinguish Jesus from other Galileans. But we must also distinguish Jesus from the reports about him preserved in the gospels, since that Jesus is the product, in large part, of his early admirers. Those reports will obscure as well as reveal' (Funk 1996:58).

First, E. P. Sanders began his reconstruction of Jesus by enumerating ‘almost indisputable facts’ about Jesus,<sup>15</sup> and these form the ‘bedrock’ of Jesus tradition (1985:10). Sanders isolates number five (‘Jesus engaged in a controversy about the temple’; 1985:11) as ‘a point of entry for the study of Jesus’ career and historical setting’ (1985:12). Though Sanders began with ‘the facts’, his reconstruction goes beyond them and involves considerable interpretation of the facts and how they should figure in our own critical historiographical efforts. Jesus did *not*, says Sanders, demonstrate or protest against ‘Judaism’ *per se*; rather, he enacted a prophetic demonstration of the Temple’s impending destruction. But Sanders has already noted that most, if not every, Jew (including Jesus) would have viewed the Temple and all its functions as instituted by God; ‘On what conceivable grounds could Jesus have undertaken to attack — and symbolize the destruction of — what was ordained by God? The obvious answer is that destruction, in turn, looks towards restoration’ (1985:71). The link between destruction and restoration has not been as obvious to others, but we point out here simply that Sanders moves beyond the facts to argue for particular *interpretations* of the facts.<sup>16</sup>

Though Sanders’s approach explicitly and programmatically opposes that of the Jesus Seminar (cf. Hoover 2002a; McGaughy 2002), it is not altogether different from that of one of its prominent members. Marcus Borg (1984) begins with a fairly secure fact from Jesus’ activity: ‘One of the most conspicuous and controversial aspects of the renewal movement founded by Jesus was its table fellowship, *a practice* that marked the ministry of Jesus himself; it was perhaps “the central feature” of his ministry’ (1984:78–79; citing Perrin 1967; my italics). Borg insists: ‘Jesus’ table fellowship had meaning *as an act*; it was a “parabolic action”’ (1984:93; original italics). More programmatically, Borg begins not with criteria of authenticity but with ‘a typology of religious figures’ in order to portray the ‘historical Jesus’ (cf. 1984:12–13). Fredriksen (1999) follows much the same approach, though she starts with different facts<sup>17</sup> and attributes to them very different meanings.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Sanders 1985:11, which includes eight such facts. Sanders later expanded his list to include fifteen facts (1993:10–11).

<sup>16</sup> This is not a criticism of Sanders’s work; it is unclear how it could be otherwise. Rather, this is a point that Sanders’s ‘fact-based’ approach shares in common with the Jesus Seminar’s and Meier’s emphasis on isolating ‘data’ via the use of criteria. That is, even if Funk or Meier could objectively isolate data that could then be pressed to reveal something of the ‘real’ Jesus, they would still have to decide what those data meant for their reconstructions. This point is plainly admitted by Fredriksen (1999:7).

<sup>17</sup> ‘The single most solid fact about Jesus’ life is his death: he was executed by the Roman prefect Pilate, on or around Passover, in the manner Rome reserved particularly for political insurrectionists, namely, crucifixion. . . . [The] second incontrovertible fact we have from the earliest movement [is]: Though Jesus was executed as a political insurrectionist, his followers were not’ (Fredriksen 1999:8, 9). Funnily enough, though Sanders lists the Temple incident as a bedrock ‘fact’, Fredriksen doubts that such an event took place (cf. 1999:234, *passim*).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. the helpful summary of Fredriksen’s incredible position (1999:265).

Second, other critics have eschewed atomistic analyses of the Jesus tradition and the criteria that facilitate such analyses without proposing lists of unassailable facts. Wright, for example, rejects outright the notion that the quest for data must precede the quest for Jesus:<sup>19</sup>

What is afoot . . . is not the detailed objective study of individual passages, leading up to a new view of Jesus and the early church. *It is a particular view of Jesus and the early church, working its way through into a detailed list of sayings that fit with this view.* Once this is recognized, it should also be seen that the real task, still awaiting all students of Jesus, is that of major hypothesis and serious verification, not pseudo-atomistic work on apparently isolated fragments. (Wright 1996:33; original italics)

This point requires emphasis: Wright proposes not a *new* approach to the problem of the ‘historical Jesus’; rather, he doubts that local questions (regarding the authenticity of individual Jesus traditions) have ever been pursued without attending to global questions (regarding the totalising image of Jesus to which one subscribes).<sup>20</sup> Wright wants to acknowledge this up front and go about proposing his ‘historical Jesus’ accordingly. Wright’s procedure, though it moves forward using the rhetoric of criteria,<sup>21</sup> pursues a task fundamentally different than the task generally pursued via the criteria: not authentication of individual traditions but verification of larger hypotheses.

Allison (1998; 2001c) proposes a similar procedure. After a tour de force critiquing the major criteria of authenticity,<sup>22</sup> Allison cogently argues against the historical programme that typically appeals to criteria. Unlike Wright, who insists all ‘pseudo-atomistic work’ on Jesus already presupposes something of the ‘historical Jesus’, Allison questions the extent to which scepticism can actually facilitate Jesus research.<sup>23</sup> On the one hand, distinguishing ‘authentic’ and ‘inauthentic’ traditions resembles ‘separat[ing] chemical compounds with a knife. . . . Why should we think that contributing apocryphal material to the Jesus tradition is something that, two thousand years after the fact, we can regularly detect?’ (1998:33). On the other hand, the relationship between the gospels’ reliability and our ability to know anything about Jesus is inverse: the more the evangelists ‘got it wrong’ the more difficult for us to know. ‘It is precarious to

---

<sup>19</sup> Though Wright (and others as well; cf. Theissen and Winter 1997; Dunn 2003b) couches his investigation in terms of ‘criteria’ (viz., the double criterion of similarity and dissimilarity; e.g., 1996:131–132), he has in view a fundamentally different conception of the tasks of historiography.

<sup>20</sup> Irrespective of one’s perspective of Wright’s own work, his point here is compelling. Notice, for example, the two ‘rules of written evidence’ listed in the Jesus Seminar’s discussion of ‘False Attribution’ (Funk, Hoover, *et al.* 1993:22–23): ‘Words borrowed from the fund of common lore or the Greek scriptures are often put on the lips of Jesus. . . . The evangelists frequently attribute their own statements to Jesus’. These are proposed as tools to help sift through the Jesus traditions, but they sound strikingly like conclusions (or, at least, hypotheses) about Jesus and his early tradents. They are none the worse for being hypotheses, but they must then be evaluated differently. See also Crossan 1988:10.

<sup>21</sup> ‘Along with the much-discussed “criterion of dissimilarity” must go a criterion of double similarity: when something can be seen to be credible (though perhaps deeply subversive) within first-century Judaism, *and* credible as the implied starting-point (though not the exact replica) of something in later Christianity, there is a strong possibility of our being in touch with the genuine history of Jesus’ (Wright 1996:132).

<sup>22</sup> Dissimilarity, coherence, embarrassment, and multiple attestation (Allison 1998:1–7).

<sup>23</sup> Allison does not, however, recommend discarding the criteria altogether, if for no other reason than he has ‘not turned up anything better’ (cf. 1998:6–7).



urge that we can find the truth about Jesus on the basis of a few dozen sayings deemed to be authentic if those sayings are interpreted contrary to the general impressions conveyed by the early tradition in its entirety. . . . Here skepticism devours itself. The conclusion refutes the premises' (1998:45).<sup>24</sup> Accordingly, Allison argues Jesus must have had a strong eschatological orientation. The tradition establishes his role as a prophet announcing the eschaton apart from considerations of individual traditions so clearly that, should individual traditions contradict this notion, those traditions (and not our conclusions) would be called into question (1998:44).<sup>25</sup>

We ought remember that, as mentioned above, Sanders refers to the criteria when they support conclusions he has made on other bases, and Wright similarly utilises criteria to coherently formulate his historiographical project. Allison, too, returns to the criteria when he considers 'the problem of authenticating individual complexes and topics' (1998:51–54).<sup>26</sup> Of course, Allison does not establish a database from which his image of the 'historical Jesus' can be constructed; rather, his use of the criteria is 'guided by the paradigm of Jesus as eschatological prophet and the working hypothesis that [particular] themes, motifs, and strategies . . . go back to Jesus himself' (1998:51). None of what has been said here (§2.2.a.) suggests that 'criteria' are without value in historical Jesus research; we are trying to put the criteria in an appropriate context. They are less criteria 'of historical authenticity' and more components of larger historical arguments. We can now consider their 'proper use'.

### 2.2.a.iii. Jesus Traditions: Authentic, Inauthentic, Neither, Both

Two points require our attention, and that only briefly. First, as Elizabeth Tonkin has argued regarding the critical practice of oral history, a fatal flaw confronts our categorical thinking: *either authentic or inauthentic*.

Professional historians who use the recollections of others cannot just scan them for useful facts to pick out, like currants from a cake. Any such facts are so embedded in the representation that it directs an interpretation of them, and its very ordering, its plotting and its metaphors bear meaning too. (Tonkin 1992:6)<sup>27</sup>

Tonkin's admonition calls into question a whole sector of Jesus research, in which scholars have explicitly pursued programmes of decontextualisation, authentication, and recontextualisation.<sup>28</sup> The Jesus Seminar's 'authentication' of, for example, '. . . you must be as sly as a snake and as simple as a dove'<sup>29</sup> not only fails to provide any plausible interpretation of this logion, it also

---

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Allison 2001c:25–26.

<sup>25</sup> Allison's argument is well and carefully made, though here he clearly overstates his case (cf. his concession at 2001a:88–89).

<sup>26</sup> Though Allison, following Meyer (1979:86) prefers 'indices' over 'criteria' (Allison 1998:51, fn 174).

<sup>27</sup> Cf. also Tonkin 1990:27.

<sup>28</sup> Horsley 2001; 2003; Horsley and Draper 1999 are also concerned to problematise this programme; for example, 'The procedure by which scholars establish a "database" from which they then construct a picture of Jesus is especially problematic as historical method. . . . *Rather than purposefully isolating Jesus-sayings from the only contexts of meaning to which we will have access, that is, the Gospels, we must start from those literary sources*' (Horsley 2003:8; emphasis added).

<sup>29</sup> Matt. 10.16; Gos. Thom. 39.3; Funk, Hoover, et al. 1993:169–170, 494–495.

lacks any compelling argument for (or against) authenticity.<sup>30</sup> This should not surprise us, since the logion, stripped of any context or significance, fails to support any image of Jesus other than as one who uttered contextless, insignificant platitudes. Thus we only know for certain that, whatever this saying meant on Jesus' lips, its meaning is distorted in Matt. 10.16.

Tonkin does not limit the assessment and interpretation of individual traditions to their meanings in their original context. But certainly the originative context of the 'data' we seek must play a part in our analyses. The criteria of historical authenticity have been used to pry individual traditions from their contexts, but doing so mutilates them beyond recognition. An 'authentic' logion of Jesus no longer remains but rather words that cannot put us in touch with the 'real' Jesus, even if he did happen to speak them. Indeed, if the meanings of Jesus' sayings were more stable than the words themselves, as the Jesus Seminar suggests,<sup>31</sup> then the sayings' literary contexts, as vehicles of those meanings, deserve closer attention than do the sayings themselves. The meanings of Jesus' sayings, not their wordings, reflect the 'real Jesus'.

Our second point is related to the first: the criteria direct exegesis of Jesus traditions more helpfully than they assess those traditions' historicity. Though scholars frequently invoke the criteria to declare this or that saying 'authentic' or 'inauthentic', their use ought to be much less categorical. The criteria have a hermeneutical value that far exceeds their historical-critical value. In other words,

Historical research is not faced with the simple alternative 'authentic' or 'inauthentic,' but with the question of how the extant tradition may receive the most satisfactory historical explanation, whether this is by tracing it back to Jesus or explaining it from some other historical context.<sup>32</sup> There are three possibilities to which the traditions attributed to Jesus may be traced: to Jews, to Jesus, to Christians. The logic of research means that tracing a tradition back to Jews has a different relative importance . . . than does tracing a tradition back to early Christianity. (Theissen and Winter 1997:204)

As always, we deal here with probabilities rather than certainties, and therefore a more provisional use of the criteria is warranted rather than the flat declaration 'authentic' or 'inauthen-

---

<sup>30</sup> The Seminar mentions a possible 'twinkle in the eye', along with a 'humorous twist' and a paradoxical element as arguments for authenticity, despite the fact that its 'proverbial' nature (Funk, Hoover, *et al.* 1993:170, 495) jars with their judgement that 'words borrowed from the fund of common lore . . . are often put on the lips of Jesus' (1993:22). How this qualifies as a serious historical judgement is difficult to discern.

<sup>31</sup> 'Transmitters of oral tradition do not ordinarily remember the exact wording of the saying or parable they are attempting to quote. . . . Passing oral lore along is much like telling and retelling a joke: we can perhaps recall the organization of the joke, along with most or all of the punchline, but we rarely remember and retell it precisely as we heard it the first time . . . Further experiments [in memory] have demonstrated that we grasp the essence or the *gist* of what we hear or read' (Funk, Hoover, *et al.* 1993:27, 28; original italics). This leads to conflicting 'rules of oral evidence': on the one hand, 'The oral memory best retains sayings and anecdotes that are short, provocative, memorable — and oft-repeated', a rule that is concerned with word-for-word memorisation of Jesus' sayings. On the other hand, 'Jesus' disciples remembered the core or gist of his sayings and parables, not his precise words, except in rare cases' (1993:28), a rule that is explicitly concerned with creative yet conservative retelling. Could it be that these conflicting 'rules' evince the Seminar's dependence upon (and not completely successful redaction of) two independent sources?

<sup>32</sup> See the discussion of Luke's portrayal of Jesus' appearance in the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4.16–30) in §6.4, below.

tic'.<sup>33</sup> When we pose the question of 'dissimilarity', for example, we ought ask what it means for the interpretation of, say, Luke 4.25–27 if we posit its origin in Luke's redaction/creation of Jesus tradition to frame the programme of Luke-Acts, on the one hand, or in the proclamation of Jesus, on the other. The assessment of 'inauthentic' too often presupposes a particular interpretation of the tradition being assessed.<sup>34</sup> If we may anticipate later discussion,<sup>35</sup> the question of 'dissimilarity' from later Christian theology requires us to note that the traditions to which Jesus refers in Luke 4.25–27 are involved in political polemic against Israel, but this polemic *originates from and remains within* Israel. On what basis can we presume, *a priori*, that Jesus *as a Jew* could not have levelled theological, social, or political criticism against his own *ethnos*? That Luke's programme was overtly concerned with the extension of God's blessing to the gentiles is, therefore, less relevant to the question of Luke 4:25–27's authenticity than to this text's significance in different contexts.

The next two chapters will continue to question the categorical distinctions 'authentic' or 'inauthentic'; indeed, the current project has as one of its major purposes the proposal of a programme for 'historical Jesus' research that asks more sensitive questions than, Is this in or out? Individual Jesus traditions cannot be so easily categorised as one or the other. Sometimes traditions can be both, sometimes neither.

### 2.2.b. Jesus and the Sapiential Turn

Another discussion current in Jesus research and related to the question of criteria is that of Jesus' location *vis-à-vis* Jewish sapiential or eschatological thought.<sup>36</sup> Near the turn of the twentieth century Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer famously concluded that Jesus was driven by an eschatological, even apocalyptic, concern. The work of the Jesus Seminar and many of its constituents has vigorously proposed and defended the thesis that Jesus was not an eschatologically orientated Jew, a position consistent with the influence borne upon many of them by Bultmann and his students.<sup>37</sup> Despite the efforts of some to portray the current state of affairs otherwise, neither Jesus the sage nor Jesus the prophet enjoys considerable consensus across the institution of New Testament research, though we ought recognise that many critics acknowledge the utility of both for our reconstructions of the 'historical Jesus'. Indeed, perhaps the insistence upon one, at the expense of the other, is the real source of distortion.

---

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Allison (1998:7): 'However much we better our methods for authenticating the traditions about Jesus, we are never going to produce results that can be confirmed or disconfirmed. . . . Appeals to shared criteria may, we can pray, assist us in being self-critical, but when all is said and done we look for the historical Jesus with our imaginations.'

<sup>34</sup> In the current instance, regarding Luke 4.25–27: 'Luke attributes a remark to Jesus that anticipates and summarizes his whole gospel story; the remark is based on two passages from the Greek Bible (1 Kgs 17:1–16; 2 Kgs 5:1–14). A major Lukan theme — the Christian mission is to carry the gospel to pagans or gentiles — is embodied in the remarks attributed to Jesus' (Funk, Hoover, *et al.* 1993:280).

<sup>35</sup> Cf. §6.4.b., below.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. the debate in Miller 2001a; also helpful is Powell 1998:172–174; Borg 1994.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Allison 2001a:84–85, 93–94.

### 2.2.b.i. 'Eschatology' and the Problem of Meaning

One of the perennial problems plaguing the question of Jesus' sapiential versus eschatological outlook involves the question of what, exactly, 'eschatology' means. Though the term is rooted in ἔσχατος (variously translated 'last' [thing] or 'end' [time]), critics disagree on where to go from here. Marcus Borg has taken up this challenge head-on. In earlier statements Borg was concerned to include notions of the literal 'end of the world', imminence, and direct divine intervention in any understanding of 'eschatology'.<sup>38</sup> Without these three notions, 'eschatology' becomes too vague, and apparent consensus among scholars (that Jesus was 'eschatological') masks very real differences (that he expected the 'end of the world'<sup>39</sup> or the 'restoration' of Israel<sup>40</sup> or whatever). 'Thus implications legitimately derived from eschatology in the sense advocated by Weiss and Schweitzer often continue to be recited even when eschatology is used in a substantially different sense' (Borg 1984:11). Ten years later Borg repented of his insistence on 'end of the world' as a central aspect of 'eschatology', though he continues to stress the radical transformation wrapped up in the term.<sup>41</sup>

The debate about the proper place of 'end of the world' ideas in the discussion of eschatology continues, perhaps unhelpfully. As late as 2001 Robert Miller could claim that, 'In a general sense eschatology is a set of beliefs about the end of the world. In biblical studies ['eschatology'] refers to a way of thinking that is centered on the end of history' (2001b:5).<sup>42</sup> The confusion is only compounded when Crossan, in the very same volume, can say (quite rightly), 'We should retire forever that now-misleading phrase "end of the world" and speak, as the ancients intended, about "the end of the present aeon of evil"' (2001b:138).<sup>43</sup> If, then, we can agree to

---

<sup>38</sup> E.g.: 'I am defining [eschatology] to include as an indispensable element the notion that the world itself will come to an end, including the traditional expectation of last judgment, resurrection, and dawn of the new age. *The eschatological Jesus is one who thought this was imminent.* Thus, with the term "eschatological," I do not mean "end" in more metaphorical senses, either the sense of a dramatic change in Israel's history, or in the sense of a radical change in the individual's subjectivity which one might describe by speaking of the (old) world coming to an end for that individual' (Borg 1986:81, fn 1; original italics; cf. 1984:10–13).

<sup>39</sup> So Schweitzer 1906; Allison 1998.

<sup>40</sup> So Sanders 1985; Wright 1996.

<sup>41</sup> 'Jewish eschatologies did not typically involve "the end of the world," if by that is meant the end of the space-time universe. What a colleague has helpfully called "molecular eschatology" — the disappearance of the material world — is not part of the expectation. . . . But the conditions of life would be so different in a visible and tangible way, involving the kinds of changes that could not be brought about simply by human activity, that one may properly speak of the end of the present age/order/world and the coming of the new age/order/world established by God' (Borg 1994:70–71; cf. also 1994:91, fn 8, where Borg insists he never intended 'the end of the space-time world' when he wrote 'the world itself will come to an end' [1986:81, fn 1; cited above]).

<sup>42</sup> Note that Miller understands 'end of the world' in first-century Jewish and Christian thought to refer to a culmination, not a cessation, of God's plan for the world/history. It would appear, though, that the harder Miller presses the distinction between culmination and cessation, the less apropos it is for him to still refer to the 'end of the world'. Cf. also the discussion in Dunn 2003b:398–401.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Crossan 1991:238, where he cites Borg's earlier definition of 'eschatology' and insists on a broader understanding of the term. His position here (2001b) appears even more nuanced, in that, in 1991, he continued to attribute to *apocalyptic* eschatology a notion of 'the end of the world', whereas he is now suggesting, quite rightly, that the phrase be subjected to consuming fire, as it were.

put behind us the concept of the total destruction of creation and recognise the transformative implications (or, better, implications of renewal) at the centre of the phenomena we refer to as 'eschatology', we still have to decide how broad a range of phenomena the term can meaningfully and helpfully encompass.<sup>44</sup>

Borg unrepentantly insists that an 'apocalyptic' or 'eschatological' paradigm is inadequate for understanding the historical Jesus,<sup>45</sup> but, he also points out that such judgements depend on how we define 'eschatology' and 'apocalyptic' (1994:73). Borg defines 'eschatology' narrowly and insists on three elements: '(1) chronological futurity; (2) dramatic divine intervention in a public and objectively unmistakable way, resulting in (3) a radically new state of affairs, including vindication of God's people, whether on a renewed earth or in another world' (1994:73). But Borg does not simply *define* eschatology this narrowly; he *insists* upon such a definition and objects that affirming an 'eschatological' Jesus according to a 'broadened sense', such as is frequently found, 'becomes virtually meaningless' (1994:73).

Two points must be made. First, though Borg rightly insists that we must use terms as important as 'apocalyptic' and 'eschatological' precisely and not expand them so they lose all probative value, his own very precise definition of 'eschatology', as given above, is so narrow that *the rejection* of an eschatological Jesus is likewise meaningless. As an example, Borg insists on 'divine intervention in a public and objectively unmistakable way' (that is, directly) though the evidence from the Second Temple period makes it difficult to maintain the distinction between 'direct' and 'indirect' divine intervention in Jewish thought.<sup>46</sup> Thus, Borg's insistence that an 'eschatological' Jesus must expect *divine* action (and this *directly*), and his conclusion that Jesus expected instead that human social and political structures would continue, does not actually help us to understand Jesus any better.<sup>47</sup> This is borne out in our second point: Borg finds a

---

<sup>44</sup> Here we are more concerned with the broader set of phenomena subsumed under the label 'eschatology'. When we consider 'eschatology', however, notions of 'apocalyptic' are never far behind. Though much more could be said, suffice it here to mention that this project will reserve the more specific term 'apocalyptic' for notions of 'revelation' as a vehicle of eschatological speculation, while purposefully avoiding the more popular connotations of epic destruction, violence, and judgement. For a similar perspective, see Dunn 2003b:401.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. 1986; 1994:69–96; 2001b; 2001c; 2002:136.

<sup>46</sup> Borg knows of this problem, as is evident even in his earlier writings: 'The notion that Yahweh would fight to defend Jerusalem and the Temple did not mean that Israel would therefore remain passively inactive, trusting to the unmediated activity of God, for it was characteristic of holy war theology that earthly warriors fought, even though one spoke primarily of the divine warrior' (1984:166).

<sup>47</sup> Note the difficulties evident in Borg's attempt to make all the necessary qualifications in 1994:70–71; 91, fn 8. The reference in Mark 14.58 to a Temple 'not made with hands' (ἀχειροποίητον) need not be pressed to mean 'built by God *without human participation*'; it is entirely understandable as connoting the authority under whose auspices the new Temple would be built. In other words, the Temple χειροποίητον (lit., 'built by hand[s]') was built under Herod's impetus; the Temple ἀχειροποίητον would be built under the impetus of YHWH. Lohse (1974:436) points out that in Herodotus χειροποίητος differentiates 'what man has done and what has come into being naturally'. This sense is still recognisable, even if it has been transformed, in the LXX, wherein χειροποίητος 'almost always stands for Hbr. לְיָדָא and it describes the gods as made with men's hands'. In New Testament usage the LXX's anti-idol connotations are turned inward against *Jewish* symbols of the covenant with YHWH (the Temple, as we are

similar problem of definition firmly at the heart of the debate concerning Jesus as a 'political' figure. Borg identifies both a narrow and a broad definition of 'politics',<sup>48</sup> but in this case he elects for the broad understanding of the term: 'If "politics" is used in the narrow sense, then Jesus was basically non-political. . . . Yet, as I shall argue, Jesus both challenged the existing social order and advocated an alternative. . . . This is "political" in the broad sense of the word' (1994:98).<sup>49</sup> If Borg willingly concedes a broadened use of 'political' to affirm Jesus' interest in (or concern for) the political structures of his day (and here he is certainly correct), then on what basis can he insist that 'eschatology' be restricted to the narrowest possible use?

We propose, then, an understanding of 'eschatology' that centres on the notion of fulfilment, specifically of YHWH's promises to Israel. That is, a concern with eschatology (i.e., with 'the end') means a concern with the coming fulfilment of the Lord's promises to Israel. There are a few advantages to this understanding. First, inasmuch as 'eschatology' implies futurity, it does so as a function of its social critique that the current state of Israel is not as it should be.<sup>50</sup> Things are not as they should be *in the present*, but they will be *in the future*. Often, as is well known, the belief that this 'future' was near heightened this expectation. Second, inasmuch as 'eschatology' connotes 'the end', it refers to the ideal state of affairs in which God's promises are realised in Israel on earth. Not that nothing else would happen once this ideal state was 'ushered in', though many Jews did think of it (or at least described it) as an everlasting reality.<sup>51</sup> Rather, Jewish eschatology emphasised the 'end' of Israel's current state of expectation, in which loyalty to YHWH included an element of trust *in spite of* present realities.<sup>52</sup> Despite his restriction of Jew-

---

discussing, but also circumcision; cf. Eph. 2.11; Col. 2.11, cited in Lohse 1974). Thus χειροποίητος and ἀχειροποίητος even in Mark 14.58 par. functioned rhetorically rather than to signal the expectation of a building built without human interposition. Indeed, if we insist on Borg's excessively narrow understanding of the language of 'eschatology', it is not clear how Jesus could be accused of threatening, ἐγὼ καταλύσω τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον τὸν χειροποίητον καὶ διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν ἄλλον ἀχειροποίητον οἰκοδομήσω, unless both Jesus and his accusers agreed that whatever Jesus would build (οἰκοδομήσω) he would do without use of his hands.

<sup>48</sup> Curiously, Borg explicitly links the discussion regarding the definition of 'politics' with the debate over the definition of 'eschatology': 'As with eschatology, there is both a narrow and broad definition of politics, and whether one sees Jesus as political is greatly affected by one's definition' (1991:98; emphasis added).

<sup>49</sup> The rest of this quote is particularly interesting: 'Indeed, in this broader sense, *much of the biblical tradition is political*' (1994:98; emphasis added). Compare this with Borg's rhetoric against a broader understanding of eschatology: 'In this broad sense, *much of the Bible is eschatological*' (1994:72; emphasis added).

<sup>50</sup> Notice that the referent has shifted from 'the world' to 'Israel'; much of the discussion, I think, has suffered confusion because we forget that we are dealing with Second Temple *Jewish* eschatology. Inasmuch as 'the world' was the scene in which eschatological schemes were envisaged, it was as a function of God's dealing with Israel and not, say, North America or Europe. To say that eschatological speculation 'was focused on the culmination of history and the fulfilment of God's plan for humanity' (Miller 2001b:6) is not wrong, but it masks that 'God's plan for humanity' would be fulfilled *vis-à-vis* Israel. Whether 'the nations' were expected to receive judgement or blessing, they did so as a function of God's working in and through Israel. Cf. also §7.3., below.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Wright's discussion of 'apocalyptic' (1992:280–338), in which he discusses, *inter alia*, Dan. 7.14; Psa. 145.10–13; *Test. Mos.* 10.1–10; Wis. 3.7–9.

<sup>52</sup> This, as far as I can tell, is what it means to say the 'end' in first-century Jewish and Christian thought was perceived as 'culmination', not 'cessation' (Miller 2001b:5; cited above), though most critics are happy not to state what they mean with any level of specificity.

ish hopes of restoration to the notion of ‘end of exile’, Wright correctly says of Jewish restorationist expectation:

One of the central ways of expressing this hope was the division of time into two eras: the present age and the age to come. The present age was a time when the creator god seemed to be hiding his face; the age to come would see the renewal of the created world. The present age was the time of Israel’s misery; in the age to come she would be restored. In the present age wicked men seemed to be flourishing; in the age to come they would receive their just reward. (Wright 1992:299–300)

In the *eschaton*, loyalty to YHWH would be sustained, at least in part, *because of* present realities. Third, this understanding of ‘eschatology’ mediates between Borg’s (and Allison’s) insistence on tangible transformation and his complaint that, for others, dramatic (but, ultimately, non-transformative) events, such as the fall of the Berlin wall, could be called ‘eschatological’.<sup>53</sup> The change is indeed dramatic *and* transformative, though perhaps not as dramatic as planetary conflagration. Finally, this perspective of ‘eschatology’ recognises the necessity of divine intervention in order to bring about the *eschaton*, but it does not insist on this divine intervention at the expense of the activity of human agents. Despite all of this, our understanding of ‘eschatology’ still admits of a wide range of conceptualisations and the diverse and inchoate expectations of turn-of-the-era Jewish and Christian eschatologies.

### 2.2.b.ii. Eschatological and Sapiential Traditions

Crossan, in his discussion of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, clearly acknowledges the link between eschatological and sapiential discourse in Second Temple Jewish texts. In fact, ‘the kingdom of God’ is one of the important links between the two. ‘If one emphasizes, however, that “kingdom of God” could have been easily heard as an apocalyptic expression<sup>54</sup> at the time of Jesus, one must just as equally emphasize that it could have been heard instead as a sapiential one’ (1991:287).<sup>55</sup> Why does Crossan say ‘instead’? Ought we imagine that ancient Jews, when speaking about the rule of God, understood God’s rule *either* as the wise, beneficent reign of the Creator, which provides a model for human monarchs seeking to rule justly, *or* as the ultimate establishment of the kingdom of God on Zion, with the nations acknowledging the sovereignty of YHWH over creation and Israel as his chosen tribe? This is unlikely; thus we accept Cros-

---

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Wright 1992:282, who uses precisely this analogy. Borg opines: ‘That seems too broad’ (1994:31). Whether eschatological language seemed apropos for describing the significance of German reunification in North American universities is certainly a different question than whether such language seemed appropriate to the German people. Similarly, critics need to consider whether eschatological language might have seemed appropriate to *Second-Temple era Jews* for describing significant changes in Israel’s political fortunes. It is not at all clear, then, that this understanding of eschatology is ‘too broad’.

<sup>54</sup> Crossan’s use of ‘apocalyptic’, though distinct from ‘eschatology’, emphasises not *revelation* but ‘divine intervention so transcendently obvious that one’s adversaries or enemies, oppressors or persecutors would be forced to acknowledge it and to accept conversion or concede defeat’ (1991:238). This is quite distinct from how the term is being used in the current project and, in fact, is nearer to our use of ‘eschatological’; cf. fn 61, below.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. also Crossan 1991:284; *pace* Patterson: ‘The term “reign of God” is not to be found in the apocalyptic literature of ancient Judaism. It belongs rather to the discourse of wisdom theology, and the question of what constitutes wise and just rule’ (2001b:76). As Allison (2001a:96–97) points out, this claim is rather incredible. Cf. also Dunn 2003b:393–396 for a more helpful analysis.

san's larger point, that ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ could have apocalyptic and/or sapiential resonances, but we resist having to classify occurrences of this phrase as one *or* the other.<sup>56</sup>

Crossan proposes a fourfold typology of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ in which two distinct groups of people (retainers and peasants) each have two options regarding how they perceive and react to their world (apocalyptic and wisdom).<sup>57</sup> This typology can be graphically represented:

	<b>Apocalyptic</b>	<b>Wisdom</b>
<b>retainers</b>	'proclaimed apocalypse' (e.g., <i>1 Enoch</i> )	'ideal mode of human existence here and now' (e.g., Philo)
<b>peasants</b>	'performed apocalypse' (e.g., the 'sign prophets')	'Kingdom of nobodies and the destitute' (as, e.g., in Jesus' parables and aphorisms)

This is helpful insofar as it provides an opening for us to examine ancient traditions regarding the kingdom of God and the social location of those traditions. But, as we have been trying to demonstrate, the vertical line separating 'apocalyptic' from 'sapiential' distorts the evidence before us.<sup>58</sup> For example, Jesus' actions were perceived by those around him as resonating with the biblical traditions of God's actions in the past. Though he did not venture across Galilee promising signs to those who would follow him (unlike the 'sign prophets' in Crossan's third quadrant), his contemporaries understood him, like those 'sign prophets', in terms of God's continuing activity among his people. Jesus (and this is not unique to him) crosses that vertical line as if it were not there; perhaps it should not be.

Sean Freyne approaches the interrelationship between (apocalyptic) eschatological and sapiential thought forms from both sides.<sup>59</sup> In Israel's biblical tradition, 'the prophets are also deeply conscious of the rich symbolism of the natural world as expressive of Yahweh's relations with Israel, when describing both present infidelity and future restoration' (2004:33). Wisdom,

<sup>56</sup> Crossan continues to oppose wisdom and apocalyptic in his analysis, even though he is aware that, if a distinction is to be made, they are two aspects of one worldview. In his 'typology of the kingdom of God', to be discussed presently, 'apocalyptic and sapiential modes are defined as separate types of understanding. They could be and often were combined, but they are taken here as disjunctive rather than conjunctive options' (1991:291). This rings somewhat artificial. Regarding apocalyptic, in which 'a future Kingdom [is] dependent on the overpowering action of God', it is high time to move beyond formulations such as: 'Believers can, *at the very most*, prepare or persuade, implore or assist its arrival, but its accomplishment is *consigned to divine power alone*' (1991:292; emphases added). Though Second Temple Jews could conceive of God acting directly (i.e., not via an agent, human or supernatural), they did not consider his intervention via an agent as any less 'an act of God'. Thus, the 'apocalyptic' kingdom's binary opposite, the 'sapiential' kingdom, which is 'present *rather than* future' and which one entered 'by wisdom or goodness, by virtue, justice, or freedom' (1991:292; emphasis added), loses all distinctiveness and analytical utility. As an example, there is no indication that that most apocalyptically orientated Jew/Christian, Paul, did not value and promote to his readers wisdom, goodness, virtue, justice, or freedom, even if he subversively redefined some, if not all, of those terms (cf. Rom. 14.17; 1 Cor. 6.9-10; Gal. 5.16-25; 1 Thess. 2.10-12, all of which fit within a 'sapiential' context, mention ἡ βασιλεία [(τοῦ) θεοῦ], and appear in the letters that scholars agree were written by the apostle himself).

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Crossan 1991:291-292.

<sup>58</sup> Allison, in reference to Kloppenborg's work, refers to the distinction between sapiential and prophetic layers as 'worrisome' and asks, 'Is [this distinction] perhaps an ahistorical construct?' (1997:4).

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Freyne 2004:33-37.



which was rooted in the natural world, provided not only the images that sustained prophetic critique (e.g., Isa. 5.1–7) but also the vision toward which that critique hoped to move society (e.g., Amos 9.13–15). Conversely, Israel's wisdom tradition, which Freyne identifies as a product of Israel's international relations, 'has been thoroughly integrated into Israel's theological framework' (2004:35). Wisdom, therefore, is not distinct from other aspects of Israelite tradition but has been reformulated to serve the same programmes as those other aspects (e.g., prophetic and/or 'eschatological' traditions). For this reason, 'the links between Wisdom and Apocalyptic are also well established in Daniel and 1 Enoch, pointing to wisdom as heavenly and esoteric, calling for divine revelation in order to unlock its secrets' (2004:35). Accordingly, eschatological speculation and wisdom observation were not two distinct programmes in ancient Judaic thought; rather, they were two vehicles that enabled the pursuit of various social, ideological, and theological agenda.

Here lies a source of our disagreement with Crossan's analysis: despite his attempts to nuance the distinction he nevertheless upholds that

The split between Jesus as a sapiential teacher of wisdom versus Jesus as an apocalyptic prophet of eschatology can be traced back as far as one can ever get in the inaugural Jesus tradition. . . . I also emphasize that one can discover combinations and confluences of an apocalyptic and a sapiential vision of Jesus. But, where they are opposed to each other, they bespeak the obvious twin modes of handling an unacceptable present. One can, in a sapiential mode, go backward into a past and lost Eden, or one can, in an apocalyptic mode, go forward into a future and imminent Heaven. (Crossan 1991:227–228)

Once again, the opposition between wisdom and eschatology is dramatically deconstructed in the ancient sources, perhaps most poignantly in John's ἀποκάλυψις, in which ὁ παράδεισος τοῦ θεοῦ (as well as the 'tree of life') functions as a driving image of John's vision of the 'future and imminent Heaven' (Rev. 2.7; cf. Rev. 22). In addition, the point cited above, that wisdom looks back and apocalyptic looks forward, conflicts with other statements Crossan has written. For example, '[The sapiential Kingdom] is therefore an ethical Kingdom, but it must be absolutely insisted that it could be just as eschatological as was the apocalyptic Kingdom' (1991:292). Crossan's point is clear enough: 'eschatological' means, simply, 'world-negating'.<sup>60</sup> But we cannot forget that *eschatology* includes notions of 'the end', even if those notions remain vaguely defined.<sup>61</sup> An 'eschatological' kingdom, then, ultimately looks forward, but this usually (almost always) also entails looking back.

One last point regarding the relationship between eschatological and sapiential traditions. One of the most distinctive, well-attested characteristics of Jesus' teaching is his use of parables. Our approach to Jesus' parables, however, immediately encounters a striking problem: on

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Crossan 1991:238, 292.

<sup>61</sup> Recall that Crossan's distinction between 'eschatology' and 'apocalyptic' is not the same as the one proposed for this project (cf. fn 54, above). Thus, though we have been referring to the 'apocalyptic Kingdom' in our interaction with Crossan's work, what he means is much more aligned with 'eschatological kingdom' according to our formulation.

the one hand, many scholars identify the parable as a wisdom form;<sup>62</sup> on the other hand, Jesus' parables graphically communicate his eschatology. Thus we see that, inasmuch as the eschatological use of parables appears odd to modern scholarship, our analytical disjunction between apocalyptic and wisdom does not fit the evidence with which we have to work. At stake here is not simply the parables' 'frames' or any other mechanism of the evangelists' redaction. Rather, the question must be, How could the gospel writers accurately preserve any trace of Jesus' teachings (as is affirmed by those who see Jesus' parables as wisdom *and not* eschatology) and yet distort beyond recognition the *meaning* of that teaching?<sup>63</sup> Even if we were to grant that the contexts in which the gospel writers inserted Jesus' teachings were the products of their own literary (or oral performative) tendencies, that would not mitigate the problem of why Jesus' tradents thought it necessary to preserve his teaching at all when everything Jesus said ran so contrary to the beliefs and perspectives Jesus' followers (apparently) legitimated by appeal to his teachings.<sup>64</sup> Thus we are forced back to an earlier conclusion: Wisdom forms (viz., Jesus' parables) were not distinct from but could be used in service of eschatological programmes. That this is so in the synoptic gospels is indisputable. That it could have been so in Jesus' teaching, therefore, is impossible to dismiss on *a priori* bases.

### 2.2.c. Jesus, Speech, and Script

The discussion here will be necessarily brief, especially as it will be picked up in further detail below.<sup>65</sup> The question of oral and written traditions, however, has been of sufficient import in 'historical Jesus' research to justify, even require, its inclusion here. First, no scholar seriously disputes the *fact* of the oral gospel tradition;<sup>66</sup> *what to do* with this fact is another matter completely. Some critics conceptualise the so-called 'oral period' of the transmission of Jesus traditions as a period of (uncontrollably) unstable flux;<sup>67</sup> others suppose that oral transmission of tradition, at least of Jesus traditions, is considerably stable.<sup>68</sup> Others, however, are content to postulate some level of correspondence between written and oral transmission, so that one's stability (and instability) is comparable to the other.<sup>69</sup>

Some specific names have become particularly and prominently associated with the concern for the oral traditional influences and/or character of the gospel traditions. Birger Gerhardsson,<sup>70</sup> Werner Kelber,<sup>71</sup> and James D. G. Dunn<sup>72</sup> come first to mind; others rightly

<sup>62</sup> E.g., Patterson 2001a:145; 2001b.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Funk, Hoover, *et al.* 1993:27–29; Patterson 1993:238.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. §5.1., below.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. §2.3. and Chapter 4, below.

<sup>66</sup> Michael Goulder is, perhaps, the exception that proves the rule (cf. Goulder 1985; Goodacre 1996).

<sup>67</sup> E.g., the Jesus Seminar (Funk, Hoover, *et al.* 1993:25–32); cf. Derico 2004 for an interaction with this conceptualisation.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. the works of Gerhardsson listed in the bibliography.

<sup>69</sup> E.g., Sanders 1969:7–8.

<sup>70</sup> Esp. Gerhardsson 1998; 2001; 2005.

<sup>71</sup> Esp. Kelber 1983, but also the other works cited in the bibliography.

deserve mentioning.<sup>73</sup> Though ‘historical Jesus’ scholars frequently invoke the oral Jesus tradition, many appear to have spent little time among the vast and diverse body of literature, from across multiple disciplines, that specifically addresses the dynamics of oral traditions from various epochs and locales. Indeed, in some instances the consideration of oral tradition and transmission goes no further than the ideas imported from early twentieth-century folkloristics by the form critics.<sup>74</sup> For example,

Members of the Jesus Seminar have gathered what is known about the transmission of oral tradition — not just in the gospels, but elsewhere in oral cultures — and have endeavored to turn this knowledge into a set of rules of evidence related to the formation and transmission of the Jesus tradition in oral form. These rules are guidelines for analyzing the earliest layer of tradition found in the written gospels. (Funk, Hoover, *et al.* 1993:28)

A few points are relevant. First, ‘what is known’ about oral traditional processes is not some ‘thing’ that can be gathered and put into service of any exegetical or historical programme; at best, we are here dealing with a discursive field in which particular questions, concerns, dynamics, processes, and comparative evidences can be brought to bear upon the question at hand. Second, it has been manifestly apparent, at least since Sanders 1969, that developing a ‘set of rules of evidence’ to analyse either the written gospel traditions or the oral traditions they are thought to record is problematic, even untenable. Moreover, any attempt to do so would require more sophistication than that found in the Seminar’s discussion. Finally, the content of ‘what is known’ about oral tradition, at least as far as it can be deduced from the ‘rules of oral evidence’ proposed by the Jesus Seminar,<sup>75</sup> is patently wrong. At least since Lord’s *The Singer of Tales* (1960) it has been impossible to maintain, for example, that ‘the oral memory best retains sayings and anecdotes that are short, provocative, memorable — and oft-repeated’ (Funk, Hoover, *et al.* 1993:28). As Lord has demonstrated, and as has been reaffirmed in more recent research, oral tradition is neither anxious about the impossibility of remembering longer texts nor very taken up with the problem of ‘memorisation’ at any rate.<sup>76</sup> *The Five Gospels* does not even evince familiarity with the one work which Seminar Fellows could be reasonably expected to refer: *The Oral*

<sup>72</sup> Esp. Dunn 1987; 2000; 2003a; 2003b; 2005a; 2005b.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Horsley and Draper 1999; Horsley 2001; 2003; Achtemeier 1990; see also the works by Kenneth Bailey, Pieter Botha, Joanna Dewey, Holly Hearon, Vernon Robbins, *inter alios*. Note, however, that many of these latter critics are more concerned with the gospels than with Jesus research (inasmuch as the distinction is still helpful).

<sup>74</sup> Though note that Sanders questions the influence of earlier folkloristics upon the form-critical programme, as it is often assumed: ‘The form critics did not derive laws of transmission from a study of folk literature, as many think. They derived them by two methods: (a) by assuming that purity of form (or, in the case of Taylor, impurity of form) indicates relative antiquity, and (b) by determining how Matthew and Luke used Mark and Q, and how the later literature used the canonical Gospels’ (1969:26). This, then, would explain how form criticism never was able to escape a literary model of tradition transmission (cf. Dunn 2003b:127–128, 194–195): it never intended to in the first place. This is not incredible, in that the assumptions of the form critics were already outdated when Lord published *A Singer of Tales* (1960), if not before that with the work of Lord’s teacher, Milman Parry (in the 1920s and 1930s).

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Funk, Hoover, *et al.* 1993:25–34.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. also Foley 2006a, whose conclusions concerning memory advance on Lord’s seminal works. See also Chapter 3, below.

and the Written Gospel (Kelber 1983).<sup>77</sup> Lest the problem of neglecting research into oral tradition and performance appear primarily applicable to the work of the Jesus Seminar, we should recognise that other 'historical Jesus' research suffers from similar shortcomings.<sup>78</sup>

### 2.2.c.i. Synoptic Relations: A Preliminary Disclaimer

Surprisingly, the discussion of the role of the oral Jesus tradition in the composition and reception of the (synoptic) gospels has not led to any systematic criticism of the dominant Two-Source Hypothesis or source criticism as a literary-critical endeavour.<sup>79</sup> Kelber (1983) explicitly addresses the different oral dynamics of the two earliest written collections of gospel traditions (note the mention of Mark and Q in his subtitle). Horsley and Draper, too, feel no obligation to even discuss the Two-Source Hypothesis and, instead, immediately proceed to critique standard approaches to Q (both as a document and as a collection of traditions). Gerhardsson has explicitly affirmed his judgement that recent research has not shaken his confidence in Markan priority,<sup>80</sup> and Dunn, despite suggesting that parts of the Q tradition are better understood as 'oral tradition', nevertheless continues to see in Matthew and Luke evidence for a documentary source, Q.<sup>81</sup> Derico (2004:10) likewise notes this peculiarity. The question, therefore, confronts us head-on: Are we, in the current project, suggesting that no literary (inter)relationship exists among our synoptic gospels?

I must confess that, in the first instance, I am suspicious of the Two-Source Hypothesis and the presuppositions masked thereby. There is nothing *inherently* unconvincing about the notions — either singly or all together — that Mark was written before Matthew and Luke, that the latter two knew of and drew upon the former and that they did so independently, or that both Matthew and Luke had access to another source, consisting primarily of sayings of Jesus, which they drew upon and edited for their own purposes. This last source is conventionally referred to as 'Q', though other titles have been gaining popularity over the last couple decades. But a number of disconcerting issues remain. First, given the widespread acceptance of the Two-

---

<sup>77</sup> I consider this a 'reasonable' expectation because, in 1993 (when *The Five Gospels* was published), *The Oral and the Written Gospel* was one of a very few works dealing explicitly with the question of oral Jesus tradition, and Kelber's book was itself the subject of scholarly discussion (cf. the essays in Silberman 1987). If, in 1993, they were unfamiliar with Kelber's monograph, it is even more difficult to discern how *The Five Gospels* can claim to have interacted at all with 'what is known' about oral tradition and transmission.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Meier 1991; 1994 (whose assessment of Kelber's work [cf. 1991:160, ftn 113] is appropriate but ultimately without consequence for the remainder of his analysis); Fredriksen 1999; Sanders 1985; 1993; Theissen and Merz 1996; *inter alios*.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. the discussion in §7.1, below.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Gerhardsson 2001:85, ftn 57, though he does refer to 'the sayings of Jesus in the *so-called* Q material' (2001:79; emphasis added), which can (but need not) communicate scepticism of the Q-hypothesis.

<sup>81</sup> Dunn (2005b) argues that Kloppenborg's sapiential layer Q<sup>1</sup> is better understood as oral tradition. He also recognises that evidence for Q is difficult, in that verbal correspondence between Matthean and Lukan passages attributed to Q varies between nearly 100% for some passages, closer to 8% for others; thus Dunn distinguishes between the hypothetical document ('Q') and the traditions that are, with varying degrees of similarity, common to both Matthew and Luke ('q'; cf. 2003b:148–149).

Source Hypothesis, scholars commonly treat Q as if it ‘really existed’, on papyrus or parchment, rather than as a hypothetical construct.<sup>82</sup> Similarly, so much depends upon these particular relationships between our actual texts (Mark, Matthew, and Luke) that, to the extent that these relationships, too, are hypothetical, our own reconstructions have built into them a growing element of contingency. Specifically, we argue below, the texts are often situated alongside one another to identify developmental (evolutionary?) trajectories between them, and these trajectories are then reified and become explanatory mechanisms for the development of ‘early Christianity’ as a whole.<sup>83</sup> Finally, the fact that there are multiple and equally plausible ways to construe the evidence for Q ought to make us remember Q’s doubly hypothetical status: not just its *existence* but also its *nature*.<sup>84</sup> How, then, the Two-Source Hypothesis enables us to make probative inquiries into ‘Christian origins’ is especially unclear.<sup>85</sup>

Despite my admitted scepticism, the problem is not with the Two-Source Hypothesis itself (or any of its rivals) but rather with the use to which it is put.<sup>86</sup> That Mark was written first and was independently known to Matthew and Luke is entirely reasonable, as is the theory that the latter also had access to another written source (or sources) of Jesus’ sayings. But this in no way obviates the question of the composition and reception of the gospels, especially of Matthew and Luke. Given the social and historical realities of manuscript production and acquisition, reading and performance,<sup>87</sup> the current project highlights the question, Are we to imagine the

---

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Goodacre 2002, chap. 1.

<sup>83</sup> A common feature of this approach to our texts is the employment of the archaeological metaphor as an orientating symbol that drives textual and historical reconstruction (cf. Crossan 1991; Crossan and Reed 2002; Kloppenborg 2000; Robinson, *et al.* 1985; *inter alios*; cf. the critique in Goodacre 2002:5–7).

<sup>84</sup> Very well known is the tradition of Robinson-Koester-Kloppenborg (cf. Robinson 1964; Robinson and Koester 1971; Kloppenborg 1987; 2000). Just as sophisticated and historically sensitive, however, are the works of Allison 1997 (who, despite himself, provides a different compositional history of Q), M. Casey 2002 (who adheres to a ‘chaotic’ model of Q), and Horsley and Draper 1999 (who reject atomising approaches to sayings traditions and identify larger ‘discourses’ comprising the document), *inter alios*. Note that all of these critics argue in favour of a *written* source (or sources) but evince different notions of what that written source is.

<sup>85</sup> This is apart from the fact that a notable minority of scholars are equally convinced of different literary interrelations between the synoptics; e.g., that Mark and Luke depend on Matthew; that Matthew used Luke and Mark, that earlier forms of a gospel (esp. *Urmarkus* or proto-Luke) were used by another gospel writer, that Mark was first but Matthew and Luke were not independent, and so on.

<sup>86</sup> Klutz, too, notes that ‘a growing number of scholarly works on the Gospels and Acts are experimenting with methods adapted from literary criticism and the social sciences, with questions about the ancient author’s Christian sources often being either backgrounded or completely bracketed’ (2004:9–10). Klutz does not necessarily share my scepticism *vis-à-vis* the Two-Source Hypothesis, but he, like this project, takes advantage of methods that do not depend on source-critical hypotheses to investigate problems of Christian origins.

<sup>87</sup> The Jesus Seminar is helpful here: ‘One should recall that copies of the first gospels were undoubtedly rare and difficult to use once acquired. It is not an easy thing to look up a passage in a sixteen-foot scroll (unrolling and rolling the parchment until one came to the desired text). . . . Moreover, parchment was expensive and few of the early leaders of the church could read and write. Even papyrus, which is closer to modern paper, was beyond ordinary means and was not as durable as parchment, which was made from animal skins. *The economics of publication and the relatively low literacy level in society limited the use of written documents in populist movements like Christianity for many decades*’ (Funk, Hoover, *et al.* 1993:26; emphasis added). Though the Seminar may exaggerate the extent to which ‘few of the early leaders of the church

gospel writers, particularly Matthew and Luke, sitting at a desk, isolated, putting pen or quill or stylus to papyrus or parchment, synthesising sources that line the wall around them?<sup>88</sup> Or can we hypothesise literary (inter)dependence in other ways, such that other possibilities not only remain open but new options previously unenvisaged arise from the texts? To repeat: Despite my misgivings about standard hypotheses of literary relationships between the synoptics and the ways those theories are used, the current project does not undermine those hypotheses so much as it investigates whether they can be put to better, more historically sensitive uses.

### 2.2.c.ii. Origins of Tradition: Written versus Oral

If we can return to the issue of oral tradition in reconstructing the 'historical Jesus', the final question of our brief survey of Jesus research pertains to how we can identify so-called 'oral traditions' in our texts.<sup>89</sup> We are *not* concerned here with the oft-made distinction between written and oral tradition (and the 'psychodynamics' thereof).<sup>90</sup> At the same time, we are not looking for traces of oral composition embedded in the written texts. After the appearance of *A Singer of Tales* (Lord 1960), a mad dash to diverse and variegated traditions scattered through time and space ensued as researchers hoped to find evidence of oral composition-in-performance in those traditions.<sup>91</sup> Though the applicability of this programme (i.e., Oral-Formulaic research) to the case of Jesus and the gospels has been rigorously questioned,<sup>92</sup> others have defended precisely this approach to the gospels and have found traces of 'oral patterning' in our texts, especially Mark and/or Q.<sup>93</sup> Alternatively, both Gerhardsson and Dunn begin not with exegetical but historical issues in identifying oral tradition as a formative influence on the synoptic texts.

Birger Gerhardsson's work, since the initial publication of his doctoral thesis in 1961, has turned to the Jewish rabbinic materials to understand the cultural patterns and systems available for both Jesus' and his disciples' understanding of their roles as teacher and learners, respectively. His point has not been that the relation that obtained between Jesus and his disciples *was* an example of a rabbinic school (as it can be reconstructed from later texts), but rather that the rabbi-disciple relationship was structured according to traditional patterns, and that these patterns, too, were available for Jesus and his disciples to think about and navigate their own situations.<sup>94</sup>

---

could read and write', their point is nevertheless crucial for understanding the gospels and the access they provide to the 'real' Jesus.

<sup>88</sup> As does, for example, B. Mack (1988:321, 322–323): 'Mark was a scholar. A reader of texts and a writer of texts. . . . Mark's Gospel was not the product of divine revelation. It was not a pious transmission of revered tradition. It was composed at a desk in a scholar's study lined with texts and open to discourse with other intellectuals' (cited in Horsley 2006e:234, fn 5). Cf. also Downing 1985:97–98.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. §2.3.b., below.

<sup>90</sup> This distinction, and the problems inherent in it, will be discussed in §4.2.a., below.

<sup>91</sup> This programme was itself suggested by Lord 1960:130; it came under severe criticism fairly early on (cf. Benson 1966; Finnegan 1976) and has been helpfully revised by Foley (1990c; 1991).

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Hurtado 1997; Gerhardsson 2005:1–7.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. esp. J. Dewey 1989; 1992, Pieter Botha 1991, and Kelber 1983.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Gerhardsson 2001:73–74.

Jesus, despite his incomparable grandeur, taught his disciples, and that clearly in traditional style *as far as the external form is concerned*. I have said that his disciples, if in fact they were proper disciples, must have memorized weighty sayings of their master. I have also said that the Twelve, after Jesus' death, probably were for several years residents of Jerusalem and functioned there as an authoritative collegium, and that as such they very likely 'worked with the Word of the Lord' — the holy scriptures and the Jesus tradition — in a way basically resembling the 'work with the Word' that occurred in other Jewish groups, as for example the leading men of the Qumran community or of the Pharisees. (Gerhardsson 2001:73; original italics)

The key here is the disciples' responsibility to 'memorize weighty sayings'. In this way Gerhardsson postulates considerable stability (and therefore reliability) in the oral transmission of tradition, though he emphasises that the tradition could, under certain circumstances and for certain purposes, be subject to modification.<sup>95</sup> Thus the oral quality of much of the synoptic tradition is determined on the analogy of other (especially rabbinic) models. For Gerhardsson, the form critics 'do not show sufficient energy in anchoring the question of the origin of the Gospel tradition within the framework of the question how holy, authoritative tradition was transmitted in the Jewish milieu of Palestine and elsewhere at the time of the New Testament' (1977:8–9).<sup>96</sup> Exegetical questions (e.g., identifying 'various didactic and poetic devices' or 'repetition') supplement, but do not initiate, the identification of oral tradition.<sup>97</sup> But the key point is always 'memorization', which for Gerhardsson ensured the authentic, oral transmission of the sayings (1977:70–72) and narrative traditions (2001:80–82).

Dunn's approach is both appreciative of and different from Gerhardsson's. Dunn builds upon Kenneth Bailey's synthesis of Bultmann's thesis of an informal, uncontrolled tradition with Gerhardsson's antithesis of a formal, controlled tradition to propose that the oral gospel tradition was informal, controlled tradition.<sup>98</sup> Whereas Gerhardsson pursued the question of oral tradition (and, primarily, transmission) on the conviction that the rabbinic parallel offered an insight into the relation between Jesus, as master, and his disciples, Dunn does so with the conviction that 'the nearest [analogies] we have to fill the gap [between our own, highly literate perspective and that of first-century Palestine] are the anecdotal essays by Kenneth Bailey in which he has reflected on more than thirty years [*sic*] experience of Middle East village life'

---

<sup>95</sup> E.g., Gerhardsson 2001:71, fn 26; 81. 'When one remembers that throughout the whole period the concrete Jesus tradition consisted essentially of *texts* that were memorized, interpreted, compiled, grouped, and regrouped and on which authoritative teachers could undertake certain redactional operations (particularly in connecting elements but also in the text of the traditions), then another picture emerges, one that differs from the scheme "first tradition — then redaction." The situation was much more one of continual interplay between transmission and redaction" (2001:84; original italics).

<sup>96</sup> Here is the problem with Gerhardsson's statement, quoted above, that 'his disciples, if in fact they were proper disciples, must have memorized weighty sayings of their master' (Gerhardsson 2001:73). Gerhardsson assumes, wrongly, in our opinion, that Jesus called his disciples to internalise and transmit tradition rather than to engage in a social, political, and theological programme in which tradition served an important role. Jesus' disciples, in other words, were disciples because they followed Jesus and were tasked with the same sorts of things he did, not because they memorised the words he spoke.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Gerhardsson's discussion of 'the rabbis' pedagogical methods and the technique employed in oral transmission' (1977:19–24).

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Dunn 2000:288–296; 2003b:192–210; see also Bailey 1991:35–40; Wright 1996:133–137.

(2003b:206). Therefore, the presence and influence of oral tradition is simply a fact, an *a priori* assumption.<sup>99</sup> The procedure for analysing this tradition, then, is to set parallel gospel traditions beside each other and to ask what type of oral tradition the extant texts preserve.<sup>100</sup> Parallels that evince more variation were 'less controlled'; those that were more stable were 'more controlled'.<sup>101</sup> Thus a model of oral tradition as a stable core to which details can be stripped, appended, modified, elaborated, and so forth emerges from the application of Bailey's insights to the synoptic texts.<sup>102</sup>

The historical approach to identifying oral tradition in the gospels, as exemplified by Gerhardsson and Dunn, seems much more fruitful for gospels and Jesus research than the exegetical approach of Kelber and others. Features of the texts (e.g., formulae, repetition, rhythmic patterns, etc.) do not raise the possibility of oral tradition enveloping our texts or generate questions of the traditioning processes. Rather, historical hypothesising (on the bases of low literacy rates, the robustness of the tradition despite the inaccessibility of its written texts to the majority of the people, the potency of tradition to foster and sustain social critique among non-/semi-literate groups, etc.) generates our questions, and features of our text are then seen from new perspectives. To emphasise the point: what follows in Part III is *not* a demonstration that features of the text must lead to the conclusion of oral tradition (and not written sources) generating the synoptic texts; rather, we are proposing a reading strategy on the basis of larger historical hypotheses, to be discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, and testing that strategy (and its driving hypotheses) by reading the texts from our new vantage point. Before we turn to these tasks, however, let us first survey the question of the gospels' literary interrelationships in gospels research.

### 2.3. Gospel Relationships in Contemporary Research

Gospels research, as a field, is certainly too broad to deal with in any significant detail, and so the current discussion is limited to how gospels scholarship conceives the object of its study and the relationships between specific gospels. Here two questions drive our discussion: First, how has the conceptualisation of the gospels as written texts governed their interpretation, both literarily and historically? and, Second, how would a shift in perspective toward the gospels

---

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Dunn 2003b:173: 'Few if any today assume that the written sources take the reader back directly to the Jesus who worked and taught in Galilee three or more decades earlier. But equally, few if any doubt that behind the written sources there was earlier tradition.' I should state plainly that I do not disagree with this assumption; the presence and influence of oral tradition can be taken for granted, even if assessing that presence and influence proves much more difficult. But that I agree with one of Dunn's assumptions does not change its status as an assumption.

<sup>100</sup> Dunn follows the typology proposed by Bailey, in which three types of oral tradition can be discerned: (a) those with no flexibility, either in their core substance or their incidentals, (b) those with some flexibility in detail but with a stable core, and (c) those with total flexibility, both in their core and in their details (Dunn 2003b:206–207; cf. Bailey 1991:42–45).

<sup>101</sup> Cf. the discussion of the conversion of Saul (Dunn 2003b:210–212). We should not forget that Dunn still allows for literary dependence between our gospels and their sources, so 'control' of oral tradition is not the only explanatory model Dunn invokes.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Dunn 2003b:223–224, *passim*.



as actualisations of an ongoing, vibrant, fluid tradition affect their interpretation, both literarily and historically?

### 2.3.a. Written Gospels, Written Sources

If any consensus exists among contemporary gospels scholars, it is that, despite the often striking differences between them, the similarities in wording, content, and order between the three synoptic gospels require the assumption of a literary relationship between them.<sup>103</sup> Often enough the agreement ends there, but it comes at least this far.<sup>104</sup> The presumption of literary relationships among the synoptics is often stated explicitly;<sup>105</sup> sometimes it is left implicit but unmistakable.<sup>106</sup> Indeed, readings of the gospels lacking the presupposition of a literary relationship stand out for that very reason; for example: 'The tradition built on or added to a core, consisting of the events and sayings of the ministry of Jesus and of his passion. Note that I am saying that the story is added to existing oral accounts, not that Matthew and Luke added episodes to an already existing Mark' (Lord 1978:44).<sup>107</sup> The precise nature of the literary relationships between the synoptic gospels continues to generate debate, though certainly a majority of scholars

---

<sup>103</sup> Studies that defend (or presume) a literary relationship between the synoptic gospels are ubiquitous, and it would be futile to attempt to construct a significant list of them here. However, even scholars who rail against the dominant conception of the literary relationship(s) among the synoptics and emphasise the oral nature of the (pre-) synoptic tradition still make use of the Two-Source Hypothesis (e.g., Gerhardsson 1986; Dunn 2003b). Kelber's statement is, perhaps, one of the most forceful among scholars probing oral dynamics of the gospel tradition: 'The profusion of verbatim correspondences and sequential parallelisms is such as to suggest textual interaction of some kind. Redaction and literary criticism, moreover, have convincingly demonstrated that the differences among the gospels represent distinct theological views worked out by writers, not fluctuations symptomatic of oral transmission' (1983:78).

<sup>104</sup> Cf. the essays in Bellinzoni 1985b and Dungan 1990. Both volumes acknowledge this consensus at the outset (e.g., Bellinzoni 1985a:4) and immediately set out to argue for exactly what type of literary relationship best accounts for the synoptic gospels as we have them. This is not to suggest that scholars are comfortable with assuming *only* a literary relationship between the synoptics (though this is precisely Goulder's perspective; cf. Goodacre 1996:18); Bellinzoni identifies three questions which are simply begged in order to focus his edited volume on the Two-Source Hypothesis, the second of which is: 'Whether, if the synoptic problem is solvable, the correct solution is strictly, or even primarily, a "literary" one, or whether a larger role must be attributed to the influence of oral tradition' (1985a:10). Cf. also Burkett 2004; Brodie 2004.

<sup>105</sup> E.g., Farrer 1955:353; Kümmel 1973:230; Butler 1969:98–100. A classic statement is found in Farmer 1976:168: 'The nature of the similarity is such as to warrant the judgment that the literary relationship between these gospels could be one involving direct copying. That is, the degree of verbatim agreement in Greek between any two of these three Gospels is as high or higher than that which generally exists between documents where it is known that the author of one copied the text of the other'.

<sup>106</sup> Streeter's rhetoric is heavily determined by the assumption of a literary relationship, for example, in the following: 'From these various figures it appears that, while Matthew omits less than 10% of the subject matter of Mark, Luke omits more than 45%, but for much of this he substitutes similar matter from another source. Each of them omits numerous points of detail and several complete sections of Mark which the other reproduces; but sometimes they both concur in making the same omission' (1924:160). Dungan (1970b:145) and Tyson (1985:439–440) both comment on Streeter's prejudicial language, but neither has a problem with Streeter's assumption 'that the Synoptic Problem is primarily a question of literary interrelationships' (Dungan 1970b:145).

<sup>107</sup> Cf. also Lord 1978:59–60, 82. As stated above (§2.2.c.i.), I am not denying that one or more evangelists knew the written works of one or more of the other evangelists. But one of the questions this project is attempting to raise is whether the evangelists' use of written sources, including other gospels, was 'literary' (i.e., of copying and editing) or 'oral' (i.e., more along the lines of reading aloud, [re]telling and [re]performing, either from the text or from memory). Lord (1978:90–91) also suggested the latter as a way of conceptualising the synoptics' interdependence.

accept some form of the Two-Source Hypothesis. We cannot here chart the various literary solutions to the synoptic problem, whether linear or complex, direct or indirect; as stated above, our question concerns how conceiving of the gospels as written phenomena affects their interpretation.

### 2.3.a.i. The Gospel Traditions as Textual Phenomena

First, scholars regularly assume that gospel traditions exist primarily, even exclusively, *in* (or *as*) written texts. This assumption is largely pragmatic — as Sanders points out, only written texts remain for our analyses of gospel traditions (1969:7–8) — and was originally applied to traditions found in multiple written gospels. When parallel texts exhibited a high level of verbal similarity, the conclusion was that, of these texts, one version must have been copied from another. On the success of this procedure, this assumption was then applied to traditions that occur in only one gospel (or to the earliest occurrence of a given tradition, e.g., in Mark or Q). Scholars nevertheless apply this assumption even as they explicitly acknowledge that some (or many) stories about Jesus were told orally. Streeter provides a useful example here. Though he was unconvinced by those who rejected the Q hypothesis in favour of an appeal to ‘cycles of oral tradition’, he does concede that, ‘for those cases where the degree of verbal resemblance between the parallel passages is small I myself believe that some such explanation is a true one’ (1924:184).<sup>108</sup> He goes on to critique those who attempt precise reconstructions of Q (whose existence he accepted), partly because ‘it does not at all follow that a saying of this [“quasi-proverbial”] character [i.e., Acts 20.35], even if it occurs in almost identically the same form in two Gospels, was derived from a written source’ (1924:185).

Thus we have from Streeter an acknowledgement of the oral existence of at least some of the Jesus tradition as well as some indication of how he conceptualised that existence to have affected the extant gospel tradition. Nevertheless, in a move that has been rejected by most adherents to the Two-Source Hypothesis (and hence the name), Streeter famously postulated two additional documentary sources, M and L, which, together with Mark and Q, accounted for nearly all of the synoptic tradition.<sup>109</sup> The need to assign traditions unique to Matthew and Luke

---

<sup>108</sup> Notice that, even here, Streeter’s argument refers exclusively to the *transmission* of gospel traditions. It never occurs to Streeter, or to many contemporary critics, that even a passage such as Luke 7.18–23 [Q], which exhibits some of the highest verbal correspondences with its parallel passage (Matt. 11.2–6), would have functioned as ‘oral tradition’ in an ‘oral environment’ (cf., for example, the discussion in Horsley and Draper 1999:263–264, and the discussion below).

<sup>109</sup> In other words, Streeter postulated parallel texts for traditions found in only a single text; e.g., though Jesus’ lament over Jerusalem in Luke 19.41–44 is found only there, Streeter presumes it had a parallel in a written source (L; cf. Streeter 1924:215)! Similarly, earlier parallels were postulated for other texts; e.g., while Matt. 21.33–44 and Luke 20.9–18 are read in relation to their presumed source (Mark 12.1–12), the Markan version itself is read in relation to a parallel text that has been reconstructed on the presumption that Mark 12.1–12 is itself evidence for other, earlier texts (cf. Scott 1989:237–238, who says, ‘Even more remarkably, the close resemblance between Dodd’s 1933 hypothetical reconstruction of an original parable and the version later found in the newly discovered *Gospel of Thomas* [1945] seems to confirm the reconstruction’). For the problems inherent with such editorial practices, cf. the discussion of

to written sources suggests an underlying discomfort with the uncontrolled nature of oral tradition, which Streeter elsewhere acknowledged. A similar observation seems appropriate in regard to the postulated documentary sources behind Mark's gospel (as well as John's): nearly everyone admits the tradition was originally oral, but the chances of any of the evangelists having any considerable contact with (or use for) the oral tradition are considered slight. This suggests a working assumption that, even if there was any oral tradition available to the evangelists, the traditions from which they drew existed primarily, if not exclusively, in documentary form.

In some cases the uncontrolled and speculative nature of any theory acknowledging and relying upon the oral nature of the gospel traditions seems to be the primary objection to such a theory of 'gospel origins'. For example, in his critique of Butler's suggestion that Mark results from the evangelist's acquaintance with Peter's preaching from the gospel of Matthew (1969:97–118), Fitzmyer writes, 'It is noteworthy that Butler had to interpose between Matthew and Mark a *preacher*, in effect, an oral source. As such, this becomes another stage in his solution to the Synoptic problem, which he does not formally acknowledge. It is a hypothetical element that is really devoid of any control, and this is its deficiency' (1970:45; original italics).<sup>110</sup> Inasmuch as Fitzmyer's objection refers to Butler's unfalsifiable hypothesis of Mark being a written record of Peter's preaching from Matthew he is certainly correct. And even insofar as we would hypothesise oral sources *between* particular gospels we are again speculating beyond our ability to falsify theories of gospel origins and relations.

But that the Jesus tradition throughout the first century was primarily accessed, celebrated, developed, and transmitted via word of mouth — in oral performance — is highly probable, and though we necessarily hypothesise here, so do those who prefer the predominate perspective that the evangelists' information about Jesus existed primarily or exclusively in written sources. We propose not so much the existence of oral sources *between* written gospels, but rather oral tradition *enveloping, infusing, and contextualising* the written gospels. Whatever comfort we may receive from the 'controls' afforded by literary approaches to gospel origins, the evangelists, as well as tradents of the gospel tradition before and after the writing of our gospels, seem to have

---

'stemmatic textual criticism' in Doane 1991:91–94 (admittedly, Doane addresses scholars of Old English texts).

<sup>110</sup> Talbert (1978) is another example of a scholar who speaks of 'controls' afforded by a literary paradigm of gospel relations. It should be said here that the problem being addressed is not with the concern to provide appropriate frames of reference for analyses of ancient phenomena (viz., the gospel traditions), especially when such an endeavour incorporates tools and insights developed within research traditions focused on the modern world. It is, rather, the failure of much research to take into account the larger historical picture being researched. Yes, we do require controls for analyses of oral tradition in the ancient world (especially as no ancient performances are available to be studied). But insofar as scholars such as Talbert and Fitzmyer insist upon a literary paradigm because it offers controls that oral paradigms do not, they fail to consider the more primary question: Is an emphatically literary paradigm of Jesus traditions more, or less, historically plausible than one which gives due consideration to the dynamics of oral tradition? Of course, the contentious phrase in this question is 'due consideration', but certainly the twentieth-century discussion being considered here falls far short, as the above discussion of Streeter's seminal work sought to demonstrate.

exhibited no anxiety to remember Jesus solely (or even primarily) through the stability afforded by written texts.

None of this denies either the existence of written, documentary sources of gospel tradition in the first century or the possibility that any or all of the evangelists had access to any of these sources. The problem, rather, finds apt illustration in the title of Talbert's response to Lord 1978: 'Oral and Independent or Literary and Interdependent' (Talbert 1978). Talbert has identified four variables in gospel research and has limited our choices to two. Rather, in the first century, it would seem that the gospel traditions were *both oral and written*,<sup>111</sup> and whatever (inter)dependence most accurately characterises their relationships must take this into account.<sup>112</sup> Did the evangelist Matthew have access to the gospel Mark?<sup>113</sup> Perhaps. Would he have consulted that gospel in the process of developing and writing his own gospel? Perhaps. Was his gospel more closely related to the text of Mark than to patterns and experiences of his own performances of the Jesus tradition in the context of concrete social groups in the period (days? weeks? months? years?) before he wrote his gospel? Probably not,<sup>114</sup> though if Matthew had access to Mark, the latter may have influenced the former's performative style. And while we may speculate that (and inquire whether) Mark influenced Matthew's oral-performative style, we can affirm more confidently that any written traditions available to Matthew influenced his performative style. But we cannot reasonably assume, without argumentation, that Matthew's written sources exerted a greater influence over the written text of his gospel than does his own history of performing Jesus traditions. However we approach the question of written and oral gospel traditions, we need not presume that independence and interdependence are contradictory possibilities.

In addition to the title, the content of Talbert's essay reveals the problem with literary perspectives of the gospels. In the first section of that response (1978:94–99) Talbert picks up

---

<sup>111</sup> Remember the point made in the preceding paragraph: not that oral sources existed *between* written gospels but that oral tradition *enveloped, infused, and contextualised* the written tradition.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. the similar point made by Hearon: 'Attentiveness to the primarily aural nature of our "written remains" signals to us their close relationship with oral text. Since these "written remains" were largely dictated, the "remains" are, in fact, texts that began in oral expression and were "actualized" in performance through the re-oralization of the words. To view them wholly as written texts, then, is to miss an important dimension of their function, and to misconstrue how they were experienced in the ancient Mediterranean world' (2003).

<sup>113</sup> Similar questions could be asked of Luke and, indeed, of Mark and John as well as of noncanonical gospels, though we should not begin with the expectation that the dynamics of the composition of the gospels must be the same for each.

<sup>114</sup> This question, and my own negative response to it, concerns the *a priori* determination of whether or not the evangelists (esp. Matthew and Luke) had access to the Jesus tradition prior to having access to the texts of Mark and Q. It seems to me, on an *a priori* basis, more probable that the stories found in Matthew and Luke — at least the majority of them — would have been familiar to the evangelists and their communities before they encountered them in Mark's gospel. Dunn provides a similar perspective: 'The claim that there were churches in the mainstream(s) represented by Matthew and Luke who did not know any Jesus tradition until they received Mark (or Q) as documents simply beggars belief and merely exemplifies the blinkered perspective imposed by the literary paradigm' (2000:305–306).

Lord's four characteristics of oral traditional literature,<sup>115</sup> which Lord identifies also in the gospels, and attempts to illustrate the same characteristics in works that more clearly bear literary relationships to their sources (e.g., Josephus's *Antiquities*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, etc.). In this way it becomes clear that the characteristics identified by Lord do not prove that the gospels were oral traditional literature;<sup>116</sup> thus Talbert reaffirms a literary approach to the gospels.<sup>117</sup> But how, if Lord's characteristics of oral traditional material are also characteristics of literary material, has the case been decided either way? Once we ask the question we find the answer near to hand: we have *always* conceived of the Jesus tradition as *written tradition*. Nevertheless, despite the invalidation of most of our well-respected analytical controls, the Jesus tradition could not have been primarily a textual phenomenon. People performed stories about Jesus; they performed groups of stories about Jesus. The writing of gospel traditions (as well as accessing those traditions) was enmeshed in that performative tradition and can not be separated from it.<sup>118</sup>

### 2.3.a.ii. The Redactional Development of Gospel Traditions

Second, scholars commonly assume that we can describe the development of the tradition best, or at least aptly, in terms of redactional and editorial praxis. This working assumption is closely related to our previous point: scholarship has treated the extant gospels as though the Jesus tradition in the first century existed primarily *in the text*. Scholars can then analyse variations between different versions of the same tradition in terms of redaction of written sources. The evangelist's redactional procedure actualises his theology, which then assists in identifying (and neutralising) secondary accretions to the tradition.<sup>119</sup> But, as argued above, the gospel traditions were primarily accessed as oral phenomena rather than written texts. They were primarily

---

<sup>115</sup> Lord's four characteristics of oral traditional literature are: (1) the verbal variations between the gospel accounts, ruling out the possibility of copying (Lord 1978:90; Talbert 1978:95); (2) the sequential variations in the arrangement of traditions (Lord 1978:90; Talbert 1978:96); (3) the tendency of the synoptics to elaborate and expand individual traditions as well as sequences of tradition (Lord 1978:90; Talbert 1978:97); and (4) the duplications of multiforms (Lord 1978:90; Talbert 1978:98). Talbert also refers to Lord's scepticism that a writer would 'choose passages from several documentary sources as if from a buffet' (Lord 1978:59–60; Talbert 1978:98).

<sup>116</sup> Talbert says, 'Lord's case, I believe, has not been made' (1978:99).

<sup>117</sup> See Talbert's conclusion: 'Christianity emerged in a Mediterranean culture that was not illiterate. Education was widespread. Books were produced on a scale theretofore unknown. A large reading public consumed prose written with a rhetorical cast. The author of such prose, though often using written sources, would not be a mere scissors-and-paste person. . . . This, it seems to me, is the context for understanding the Synoptic Problem' (1978:101–102). This description of the ancient Mediterranean world has been largely, if not wholly, abandoned in current scholarship (cf. §6.4.a.i., below).

<sup>118</sup> For a rhetorical parallel to our argument here, cf. Hägg's discussion of early Greek novels, in which he writes, 'The only certain thing is that our knowledge of this genre's first stage is utterly fragmentary, and that there *was* more than we *have* [original italics]. *Our gravest mistake would be to construct a building using only the few scattered remains — and believe the result to be historically true*' (1994:53; my emphasis). So also with our gospels: there 'was more' to their originative contexts than the written texts that remain. When we read them, therefore, without acknowledging their broader originative contexts, we also 'construct a building using only the few scattered remains' and, worse, 'believe the result to be historically true'.

<sup>119</sup> Over twenty-five years ago Bruce Chilton called into question the easy distinction biblical critics make between 'redaction' and 'tradition', noting that we cannot (always) easily sort the gospels' traditions into one or the other (cf. 1982:90; cf. also 1980).

received in performance rather than reading. And despite all this the distinctions between oral and written traditions appear rather meaningless in a first-century setting.

Scholars can no longer sustain the model in which the Jesus tradition developed primarily through the evangelists' editorial agenda. Neither can scholars continue to appeal to such agenda as explanatory forces for phenomena relevant to the study of the 'historical Jesus', the gospels, or Christian origins more generally. Rather, we must consider more seriously the possibility that the verbal similarities and differences between our gospels do not represent reactions to or modifications of other textual phenomena. Instead, wording peculiar to an expression of one traditional unit represents an instance of the variability with which traditions could be expressed. Similarly, the *meaning* of differences between two texts may depend more directly upon our interpretations of the texts than from an authorial innovation in the text.<sup>120</sup> For example, the Matthean and Lukan versions of the first beatitude read differently:

Matt. 5.3:	Luke 6.20:
<sup>3</sup> Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.	<sup>20</sup> Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοί, ὅτι ὑμετέρα ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ.

We immediately recognise three differences between the two texts; we will deal them in reverse order. The difference between Matthew's 'kingdom of heaven' and Luke's 'kingdom of God' is sufficiently consistent<sup>121</sup> that it hardly merits discussion; scholars typically explain Matthew as avoiding the use of the Greek translation of YHWH. The difference between Matthew's αὐτῶν and Luke's ὑμετέρα is negligible and does not suggest any distinctive Lukan or Matthean theology, though it also eludes explanation in terms of the evangelists' literary dependence on a common source. The elephant in the room, however, is Matthew's τῷ πνεύματι, which scholars conventionally attribute to Matthean redaction. In this way Matthew 'spiritualises' the otherwise very concrete saying, 'Blessed are the poor', found in Q (and very probably attributable to the historical Jesus; cf. Crossan 1991:270–273; Funk, Hoover, *et al.* 1993:138, 289).<sup>122</sup>

The problem with this way of analysing the first Beatitude is twofold. First, our confidence that τῷ πνεύματι is Matthean redaction fails to address the observation that, if Luke found τῷ πνεύματι in his source,<sup>123</sup> he would have had reason to drop it here. Unlike Matthew, who does not parallel his beatitudes with corresponding woes, Luke 6.20 is complemented by 6.24: Πλὴν οὐαὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς πλουσίοις, ὅτι ἀπέχετε τὴν παράκλησιν ὑμῖν. Had Luke read οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι in his source, his interest in juxtaposing οἱ πτωχοὶ with τοῖς πλουσίοις might have prompted him to edit τῷ πνεύματι out of his text. Thus, whereas the

<sup>120</sup> Cf. the discussion of Matthew's οἱ Φαρισαῖοι and Mark's οἱ γραμματεῖς in §7.3.a., below.

<sup>121</sup> Matthew uses 'kingdom of God' four times (12.28; 19.24; 21.31, 43), unless the reading τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ at 6.33 is original.

<sup>122</sup> Interestingly, the phrase 'in spirit' in Matt. 5.3 is printed pink (Funk and Hoover 1993:138).

<sup>123</sup> Q, according to the Two-Source Hypothesis, or Matthew, for the neo-Gricsbachians.

Matthean beatitude looks secondary, it may not be. Second, the standard redaction-critical reading of Matt. 5.3//Luke 6.20 fails to deliver what it promises: the distinctive theology of the redactor responsible for the final form of Matt. 5.3. If it did, we would suppose that Matthew writes a 'spiritual' gospel, whereas Luke (or Luke's source) addressed concrete socio-economic realities.<sup>124</sup> But elsewhere we see exactly the opposite tendency as that found in Matt. 5.3//Luke 6.20. In Jesus' saying about giving good gifts (Matt. 7.11//Luke 11.13), we find it is *Luke* who provides the more 'spiritualised' reading:

Matt. 7.11:	Luke 11.13:
<p><sup>11</sup> εἰ οὖν ὑμεῖς πονηροὶ ὄντες οἴδατε δόματα ἀγαθὰ διδόναι τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν, πόσω μᾶλλον ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς δώσει ἀγαθὰ τοῖς αἰτουῦσιν αὐτόν.</p>	<p><sup>13</sup> εἰ οὖν ὑμεῖς πονηροὶ ὑπάρχοντες οἴδατε δόματα ἀγαθὰ διδόναι τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν, πόσω μᾶλλον ὁ πατήρ [ὁ] ἐξ οὐράνου δώσει πνεῦμα ἅγιον τοῖς αἰτουῦσιν αὐτόν.</p>

The 'good things' (ἀγαθὰ) the Father will give to Jesus' audience ought to be understood in terms of Matt. 7.9–10; that is, as a human father provides food ('bread' and 'fish') to his children, so the heavenly Father provides for the concrete, visceral needs of his people.<sup>125</sup> Luke's Jesus, however, blocks this reading; the Father from heaven will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask. The parallel with Luke 11.11–12 is, in fact, difficult to discern, except perhaps to say that, as human fathers<sup>126</sup> give what they are able for the benefit of their children (ὁ υἱός), so, too, the Father from heaven.

Here, then, lies the problem with redaction-critical approaches to the gospels, and especially with the concomitant view of the Jesus tradition and its development undergirding such approaches.<sup>127</sup> We are simply unable to demonstrate beyond mere assertion that Matthew's τῷ πνεύματι is symptomatic of Matthew's 'spiritualising tendencies', thereby blocking a concrete socio-economic meaning for Jesus' pronouncement of blessing upon the destitute (οἱ πτωχοί). Even if this were true, we still could not demonstrate that this reveals a distinctive characteristic

<sup>124</sup> E.g., Luke's 'the poor' in 6.20 (see the discussion in Esler 1987). See the discussion of Q 6.20–49 as covenantal discourse in Horsley and Draper 1999:195–227, and especially the concern evident in the 'blessings and curses' for 'economic viability' and judgement 'against the rich' (1999:216–220). It should be pointed out that Q's alleged interest in concrete socio-economic life, inasmuch as it is opposed to Matthew's more spiritual, metaphorical perspective, is an assertion rather than a conclusion based on evidentiary arguments. There is no reason to assume that Matthew did not preserve Q's 'spiritualised' reading (or that Jesus was himself responsible for the 'spiritual' emphasis of this saying) and that Luke redacted the saying to make it relevant to his reader's concrete situations. Similarly, the classification of 'Blessed are the poor in spirit' as 'spiritualised' and unconcerned with socio-economic realities of life for first-century peasants is likewise asserted rather than convincingly argued. This whole point, however, is made moot by problems with our conceptualisation of 'redaction', as I am arguing here.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Matt 6.25–34.

<sup>126</sup> Admittedly, 'human fathers' is a concept imported here from Matthew (τίς ἐστὶν ἐξ ὑμῶν ἄνθρωπος; 7.9), though Luke's τίνα δὲ ἐξ ὑμῶν (11.11) seems to make the same point, if somewhat less emphatically.

<sup>127</sup> We have, of course, only treated two texts; redaction-critical approaches conceivably work better for other passages, and thus the force of this criticism is mitigated. But maybe not, for the characterisations of Matthew and Luke, as whole gospels, on the bases of the passages just cited (esp. Matt. 5.3//Luke 6.20) is widespread (e.g., Crossan 1991:270–273; Theissen and Merz 1996:254).

of Matthew's theology *vis-à-vis* Luke's (or Q's), and that Matthew therefore tends to treat his written sources in a manner consistent with this theology. The evidence of Matt. 5.3 and parallel and 7.11 and parallel prevents us from treating either Matthew or Luke in such a fashion. We thus cannot identify any version of these traditions as 'original'. Instead, we are forced to recognise that, instead of 'original' and 'secondary', Jesus traditions are capable of multiple and multi-form expression, and that the difference, for example, between οἱ πτωχοὶ and οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι is not as probative as we would like.

### 2.3.b. The Gospels as Oral-Derived Texts

If our fundamental understanding of the Jesus tradition (and its expression in extant written gospels) has misled us in our quests for both the 'historical Jesus' and a historical understanding of the texts about him, then let us turn to our second question, posed above: How would a shift in perspective toward the gospels as actualisations of an ongoing, vibrant, fluid oral tradition affect their interpretation, both literarily and historically? Much of this discussion must wait until Chapter 4. Nevertheless, we can introduce the concept of 'oral-derived texts' here and ask how such a concept might alter our perception of the written gospels before us.

John Miles Foley<sup>128</sup> has developed the concept of the 'oral-derived text' as a way of speaking about written texts whose originative context (and, therefore, the most [or first] appropriate context for reception) comprises the oral traditions of a given community or set of communities, as well as the performative contexts in which concrete performers actualised those traditions.<sup>129</sup> Foley speaks of 'verbal art',<sup>130</sup> an umbrella term meant to refer generically to a spectrum of 'texts', ranging from the content of an oral performance to a written account of that performance and on to a literary work more securely under the control of an individual author. 'Oral-derived texts', then, represent a more specialised spectrum within 'verbal art'; they are works 'that either stem directly from or have roots in oral tradition' (1991:xi).<sup>131</sup> Clearly the concept of 'oral-derived text' includes substantial ambiguity, such that identifying any text as 'oral-derived' will require further and more precise discussion.<sup>132</sup> Nevertheless, such a label brings with it a broad array of interpretative consequences, which gospels and Jesus research have thus far neglected.<sup>133</sup> Taking stock of our gospels as oral-derived texts will be one of the major tasks of the current project.

---

<sup>128</sup> See esp. Foley 1991; 1995a.; cf. also §§4.3.c. and 4.3.d., below.

<sup>129</sup> With regard to modern criticism's attempts to apprehend oral-derived texts, Foley refers to the 'reading imperative' (cf. 1991:57, fn 32), by which he means the obligation of the contemporary reader to 'transcend' the 'initial limitation' of our status as 'prisoner[s] of a text'.

<sup>130</sup> Foley is explicitly influenced by the work of Richard Bauman (e.g., 1977).

<sup>131</sup> Foley developed the concept of 'oral-derived texts' as a way of recognising and respecting the difference between how meaning is generated in oral performance, on the one hand, and literary text, on the other, without subscribing to the faulty theory of a 'Great Divide' between 'orality' and 'literacy' (1991:15; cf. also Finnegan 1989; 1990).

<sup>132</sup> Cf. Foley's fourfold typology, discussed in §4.3.d.i., below.

<sup>133</sup> A notable exception is Horsley and Draper 1999; cf. also the essays in Horsley 2006c.



Foley's investigation into oral-derived texts (viz., the Homeric and Old English corpora) postpones the question of *what* these texts mean and focuses attention on *how* they mean. In response to this question, Foley speaks of 'traditional referentiality',<sup>134</sup> which

entails the invoking of a context that is enormously larger and more echoic than the text or work itself, that brings the lifeblood of generations of poems and performances to the individual performance or text. . . . Even when the process becomes one of making oral-derived texts, the traditional phraseology and narrative patterns continue to provide ways for the poet to convey meaning, to tap the traditional reservoir. (Foley 1991:7)<sup>135</sup>

Inasmuch as traditional phraseology and narrative patterns 'tap the traditional reservoir', the meaning generated by such phrases and patterns is *inherent*; that is, 'a traditional work depends primarily on elements and strategies that were in place long before the execution of the present version or text, long before the present nominal author learned the inherited craft' (1991:8).<sup>136</sup> The performer of the tradition (or a scribe writing it down) actualises meaning already latent in the tradition; her role as the *source* of the work's meaning is constrained, compared to her more literary counterparts, and her role as the *vehicle* of meaning, in partnership with her audience, is augmented. A literary author, by way of contrast, stands over his work and bears a higher degree of responsibility for the paths of meaning leading through his work.

Related to the question of how oral-derived texts *generate* meaning is, How are oral-derived texts *received* by their audience(s)? A. N. Doane, referring to Lord's classic discussion of so-called 'transitional' texts (Lord 1960:128–138), identifies three ways in which written texts and oral traditional material have been thought to interact.<sup>137</sup> Doane proposes a fourth model, which he calls *reperformance*:

Whenever scribes who are part of the oral traditional culture write or copy traditional oral works, they do not merely mechanically hand them down; they rehear them, 'mouth' them, 'reperform' them in the act of writing in such a way that the text may change but remain authentic, just as a completely oral poet's text changes from performance to performance without losing authenticity. A textualist perspective will show scribed texts to have a different textual form from their 'originals,' but these texts reformed in their writing will be new originals in that the forms they draw from will be from the same sources and conform to the same canon as completely oral texts. (Doane 1991:80–81)

We will argue in Chapter 4 that the evangelists qualify as 'part of the oral traditional culture', and that this has too often gone unnoticed in New Testament scholarship. The authors of our gospels were not simply 'familiar with' scattered bits of oral tradition; neither did they 'have ac-

---

<sup>134</sup> Cf. §4.3.c., below, for a more detailed discussion of 'traditional referentiality'.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. the discussion of oral-derived texts' 'continuity of reception'; §4.3.d., below.

<sup>136</sup> *Inherent* meaning is defined in contrast to *conferred* meaning, though the distinction is, for Foley as well as for this project, heuristic rather than categorical (cf. Foley 1991:xiv–xv). We can read Foley's work to suggest (rightly, I think) that meaning is a function of social interaction rather than any supposed ontological reality embodied within communication systems, whether written or oral.

<sup>137</sup> ' . . . by a speaker dictating directly to a scribe, by an oral poet writing down his own lines as he pronounces them, and by a literate poet who is familiar with a particular oral tradition, imitating or interacting with the produce [*sic*] of oral-traditional performative situations by literary means' (Doane 1991:80).

cess' to oral tradition, as if they approached the oral traditions of the early Jesus movement(s) as outsiders. Instead, the evangelists were experienced performers (whether or not the most talented) of the traditions cherished and celebrated by the communities of the Jesus movement(s).

#### 2.4. Concluding Remarks

Once we realise this possibility, we can perceive the written gospels as *consistent with* the oral performances of the traditions they contain.<sup>138</sup> We ought not underestimate the paradigmatic shift in gospels research that this perspective represents. According to this perspective, we must approach the written gospels at the centre of our research programmes as instances of the Jesus tradition itself and *not as* editions or versions of one another.<sup>139</sup> Loveday Alexander has recently endorsed just this model of text-tradition relations and has linked it with early (first- and second-century) perspectives on the gospels. In the surviving testimony of Justin Martyr, Papias, and Clement of Alexandria,

It is as if each written text represents a particular performance of 'the gospel', the good news about Jesus, and, however much it is valued and respected, it retains its 'provisional' character as a performance, as one possible instantiation of *the* gospel [original italics]. Contrary to what we might expect, *it is the underlying story that has solidity, while the particular performance in which it is embodied . . . has a more ephemeral quality.* (L. Alexander 2006:23; emphasis added)<sup>140</sup>

The texts exhibit both striking similarities and differences, but we no longer perceive their relationships in terms of a model of decay, whereby later and/or more developed texts have 'fallen away from' or are 'less reflective of' the historical Jesus.

---

<sup>138</sup> The point here is not that the oral tradition *evolved into* or *grew steadily toward* their final form, which we find in the gospels. Neither is it to claim the unknowable: that the oral performances of the early 'Christian' communities resembled to a remarkable degree the written gospels to which we still have access. It is, rather, that the written texts do not represent radically new verbal products of those early communities; they were, in all probability, intended and received as examples (or instances) of the Jesus tradition in performance, or at least that they were perceived as *consistent with* the communities' reception of oral performances. See the discussion in Chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion.

<sup>139</sup> E.g., Scott 1989:4–5, esp.: 'Since I accent the performance character of parables, each extant version of a parable, even if literarily dependent on another version, is a new performance'. If individual gospel traditions ought not be read as editions of earlier parallels, the result is a substantial undermining of most gospels and Jesus research, where the meaning of, say, Matt. 3.13–16 is generated not by anything in Matthew but by a comparison with Mark 1:9–10 (indeed, in this instance at least, Luke 3.21 is often read against Mark 1:9–10 *as well as* Matt. 3.13–16, despite the predominant position that Luke is dependent on the former while being independent on the latter; cf. Crossan 1991:232–234; Fredriksen 1988:97). In the new paradigm of the gospels as oral-derived texts, these passages are synchronically and diachronically related to other performances of the tradition of Jesus' baptism without necessarily being 'editions' of an earlier (written) text. Synchronically, Matt. 3.13–16 comprises part of a one-time, autonomous performance of the Jesus tradition itself; in other words, these verses are part of a larger narrative and must be interpreted as such. Diachronically, they are related to performances before and after the text was written; they are not simply *editions* or *versions* of the tradition of Jesus' baptism but *are themselves that tradition* (cf. Lord 1978:44). Notice that this new paradigm does not depend on a different solution to the synoptic problem. Even if Mark was written first, and Matthew and Luke independently made use of Mark and a sayings source, the real issues here are, How, historically, are we to envision the influence one written text would/could wield over another? How, consequently, were those written texts related? and How, finally, ought we to interpret those texts?

<sup>140</sup> Immediately before this quote L. Alexander refers to Koester 1990, §1.4 and chap. 5.

We can say much more regarding the gospels as oral-derived texts.<sup>141</sup> But it suffices for this chapter that we have highlighted some of the more consequential problems posed by a literary approach to the gospels, especially when research ultimately seeks to apprehend something of the historical Jesus. We still have to explore more fully what it means for us to identify the gospels as oral-derived texts, and of course we will have to specify how each gospel relates to the oral performative tradition. But we saw in the previous paragraph that a more nuanced perspective on the relationship between our texts and the oral tradition of the earliest communities of Jesus' followers already represents a seismic shift in the methods (and, therefore, the results) of gospels criticism. Before we attend to these matters, however, let us turn to questions of how the past is re-presented, in general as well as in oral traditional performance.

---

<sup>141</sup> Or, in Lord's terminology, as oral traditional literature; cf. Lord 1978.

# Part II:

*A Framework for Apprehending  
Ancient Christian Traditions*

### Chapter 3 Memory, Reputation, History

So it is that when people think they are alone,  
face to face with themselves, other people ap-  
pear and with them the groups of which they  
are members.

Maurice Halbwachs,  
*The Social Frameworks of Memory*, 49

#### 3.1. Introduction: Social Memory Theory

In order to balance some of the approaches to Jesus and gospels research discussed above, this project outlines the discussion of collective memory and explores a few ways in which this discussion can further ‘historical Jesus’ research. Though collective memory research has raged in the humanities for two or three decades, as of yet it has had little impact on biblical studies in general and historical Jesus studies in particular. Consequently, this chapter will attempt to establish the general contours of collective memory studies, highlight the questions around which such studies centre, and trace some methods and perspectives that have proved useful in analysing those questions.

#### 3.2. Memory’s Social Matrix

‘Collective memory’ — whether the conceptual apparatus or simply the term — has recently begun to emerge in New Testament studies. Gerhardsson, rightly sensing the relevance to his own work, reacts sharply to any suggestion that memory is in any sense ‘collective’, complaining that ‘it sounds too much like Émile Durkheim’s ideas about the creativity of the collective’, or ‘like the declarations of the form critics that many elements in the gospels are community creations (*Gemeindebildungen*)’ (2005:8–9).<sup>1</sup> Gerhardsson reacts here against Dunn’s recent work (esp. 2003). Samuel Byrskog, an important disciple of Gerhardsson, similarly objects to the notion of social memory, though his position is first more ambivalent than Gerhardsson’s (cf. 2000:255), then just as striking (cf. 2004). It is, then, an irony of scholarship that Dunn himself is sceptical of social memory theory, if for different reasons (cf. 2005a:43–44, 54). As we will see presently, however, Gerhardsson’s criticisms, though not without warrant, evince an unfamiliarity with social memory research. Presently, however, let us inquire into the social conditioning of memory, long considered the faculty of the individual *par excellence* (cf. Kirk 2005b:2).

##### 3.2.a. Group and Individual Influences on Memory

‘*Groups and cultures do not remember and recall, individuals do*’ (Byrskog 2000:255; original italics). On a basic level this is, of course, axiomatic. But such an insistence fails to consider the dynamics of individual recall of the past: the concerns that motivate such recall, the resources that enable recall, the contexts in which recall takes place, the rites and forms available for the ex-

---

<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Bauckham expresses serious doubts about the ‘Durkheimian sociological notion of “collective memory”’ (2006:291) but also appreciatively refers to Misztal 2003 and the recognition of memory as ‘intersubjective’ (2006:311–313).

pression of recall, and so on. Groups and cultures may not remember and recall, but they are ever-present in every act of remembrance. 'It is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories' (Halbwachs 1925:38).<sup>2</sup>

The problem is not simply one of recognising a symbiotic relationship between individuals and communities as two isolated (or isolatable) entities sharing a common relation ('memory') between them; such an approach inappropriately reifies both the individual and the collective.<sup>3</sup> 'All individual remembering', writes Olick, building on Halbwachs, 'takes place with social materials, within social contexts, and in response to social cues. Even when we do it alone, we do so as social beings with reference to our social identities' (2006:11). Groups are more than the sum of their individual constitutive members, and individuals are never separate(d) from the groups to which they belong.<sup>4</sup> We require, then, a perspective that recognises that 'individual and collective identity . . . are two sides of a coin rather than different phenomena' (Olick 1999a:342). Social memory theory, then, does not simply attempt to problematise the *social aspect* of memory; rather, it takes a stance *vis-à-vis* the nature of memory itself: that it is forged and summoned in the present by individuals *constantly engaged in social interaction*.<sup>5</sup>

Richard Jenkins has explored the entanglement of the individual with the group and social interaction as the site of this entanglement; his argument, concerned with social *identity* but appropriate to social *memory*,<sup>6</sup> deserves quoting at length:

The *individually unique* and the *collectively shared* can be understood as similar (if not exactly the same) in important respects: that each is routinely related to — or, better perhaps, entangled with — the other; that the processes by which they are produced, reproduced and changed are analogous; and that *both* are intrinsically social. (1996:19; original italics)

---

<sup>2</sup> Quoted also in Olick 1999a:334; Prager 1998:68–69.

<sup>3</sup> Halbwachs similarly expressed his astonishment at finding that 'people are considered there [i.e., in psychological treatises] as isolated beings' (1925:38).

<sup>4</sup> 'There is no individual memory without social experience nor is there any collective memory without individuals participating in communal life. Thinking about remembering in this way demands that we overcome our inculcated tendency . . . to see individual and society, in the words of Norbert Elias, as separate things, "like pots and pans"' (Olick 1999a:346). For a nuanced discussion of the problematic reification of 'individual' and 'group', cf. Jenkins 1996, esp. 11–18, 19–28.

<sup>5</sup> We are not trying to relate two separable phenomena (individuals and groups). Rather, these two phenomena are already mutually implicating. Our perspective differs from, e.g., Bauckham, who is concerned to keep individual and collective memory in balance: 'Some theorists in this tradition [social memory] have dissolved the notion of individual memory in that of collective, social, or cultural memory, while others have worked with a close relationship between the two. . . . Much of what is called "collective memory," "social memory," or "cultural memory" is shared memory of information about the past. This is what is entailed, for example, when a large social group "commemorates" a notable event in its past, although, while the event is still within living memory, individuals with personal memories of the event may participate in the commemoration and may enrich the collective memory with their personal testimonies. Thus individual memory, shared with others, is the prime source of collective memory and can feed into the latter at any stage while the individuals in question are still alive and actively remembering their own past' (2006:291, 312). Cf. the preceding footnote.

<sup>6</sup> The links between identity and memory are explored in numerous works; cf., for example, Schudson 1989b; Assmann 1995; Ben-Yehuda 1995; Rosenzweig and Thelen 1998; Kirk 2005b (and the extensive literature cited there); Esler 2005; Olick 2006, among many, many others.

Similarly, Jeffrey Prager has explored the dynamics by which memory is ‘intersubjectively constituted’ (1998), in this case within the context of the interaction between a psychoanalyst and his patient (and the connections between that very private context and the cultural context framing that interaction). In the field of biblical studies, Philip Esler, importing the work of Henri Tajfel and other social psychologists, investigates ‘how . . . society at large or a group in particular managed to install itself in the mind of individuals and to affect their behaviour’ (1998:41). Inasmuch as individuals internalise the cultural frameworks of the group to which they belong, the seemingly private, internal functions of the mind, of self-identification, and of memory become social in nature and consequence. Both individual and social identity — and memory — are established, shaped, and perpetuated in the dynamics of social interaction: both are processual, under constant negotiation, and result from a dialectic between the individual and the collective (Jenkins 1996:20). Thus social identity and social memory are closely linked to each other and to processes of social interaction.<sup>7</sup>

Neither individual nor collective identity represent static entities or ‘things’ that can be analysed as discrete entities apart from the other. They are dynamic and fluid, constantly under construction as my own projections of my self interact with feedback and identifications of ‘me’ that I receive from others in the course of social interaction. The same holds for memory: the memorial narratives I tell myself and those around me interact with feedback and narratives I receive from others.<sup>8</sup> Both ‘personal’ and ‘collective’ memory, therefore, are continually being negotiated as objects and subjects of social interaction; both are mutually constituting and ‘intrinsically social’.<sup>9</sup>

We intend here a complete lack of sequence. Individual and collective factors of memory (and of identity) are not only *mutually* but also *simultaneously* influencing. Emphasising either too strongly, or presuming first one, then the other, distorts both and obscures our focus: the

---

<sup>7</sup> Tonkin’s programmatic statement is as clear as one could hope: ‘Individuals are also social beings, formed in interaction, reproducing and also altering the societies of which they are members. I argue that “the past” is not only a resource to deploy, to support a case or assert a social claim, it also enters memory in different ways and helps to structure it. Literate or illiterate, *we are our memories*’ (1992:1; my emphasis).

<sup>8</sup> Berger and Luckmann (1966:26, 66, 67–68) discuss the objectification of knowledge (and, as a specific subset of knowledge, memory) through language, which is itself an important vehicle for the externalisation of that knowledge. The important point is that this knowledge, previously comprised of inchoate cognitive images but now given structure and form by virtue of being transformed into narrative, is itself internalised by the social actors involved, *even by the author(s) of the narrative that structured those images in the first place* (cf. Fentress and Wickham 1992:28, who discuss the semantic structure of knowledge and describe language as ‘a natural *aide-mémoire* [that] organizes our knowledge in conceptual categories that are immediately available for articulation’). This narrative largely replaces the knowledge (memory) to which it gave expression in the first place. In other words, the memory of an event is often fused with subsequent acts of recalling that event (to myself as well as to others); similarly, my experience of an event is fused with my experience of subsequent acts of articulating that event (cf. E. Zerubavel 2003:3). For a discussion of similar processes *vis-à-vis* oral performance of history and tradition, cf. §4.3.b., below.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. this chapter’s epigram: even in the most private moments when an individual’s thought turns inward and he perceives himself to be all alone, he conjures up other people to recall, think about, enhance, or modify ‘personal’ memories that have already been shaped by and structured according to the values and thought patterns of the groups to which he belongs.

synthesis between individual and group that is established in social interaction (Jenkins 1996:26–27).<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, the distinction between personal and collective memory (and identity) retains importance; ‘not everything that goes on in our heads and hearts is obvious to others. Nor is there always a fit between how we see ourselves and how others see us (or how we imagine they do)’ (1996:30). The problem, then, with distinguishing the personal from the collective arises precisely when we forget that this distinction does not exist.

Halbwachs approached memory as a social construction (a product of social interaction), but he recognised that group memory was not ‘some mystical group mind’. Rather, collective memory exists within the minds of individual group members. Coser, summarising Halbwachs, writes: ‘It is . . . individuals who remember, not groups or institutions, but these individuals, being located in a specific group context, draw on that context to remember or recreate the past’ (Coser 1992:22).<sup>11</sup> The relationship between individual and collective appears in Halbwachs’s larger move from approaching memory as an individual, psychological phenomenon to considering it as a collective, sociological process. He eschews the hunt for memory’s preservation and storage ‘in my brain or in some nook of my mind to which I alone have access’, but instead locates the functions of storage and recall — or, more precisely, reconstruction — outside the individual. ‘It is in this sense that there exists a collective memory and social frameworks for memory; it is to the degree that our individual thought places itself in these frameworks and participates in this memory that it is capable of the act of recollection’ (Halbwachs 1925:38). Similarly, ‘Society seems to stop at the threshold of interior life. But it well knows that even then it leaves them alone only in appearance — it is perhaps at the moment when the individual appears to care very little about society that he develops in himself to the fullest the qualities of a social being’ (1925:50).

But Halbwachs has not imagined that society has completely taken over the individual; he reserves space for the individual. Jenkins, aware of the danger of reifying the distinction, also insists that one is not derivative of the other. Whereas Jenkins pointed to the imperfect fit between an individual’s self-identifications and her group’s opinion of her, Halbwachs considers

---

<sup>10</sup> Jenkins’s warning is significant enough to quote in full: ‘The danger exists of reifying or objectifying a distinction which is only pragmatic and analytical, which commits necessary violence to the complexities and subtleties of living in order to pin them down in the pursuit of better understanding. It is not meant to imply necessary sequence . . . in principle they are simultaneous dimensions of ongoing social practice. . . . In this dialectical model the focus is firmly upon the synthesis. Nor is this usage meant to suggest difference of kind. Your external definition of me is an inexorable part of my internal definition of myself — even if only in the process of rejection or resistance — and vice versa. Both processes are among the routine everyday practices of actors. Nor is one more significant than the other. At best I am indicating different modes of mutual identification which proceed, not side by side, but in the same social space. It may be possible, and analytically necessary, to distinguish different kinds of collective identities . . . in terms of the relative significance to each of internal or external moments of identification, but this is only a matter of emphasis, and as far as one should take it’ (1996:26–27).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Connerton (1989:37–38): ‘Thus Halbwachs explicitly rejected the separation of the two questions: How does the individual preserve and rediscover memories? And how do societies preserve and rediscover memories? With exemplary lucidity, he demonstrated that the idea of an individual memory, absolutely separate from social memory, is an abstraction almost devoid of meaning’.



the individual as a nexus of a unique (or nearly so) combination of group membership (1925:52).<sup>12</sup> As groups construct and utilise their own cognitive frameworks, the capacity of an individual to process and comprehend her memories develops in the context of interactions within the groups to which she belongs. The groups to which she belongs, therefore, impact and exert social force upon the ways in which she perceives and interprets her own experiences, public or private.

In this way, the framework of collective memory confines and binds our most intimate remembrances to each other. It is not necessary that the group be familiar with them. It suffices that we cannot consider them except from the outside — that is, by putting ourselves in the position of others — and that in order to retrieve these remembrances we must tread the same path that others would have followed had they been in our position. (Halbwachs 1925:53)

Likewise, she leaves her mark on the social frameworks according to which she comprehends her world, so that her private experiences, even if they remain her private experiences, impact those social frameworks by virtue of being attached to them in her mind and, consequentially, in her behaviour.

Even so, some theorists persist in differentiating between ‘individual’ and ‘collective’ memory.<sup>13</sup> Zelizer (1995:214), as an example, proffers the following definition: ‘Collective memory refers to recollections that are instantiated *beyond the individual by and for the collective*. Unlike personal memory, which refers to an individual’s ability to conserve information, the collective memory comprises recollections of the past *that are determined and shaped by the group*’ (emphases added). But we have seen that all memory is shaped by the group, though to say that memory is socially *determined* goes too far. ‘Collective memory’ is not some ‘thing’ to be analysed over and against ‘personal memory’; memory is a social phenomenon, as are identity, religion, economics, politics, etc.

The link between memory and identity lies at the centre of much social memory research.<sup>14</sup> Jan Assmann takes seriously the shift from ‘a biological framework [to] a cultural one’ in ‘discourse concerning collective knowledge’ (1995:125). Likewise, he maintains Halbwachs’s sense of the entanglement of the collective and the individual: ‘The specific character that a person derives from belonging to a distinct society and culture is not seen to maintain itself for generations as a result of phylogenetic evolution, but rather as a result of socialization and customs’

---

<sup>12</sup> Jenkins makes a similar move, pointing out that ‘just as all individual identities are social, so all social identities attach to individuals. . . . Individuals differ from each other in their characteristic combinations of collective identities’ (cf. 1996:52–53).

<sup>13</sup> Fentress and Wickham come to a similar conclusion: ‘Certain of our memories seem indeed to be more private and personal than others. Yet this distinction between personal and social memory is, at best, a relative one. Typically, our memories are mixed, possessing both a personal and a social aspect. There seems little reason, therefore, to suppose that memory itself is divided into two compartments — one personal and the other social’ (1992:7).

<sup>14</sup> The lack of collective historical memory in the field of nursing — and that lack’s effects on the collective identity of nurses as a professional community — throws into sharp relief the importance of social memory (a way of recognising and thinking about the world) for the construction and maintenance of social identity (a way of being in the world; cf. Hamilton 1996).

(1995:125). Assmann's 'cultural memory' resembles Halbwachs's social frameworks of memory, which include the larger concepts and structures of 'objectivized culture'. Group identity is constructed and perpetuated *vis-à-vis* objectivized culture, allowing that group to become conscious of its unity and distinction from other groups; at the same time, objectivized culture provides a pool from which 'formative and normative impulses' may be drawn. 'In this sense, objectivized culture has the structure of memory' (1995:128; cf. 132).

In many important respects, then, 'social memory' does not merely refer to 'group memory'. Similar to work in social identity theory carried out since the 1970s, social memory theory highlights ways in which individual and group memories are dialectically constituted and problematises how individuals internalise society even as society exists by virtue of interaction between individuals. Social memory is not just a new field within memory studies; it is an approach to memory itself. That, however, is not the only link between social identity and social memory. Memory, as we have briefly noted, is an important aspect of identity construction, negotiation, and legitimation. Both are forged in the processes of social interaction, even as both are necessarily prerequisite for that interaction (cf. Jenkins 1996:20).

Thus, *pace* Gerhardsson and Byrskog, social memory theory does not postulate a Durkheimian metaphysical 'group consciousness' that acts independently of individual social actors comprising the group.<sup>15</sup> But, unlike Gerhardsson and Bauckham (and, to a lesser extent, Byrskog), social memory refuses to treat the individual as an isolated entity, analysable apart from the social contexts in which she moves and breathes and has her being.<sup>16</sup> In true dialectical fashion, the individual neither determines nor is determined by her social context, but she does find herself constrained by the cultural field within which her interactions take place even as the direct and indirect consequences of her interactions affect that field, often unpredictably.<sup>17</sup>

### 3.2.b. Ideological Influences on Memory

The dialectic that complicates our understanding of 'individual' and 'collective' results in the situation whereby different individuals and different groups remember divergent pasts. Even so, different people (and groups) frequently recognise consistencies between their own and other's memories (Schwartz 2000:222). Though we can easily overemphasise ideological factors in the analysis of memory (cf. Schwartz 1991:222) such factors nevertheless require our atten-

---

<sup>15</sup> Where such a postulate is implied, however, Gerhardsson and Byrskog would, of course, be correct (cf. the critique of Zelizer's essay, above). Even so, our efforts to refuse reifying the concepts 'individual' and 'group' (as does, e.g., Bauckham 2006) helps safeguard against such metaphysical confusions.

<sup>16</sup> Many social memory theorists have taken care not to make the same assumptions about any qualitative differences between individual and collective. E. Zerubavel (2003:2), for example, uses a 'sociomental topographical' model of social memory in an attempt to focus on both the individual/internal (*sociomental*) and the collective/external (*sociomental*) aspects of social memory. Fentress and Wickham attempt to talk about both collective and individual memory without supposing a qualitative difference between them: 'We have called this book *Social Memory* to counterpose its subject to that of the memory of individuals. Yet it is individuals who actually do the remembering; what is social about it? The essential answer is that much memory is attached to membership to social groups of one kind or another' (1992:ix).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. the careful (and autobiographical) discussion in Thatcher 2006:54–60.

tion. 'Collective memory presumes activities of sharing, discussion, negotiation, and, often, contestation' (Zelizer 1995:214). We turn now to agonistic aspects of memory.

Social identity theory not only focuses attention on how group identity enables the individual to know herself in relation to others; it also analyses how group membership throws into sharp relief who she is *not* by virtue of the differentiation between ingroups and outgroups (Esler 1998:42). Just so, social memory theory focuses our attention on how group membership influences which past or pasts we internalise and which belong to other groups (and how collective memories interact and compete).<sup>18</sup> John Bodnar, in his study of twentieth-century ethnic American commemoration, traces how different pasts compete for dominance as groups vie for control and influence over society. 'The shaping of a past worthy of public commemoration in the present is contested and involves a struggle for supremacy between advocates of various political ideas and sentiments' (1992:13).<sup>19</sup>

Though Bodnar's work often goes too far in assuming a conflictual model of society, his analysis sheds light on how memory and commemoration can be the arena in which different groups compete. For him, 'public memory emerges from the intersection of official and vernacular cultural expressions' (1992:13).<sup>20</sup> 'Official culture' refers to 'the concerns of cultural leaders or authorities at all levels of society' and mediates or marginalises various social groups' interests in order to attain the programmes and goals of the cultural elite. 'Official culture relies on "dogmatic formalism" and the restatement of reality in ideal rather than complex or ambiguous terms. . . . Vernacular culture, on the other hand, represents an array of specialized interests that are grounded in parts of the whole' (cf. 1992:13–14). Though Bodnar attempts to argue a qualitative difference between official and vernacular memories, the primary difference between them is one of social position and influence.<sup>21</sup> While the distinction between official and vernacular memories is heuristically useful, we will approach both as fundamentally the same

---

<sup>18</sup> Though we are addressing the competitive or contested aspect of memory under the rubric of collective memory, the same processes are at work in the memories of individuals, as is evidenced by the influence that differing individual memories of the same event have on one another when eyewitnesses to a crime are permitted to discuss just what it was they each 'saw' (cf. Buckhout 1982 for a discussion of the vicissitudes of eyewitness memory and testimony; cf. also Crossan 1998:59–68). These forces are not always (or necessarily) ideological. The shaping of eyewitnesses' memories is not simply a matter of pursuing certain goals (a court conviction, for example); collusion also occurs as an attempt to clean up and clarify just what it was an eyewitness was supposed to remember.

<sup>19</sup> See Schwartz 2000:15–18, 192–194, 198–204 for critiques of Bodnar's analytical perspective.

<sup>20</sup> Inasmuch as 'public memory' mediates between 'official' and 'vernacular' culture, Bodnar offers a helpful point of departure.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Bodnar (1992:14): 'Normally vernacular expressions convey what social reality feels like rather than what it should be like. Its very existence threatens the sacred and timeless nature of official expressions'. Bodnar thus seems to allow 'vernacular' (or 'popular', to link to Horsley's analyses [e.g., 1987; 2001; 2003; Horsley and Draper 1999]) expressions of the past firmer connections to reality (and/or the past) than those that attach to 'official' expressions. Schwartz (2000:x) may have had Bodnar in mind when he wrote, 'The problem with [constructionist] research is its inconsistency. As constructionists present the nations' sins as matters of indisputable fact, they present the nation's virtues as "myths," "metanarratives," and "inventions" concocted by a privileged majority determined to secure its domination over minorities. Conductors of this research are positivist on the matter of the vices of American history, constructionist on its virtues.'

things: expressions of the past that take a stand *vis-à-vis* the past's meaning in relation to present circumstances. Such expressions are therefore ideologically motivated. Salient features of the past (which transcend and set limits upon the ideological options presenting themselves to social actors engaged in social interaction and competition) constrain the meaning that *both official and vernacular* narratives attribute to the past. Bodnar's distinction helps us keep in mind who is remembering and helps us ask why some memories take root while others wither and are, ultimately, forgotten. It is, however, neither productive nor empirically justifiable to presume at the outset that official and vernacular cultural expressions are always, naturally, and inevitably at odds.

In fact, the meaning-making functions of memory make it necessary for us to qualify Bodnar's claims about memory and society; we cannot separate ideological aspects of memory from the sense-making (cultural) aspects of memory.<sup>22</sup> Our ideological efforts — our attempts to persuade others to see the world and behave in it as we do — are rooted in our own attempts to make sense of our environment and experiences. Schwartz notes the link between the semiotic and ideological aspects of memory: 'Social memories, as aspects of culture, do more than "express" social reality; they shape reality by articulating ideals and generating the motivation to realize them' (2000:5).<sup>23</sup> As a 'source of knowledge' (Fentress and Wickham 1992:26), collective memory engages and competes with other conceptualisations of the past *even as* it makes sense of the present, and vice versa.

Thus the question arises: How do groups — whether official or vernacular — come to terms with the past and the present and attempt to persuade other groups to do so in their terms? In his attempt to distinguish between hegemonic manipulation and cultural expression, Schwartz (2000:204, 245–255, 295) suggests a matrix along two axes to analyse the relationship between official and vernacular interests. First, it matters whether the cultural leaders are themselves invested in the values and agenda they are espousing or they are attempting to manipulate the masses to accept something they (the elite) know to be false or harmful. Second, it matters whether the cultural leaders are propagating values and agendas the masses already accept (or are predisposed to accept) or they are putting forth a programme the masses would otherwise reject.<sup>24</sup> Schwartz's analysis suggests that voices of official and vernacular memories sometimes,

---

<sup>22</sup> Schwartz identifies two approaches to, or models of, memory: memory as a cultural system (which is related to the consistency of collective memory through time), and memory as a political system (which is related to the vicissitudes of memory). Though these models appear under different labels in different publications, they are a constant theme of his work (cf. 1991:221–222; 2000:1–25; 2005a:44; also Schudson 1992:205–221).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. also Schwartz 1996.

<sup>24</sup> For example, Schwartz writes, 'Making the connection between national identity and national memory takes money and time. Reputational entrepreneurs sometimes make this connection with a view to promoting and protecting their own interests; sometimes, with a view to promoting and protecting the interests of society at large. The consequence differs. An audience manipulated into associating its interests with a particular conception of the past will withdraw its commitment as soon as the manipulation

if not usually, sound very similar and are engaged in similar endeavours: the attempt to establish consensus concerning the content, structure, and lessons of the past.

Political interests are ever-present in every act of historical interpretation and (re)shaping the past; ‘the main characteristic of history is that it is composed of selected sequences of events. The large number of sequences dictates, obviously, that there will be a discontinuity effect in remembering the past’ (Ben-Yehuda 1995:302). But even groups with conflicting interests typically agree on the broad strokes of history; their images of the past are reflective of, but not determined by, their interests in the present: ‘many of these sequences (possibly a majority of them) share certain common elements. Without this commonality, we would have not just different sequences but, rather, altogether different histories’ (1995:302). Competing groups can frequently recognise their own past in other groups’ memories. And even though the right (or power) to define the past with any significant consensus will usually — and for obvious reasons — lie with culturally dominant groups, dominant images of the past are not merely ideological constructions. ‘The more privileged may or may not [profit] more by this consensus than the less privileged, but political profit hardly exhausts its significance’ (Schwartz 2000:295).<sup>25</sup>

We must, then, raise questions about who is doing the remembering, for what purposes, and toward which audiences. But we need to balance ideological factors of memory with memory’s cultural factors; though we sought to discuss the political functions of memory apart from its semiotic functions, we found ourselves unable to do so. Using the past to pursue goals in the present (either class-specific, self-serving goals or goals that genuinely seek to serve societal needs) presupposes coming to terms with the present in terms of the past. This last point will surface repeatedly throughout this chapter: the distinction between memory as an ideological force and memory as a cultural system can only ever be analytical.

### 3.3. Distortions of Past and Present in Social Memory

If the recovery of the past is inextricably bound up with group membership and includes complex processes of social identity and memory, then we must clarify and make explicit the

---

ends; but if entrepreneurs and their audience share the same values, then reputational enterprise will sustain rather than create collective memory’ (2000:295).

<sup>25</sup> For this reason, Bodnar’s conclusion concerning patriotism (taken here to be a specific form of a sense of ethnic belonging and identification) appears remarkably simplistic: ‘One implication of the argument that the abundant patriotic messages of American public memory are rooted partially in the quest for power by leaders of various sorts is that patriotism is invented as a form of social control and that it does not naturally find resonance within the hearts and minds of ordinary people’ (1992:17). Not only is this conclusion theoretically untenable, but the upsurge of popular American patriotism in the wake of 9/11 suggests an empirical weakness as well. Importantly, though the increase in post-9/11 patriotism has been evident in a broad and diverse cross-section of the population, this has not meant that this diverse population thinks the same things about America or its role in international politics (cp. Schwartz 2000:29–65; esp. p. 54: ‘Lincoln could be universally mourned without being universally admired because the celebration of America’s integrity was the ultimate object of his funeral’). This is particularly evident in the current and heated debates concerning what it means to ‘support our troops’ or to be a ‘patriotic American’, values which appear to be significantly more universal in American society than the meanings that are attached to them. Similar dynamics attend to discussions of “being British” in the UK.

model that drives our analysis of the relationship between the past and the present. As Kirk and Thatcher (2005a) have pointed out, New Testament scholars tend to view one as epiphenomenal of the other. The dominant paradigm, heavily determined by form-critical perspectives and broadly influential, sees the past as derivative of the present, reflecting (and serving) present interests and engaged in ideological conflicts in the present (with ‘the Jews’, or ‘heretical’ groups such as [proto-] Gnostics, or [John the] Baptist sectarians, etc.). Thus, ‘social realities of the early communities [are construed] not only as the formative *contexts* in which Gospel traditions were shaped and transmitted, but also as the primary *generative force* behind those traditions’ (Kirk and Thatcher 2005a:30; original italics).<sup>26</sup> But there are those (e.g., Gerhardsson) who subordinate the present to the pressures exerted upon it by the past; in effect, the present is remade in the image of the past. Here scholars grant the past a stability and continuity that impinges upon the present. ‘If the form critics were fixated on present social realities in the formation of tradition, Gerhardsson severely underestimates the effect of these realities’ (Kirk and Thatcher 2005a:35, citing Gerhardsson 1998; 2001). The present section surveys the ways in which some authors have attempted to refuse subordinating either past or present to the other.

What dynamics characterise the relationship between past and present, objective and constructed history, historical truth and ideological legitimation? Not just the *presence* of the past, but also the *use* of the past makes the task of historical reconstruction (the heart of ‘historical Jesus’ studies, including this project) problematic. Simplistic models of sifting-and-sorting are no more effective for efforts to reconstruct the ‘historical Jesus’ than such procedures were for oral historians of the late twentieth century.<sup>27</sup> We need a more focussed examination of the past and present in relation to one another. Certainly aspects of this relationship have lurked behind various points of the discussion thus far, but here we consider that relationship directly.

### **3.3.a. Expressions of the Past as Phenomena in the Present**

As already stated, ‘the most widely accepted approach [to collective memory] sees the past as a social construction shaped by the concerns and needs of the present’ (Schwartz 1991:221; cf. Zhang and Schwartz 1997:189–190). From this perspective, pressures in the present (beliefs, values, interests, polemics, etc.) reconfigure the past as it is summoned in collective memory, whether in commemorative ritual, statuary, literature, temporal organisation, etc. We easily find examples of this perspective in Jesus research: everything from Jesus’ relationship to John the Baptist to his reported encounters with gentiles in Galilee and its environs to the accounts of controversies between Jesus and contemporary Jewish figures are presumed to repre-

---

<sup>26</sup> This is the dominant perspective not only in New Testament studies but in social memory research more generally (Schwartz 1991:221).

<sup>27</sup> Cf. the discussions in Samuel and Thompson 1990b and Perks and Thomson 1998.

sent distortions of Jesus' past in order to make him relevant for the evangelists' present.<sup>28</sup> As a particularly striking example: 'Consonance with the past . . . was for the victorious church the ultimate criterion of legitimacy. But the past, if it must bear this burden, is not so much preserved as remade in the image of the present: it is too important to be allowed an independent existence' (Fredriksen 1988:7-8). Note that the past is not simply remade *in* the present but *in the image of* the present. Here is a heavily presentist perspective.

From a similar perspective, the essays in Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) analyse the development and fixation of new practices in society that are then supposed to have their origins in the distant past.<sup>29</sup> When societies emerge from a period of radical restructuring, drawing meaningful connections between the present and the past requires considerable effort: trying to maintain a sense of a 'suitable historic past', 'the peculiarity of "invented" traditions is that the continuity with [the historic past] is largely fictitious' (Hobsbawm 1983a:2). But even in pre- (or early) revolutionary societies, as well as societies moving through periods of relative stability, the invention of tradition (the reconfiguration of the past) can be identified, as the analyses of Trevor-Roper (1983) and Cannadine (1983) demonstrate.

Hobsbawm identifies repetition as an important aspect of inventing traditions and constructing a sense of continuity with the past (1983a:1). Also, similar to Schwartz's analyses, Hobsbawm identifies social change as a factor that necessitates the invention of traditions even in societies whose histories are legitimately historic: 'Quite new, or old but dramatically transformed, social groups, environments and social contexts called for new devices to ensure or express social cohesion and identity and to structure social relations' (Hobsbawm 1983b:263). Hobsbawm also notes the role of public reception in the analysis of the successful invention of traditions, insofar as 'conscious invention succeeded mainly in proportion to its success in broadcasting on a wavelength to which the public was ready to tune in. [Official inventions, however,] . . . might still fail to mobilize the citizen volunteers if they lacked genuine popular resonance' (1983b:263). Hobsbawm, however, collapses reception into merely another facet of political manipulation; reception is a matter of the official culture's ability to express its interests in terms that resonate with, or mimic, the cultural logic of society at large.<sup>30</sup> This perspective, like Bodnar's (discussed above), underestimates both the robustness with which marginal (or, at least, non-elite) groups are able to detect and resist culturally hegemonic forces as well as the possibility that dominant and subordinate groups may, in fact, share certain values, beliefs, and traditions.

---

<sup>28</sup> For the relationship between Jesus and John, cf. Crossan 1991:227-264; for his response to gentiles, cf. Fredriksen 1998:180-181; for a discussion of the so-called controversy stories, cf. Sanders 1985:270-293.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. the interesting discussion (Trevor-Roper 1983:15-41) of the development and retrojection of the traditions surrounding kilts and their tartans in early-industrial Scotland, a process set into motion by — ironically enough — an early English industrialist!

<sup>30</sup> For a discussion of 'resonance' as a critical factor in 'how culture works', see Schudson 1989a:167-170.

The question at the heart of this discussion is, How, and to what extent, does memory's rootedness in the present distort the past? It is axiomatically true that every expression of the past happens in the present; even in the case of written texts, statues, paintings and portraits, etc., which persist through successive presents after first coming into being, the apprehension of the images of the past they portray happens in the present.<sup>31</sup> This, then, raises questions about the present's ability to accurately and authentically recall events and figures from the past and the extent to which the past is distorted by being expressed in the present.

Certainly, in the cases of fabrication and deception (whether intended or not), we ought to understand 'distortion' in a strong sense: the past expressed in the present bears no significant relation to the actual past. The problem, in this instance, is the impossibility of distinguishing between expressions of the past fabricated out of whole cloth and those that attempt to communicate something of the actual past. When analysing narratives that bear no direct relation to any actual event of the past, normal procedure (specifically in Jesus research) is to examine the connections between a narrative and the needs of the present in which the narrative was constructed.<sup>32</sup> The move from a demonstrably 'false' narrative of the past to the needs of the present that gave rise to the narrative is appropriate,<sup>33</sup> but the recognition that *all* acts of remembrance are rooted in the present — not just those we would label 'inauthentic' — problematises the implicit (but widespread) assumption that we can reverse this procedure. The demonstration of a narrative's links to the concerns of the present *does not* constitute evidence of any quality that that narrative is unrepresentative of the past.

The connections formed between past and present, rather than covering up a rupture between past and present, enable recollection of the past in its pastness. Schwartz (2000:18–19) discusses the 'matching' of past and present in collective memory, in which the past functions 'as a model *of* society and a model *for* society' (original italics; cf. also 1996). As a model *of* the remembering group, the past is selectively recalled and represented in the present; the events selected and represented are expressed in terms that are relevant for the context of remembrance (as opposed to the context being remembered).<sup>34</sup> 'Selectivity' refers to more than simply proc-

---

<sup>31</sup> Here is a problem, to be discussed later, with conceptions of written texts as 'freezing' the past, particularly *vis-à-vis* images of the past presented via oral tradition and performance (e.g., Kelber 1983; Thatcher 2005). While the text may persist as an expression *of* the past *from* the past, its apprehension and interpretation, though restricted in ways that do not necessarily attach to oral texts, is rooted in the present and driven by questions, concerns, and convictions arising within the present.

<sup>32</sup> For example, the account of Jesus' address in the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:16–30) is typically discussed in terms of legitimating Lukan theology, particularly the openness of the later Christian movement to the gentiles on account of the failure of 'Israel' to respond, either to Jesus or to the message about him (vv. 25–27). For one example, among many, of this procedure, cf. Esler 1987:164–169.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Schwartz 2000:144: 'People everywhere define themselves by asking and answering the question, "Of what stories do I find myself a part?"', but *the function of these stories is not totally dependent on their authenticity*' (my emphasis).

<sup>34</sup> In light of the surprising frequency with which terms such as 'egalitarian', 'globalisation', 'terrorism', etc. appear, Horsley's *Jesus and Empire* (2003) is an interesting example of the past being expressed in terms primarily relevant to the present.



esses that determine *what* an individual or group will attend to but also *how* they will attend to it; 'People not only attend to media selectively but perceive selectively from what they attend to' (Schudson 1989a:168). That the expression of the past is selective does not mean that an alien past is made to fit an incongruent present; it is merely to recognise that present concerns frame decisions (whether conscious or not) concerning which aspects of the past are remembered.<sup>35</sup> Neither does the selectivity of memory demean the past as merely a tool in the service of ideological forces; as a cultural program, memory 'orients our intentions, sets our moods, and enables us to act' (Schwartz 2000:251). Memory, in other words, *precedes* the legitimising actions of ideological interests even as it plays an important legitimising role.<sup>36</sup> As Olick has aptly said, 'Interests always involve an understanding of the past and a projection of the future, and this is exactly what shared communal narratives provide' (2006:6).

As a model *for* the remembering group, memory bears its own weight upon the remembering present and brings to the fore the vigour of the past *vis-à-vis* the distorting effects of the present.<sup>37</sup> Schwartz identifies two functions of the past as model *for* society: the past 'embodies a *template* that organizes and animates behavior and a *frame* within which people locate and find meaning for their present experience' (2000:18; original italics). As we stated in the previous paragraph, the past provides a platform upon which social actors are able to survey the vagaries of the present, assess the range of courses of action available in the present, and choose between them. As such, the past is not merely a social construct produced to legitimise behaviour in the present, behaviour which was determined prior to and apart from an image of the past. The past also constrains the meanings that can attach to a given situation in the present. 'Collective memory affects social reality by *reflecting, shaping, and framing* it' (2000:18; original italics).<sup>38</sup>

Our concerns focus our attention on the ways the present *distorts* the past in every act of remembrance and recall (though in the next section we will resume the discussion, initiated in the previous paragraph, of how the past distorts the present). Often enough, scholars understand

---

<sup>35</sup> New Testament scholarship has recognised this phenomenon: 'To suggest a reason why the early church found a particular saying useful is not to prove that the early church created the saying instead of preserving or adapting it from the teaching of the historical Jesus' (Meier 1994:181).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Schwartz 2000:252–253: 'The machinery of invocation (keying) *presupposes* rather than *creates* the affinity of the events it brings together' (my emphases); cf. also Schudson's discussions (1989b; 1992) of 'pre-emptive metaphors', discussed below.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Olick 1999b; Olick and Levy 1997; Schudson 1989b; 1992; Connerton 1989; *inter alios*; cf. also the discussion in §3.3.b., below.

<sup>38</sup> These three functions — reflecting, shaping, and framing — capture the heart of Schwartz's model of past-present interaction. In collective memory, neither the past nor the present precede the other; they are mutually affecting and dialectic. Our present is determinative for our image of the past (i.e., the past is made to reflect the present) *even as* our past is determinative for our image of the present (i.e., the present is shaped by and framed within the past). But even these three functions are mutually affecting: 'Memories must express current problems before they can program ways to deal with them, for we cannot be oriented by a past in which we fail to see ourselves. . . . On the other hand, the programming and framing functions of memory are what make its reflexive function significant, for we have no reason to look for ourselves in a past that does not already orient our lives' (Schwartz 2000:18, 19).

'distortion' in a strong sense, as the act of making the past something it could not have been.<sup>39</sup> In this regard, ideological forces are given considerable (some would argue absolute) power over the past in order to remake it according to elite cultural interests. The author of (or community responsible for) Q, for example, fabricates<sup>40</sup> the image of Jesus answering John the Baptist's question according to the Isaianic tradition (cf. Luke 7.18–25) as propaganda for Jesus; the image is without basis in the life of the real Jesus.<sup>41</sup> According to this perspective, ideological forces are all that matter because the past has been thoroughly distorted and is unrecognisable *as* the past.<sup>42</sup>

But it is possible to understand 'distortion' in a weak sense, as making the past something it was previously not.<sup>43</sup> 'Distortion' in this sense has more to do with actualising the past's potential than with exerting power over competing images of the past. Considered in isolation, the flow of historical events lacks meaning and is chaotic, inchoate, disconnected, without moral lessons to teach and orientating directions to guide. 'One of the most remarkable features of human memory is our ability to mentally transform essentially unstructured series of events into seemingly coherent *historical narratives*. We normally view past events as episodes in a story . . . and it is basically such "stories" that make these events historically meaningful (E. Zerubavel 2003:13, original italics; cf. E. Casey 1987:291; Thatcher 2005:91). Another word, then, for 'distortion', understood in this weak sense, is 'transformation'. The emplotment of disparate, empirically disconnected events into narrational form is itself distortion (and involves other processes of distortion, as we will see presently), but this is a far cry from theoretical perspectives that view the past *solely* as products of interested manipulations in the present.<sup>44</sup>

The placement of historical events within narrative plot structures is not the only source of distorting pressure exerted upon the past by the present. The past 'fits' imperfectly with the present, so that in every instance of remembering, of turning to the past to orientate oneself to

---

<sup>39</sup> The OED website, accessed 1 May 2006, uses the terms 'wrench' and 'to change to an unnatural shape' in its entry on 'distort', both of which are graphic visual metaphors of the strong sense of 'distortion' being discussed presently.

<sup>40</sup> I intend the term 'fabricate' here in the strong sense of 'creation'; in this regard, the OED website, accessed 1 May 2006, offers, 'In bad sense: To "make up"; to frame or invent (a legend, lie, etc.); to forge (a document)' (as opposed to the more neutral entry, "To form . . . into the shape required for a finished product"). Luke, according to this perspective, is responsible for the image of the past that inheres in his fabricated account (as opposed to a weak sense, in which 'fabricate' merely means 'to form'; Luke 'put together' [fabricated] an image of the past using resources and materials publicly available).

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Funk, Hoover, *et al.* 1993:177–178.

<sup>42</sup> This is an ironic position, given the Jesus Seminar's stated goal of recovering 'the authentic words of Jesus'. It is also an inconsistent position; the Seminar refuses the gospels a connection with the Jesus of history on the basis that they demonstrably have axes to grind, though this connection with the past is readily — almost positivistically — granted the Seminar's own findings, despite their similarly demonstrable axes (cf. Funk 1996, as well as the essays in Hoover 2002c).

<sup>43</sup> The OED website, accessed 1 May 2006, also uses the phrase 'to alter the shape of any figure without destroying continuity' in its entry on 'distort'; this sense of 'without destroying continuity' expresses something of the 'weaker' sense of distortion for which I am presently aiming.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. H. White (1978:81–100) for an interesting essay concerning the narrativising of historical accounts, the transformative effects of narrativisation, and the consequences for our understanding of the nature of historiography.

the present and identify desirable paths into the future,<sup>45</sup> the connection between past and present is itself imperfect. Every historical analogy breaks down. This is not a fault with the processes of framing and keying, processes by which past and present are brought together and illuminate one another; rather,

The past is at once an idealization and critique of the present world. . . . A past that merely reproduces the present suggests no answers to its dilemmas. Ideal models, not realistic ones, inspire. . . . On the other hand, abstractly simplistic ideals bear no credible relationship to a complex and imperfect present. *Tension, not easy compatibility, defines the relation between memory and experience.* (Schwartz 2000:253; emphasis added)

We ought not simplistically understand this tension as an impediment toward understanding the past in the present; social actors are often aware of the discrepancies of the past being remembered and present needs that motivate remembrance. These discrepancies, in fact, can also provide orientation and moral guidance in shaping and framing the present (cf. Fentress and Wickham 1992:24).

Schwartz (2000:225ff.) uses a double model of framing and keying to analyse how the past is put to use in the present. He expands Goffman's concept of 'primary framework', that is, a framework that is understood by those who apply it as not referring to some prior interpretative event or framework, by tracing 'how participants in one primary event . . . interpret their experience by aligning it to another primary event'. Thus, past events and images are used to interpret — to recognise — current events and issues. This process not only renders current significant issues meaningful, but it distorts those issues in order to conform them to images of the past.<sup>46</sup> The distortion, then, works both ways; past and present are transformed even as they are illuminated and clarified through processes of framing and keying. Events are 'paired' to tighten the correlation between the past and the present and to understand each in light of the other.

*Keying* transforms the meaning of activities understood in terms of one event by comparing them with activities understood in terms of another. . . . Keying transforms memory into a cultural system because it matches publicly accessible (i.e., symbolic) models of the past . . . to the experiences of the present. Keying arranges cultural symbols into a publicly visible discourse that flows through the organizations and institutions of the social world. (Schwartz 2000:225–226; original italics)<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Schudson makes a subtle — but important — distinction between 'guiding' (= orientating) and 'instigating' behaviour; religious convictions, for example, may not simply frame behaviour and thereby bring meaning to it but may also be causative factors for behaviour, from giving to the poor or tutoring urban children to fostering international crises or bombing abortion clinics (cf. Schudson 1989a:172–173).

<sup>46</sup> Again, 'distortion' is not meant here to suggest that processes of framing and keying arbitrarily link later events to earlier ones; 'The machinery of invocation (keying) presupposes rather than creates the affinity of the events it brings together' (Schwartz 2000:252–253). The 'fit' between events linked in social uses of the past is never perfect, a fact that suggests the objective ('external' or 'non-interested') basis for the connection as events are keyed to one another.

<sup>47</sup> Schwartz's concept of keying has two major similarities with Schudson's use of 'pre-emptive metaphor': first, both involve linking two events from disparate historical eras to understand both events in light of the other; second, both ensure 'misunderstanding' as a consequence: my view of what is going on may be clearer, but it is less accurate.

Keying does not simply provide meaning for secondary (or simply later) historical events; rather, it *transforms* meaning by plugging current issues and events into the 'sacred narrative of the nation' or group (Schwartz 2000:231).

The idealisation of the past, of course, presents us with an issue about which historians of Jesus have been concerned for some time.<sup>48</sup> Typically, scholarly efforts are directed toward de-idealising the historical image presented in the gospels, usually on the assumption that some 'historical kernel' exists buried beneath interpretative and editorial layers. Memory does not, however, preserve the past in a way that allows for the separation of historical fact and later interpretation. 'Memory entails a degree of interpretation. Our memories no more store little replicas of the outside world made out of mind stuff than do the backs of our televisions' (Fentress and Wickham 1992:31). Fentress and Wickham go on to discuss 'a tendency towards simplification and schematization in memory' (1992:32), processes which aid in the conceptualisation of the past in memory. The act of remembering involves reconstructing the past by 'filling out' details of a historical event 'stored in some "conceptual" form, as concepts are easier to remember than full representations' (1992:32; cf. p. 40).<sup>49</sup> Through processes of conceptualising (installing in memory) and expanding (recalling from memory), the hypothetical 'historical kernel' is fused with the interpretation of that kernel (Kirk 2005b:7–8).

Historical Jesus research presumes, however, that we have (at least some) access to the patterns according to which the early Jesus traditioners would have conceptualised their images of Jesus in the collective memory. Especially via the procedures of redaction criticism, we can assume the theologies of the early Jesus movements exerted their own pressure upon the Jesus traditions. The theology of Jesus' followers, then, is lifted out of the present and made a secure platform from which scholars can survey the ways in which they idealised (= distorted) their memory of Jesus. This procedure, however, falters on the observation that the patterns according to which we conceptualise the past and expand memory are not always conscious, and in fact those patterns can well up from already established beliefs about the past and influence belief in the present (Fentress and Wickham 1992:33, 36). The theology of Jesus' earliest followers, then, is not the stable platform we require.

We can begin to see, now, that expressions of the past are necessarily expressions rooted in and motivated by the present; even in the case when the past being remembered is invested with a sacred significance *as the past*, the 'sacralisation' of the past occurs in present contexts. But we have also seen that this does not degrade the past as *merely* an expression in the present, let alone a mere expression *of* the present. The present itself is constituted, in important ways, by

---

<sup>48</sup> Cf. the discussion regarding the historicity of the healing and exorcism stories in Meier 1994:678–772, 646–677, respectively, and the literature cited there.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. also Fry 1981, whose theory of memory is dependent on Bartlett (1932). Bauckham (2006:325–330) provides a useful discussion of 'copy and reconstructive theories' of memory.

the past with which it is taken up, as we will see presently. Kirk, referring to a number of memory theorists, summarises:

The activity of memory in articulating the past is dynamic, unceasing, *because it is wired into the ever-shifting present*. The remembering subject, from his or her situatedness in the present, interacts with a formative past to relate it meaningfully to contemporary exigencies and to the ongoing project of negotiating continuity and change in personal identity. (Kirk 2005b:10; original italics)

The ever-impinging present affects our conceptions of the past, conceptions which themselves are fluid as the present fluctuates. Ideological struggles to define how we ought to remember the past and relate it to the issues and concerns of the present often result. 'Different reconstructions [of the past] clash. Control over the past is disputed and the past becomes contested terrain. Some individuals, organizations, classes, and nations have more power than others to claim the territory of memory. There is a politics of memory that requires study' (Schudson 1989b:112).<sup>50</sup> But there are limits to the extent to which ideological forces can fiddle about with the past. We now shift our attention to these limits.

### 3.3.b. Apprehension of the Present as Constrained by the Past

Despite the analytical and theoretical utility of perspectives that emphasise the vicissitudes of the past, studies that emphasise the past's contingency often 'see the past as precarious, its contents hostage to the conditions of the present. They set forth an atemporal concept of collective memory that relates things remembered to the beliefs, aspirations, and fears of the here and now' (Schwartz 1991:222). Schwartz criticises this perspective as 'one-sided' because his analysis supplements rather than undermines studies that emphasise the past's contingency. The past fluctuates, and it does so under the influence of the present. 'But this is half the truth, at best, and a particularly cynical half-truth, at that' (Schudson 1989b:113).<sup>51</sup> The present fluctuates as well; not just at the passage of time, but also because of the presence of the past: 'Concerning memory as such, we may note that our experience of the present very largely depends upon our knowledge of the past' (Connerton 1989:2; cf. Fentress and Wickham 1992:24). This is 'the other half of the truth' (Schudson 1989b:113); the past persists — perhaps not always; certainly never perfectly — across fluctuations in the present. But emphasising the past's consistency at the expense of its contingency distorts 'in a different direction' (Schwartz 1991:222).

Schudson contends that 'the past is in some respects, and under some conditions, highly resistant to efforts to make it over' (1989b:107), and he identifies three factors that limit the abil-

---

<sup>50</sup> This observation is part of Schudson's larger point that the presence of multiple, conflicting interest groups is a limiting factor in efforts to rewrite the past, a point we will analyse more closely in the next sub-section. For now, note that Schudson immediately continues: 'Certainly political leaders of both powerful and aspiring groups recognize that the mobilization of memory is often a vital political resource. But as for the idea that people and groups and nations rewrite the past to legitimate the present, this observation cuts two ways. Yes, individual and groups try to co-opt memory for their own purposes; but no, they do not do so with a free hand so long as success in even convincing oneself requires non-contradiction by others' (1989b:112).

<sup>51</sup> Schudson 1989a also explicitly offers up a mediating position between a 'dominant ideology thesis' and a 'tool kit' view of culture.

ity of present interests to rewrite history: ‘the structure of available pasts, the structure of individual choices, and the conflicts about the past among a multitude of mutually aware individuals or groups’ (1989b:107). First, ‘there are features of our own pasts that become part of the givens of our lives, whether they are convenient or not’ (1989b:108–109). Though the past’s salience may fade with time, its features also exert pressure on subsequent presents. ‘Once commemoration gets underway, it picks up steam; it operates by a logic and force of its own. . . . Even powerful groups and individuals, therefore, can only muck with the salient past so far’ (1989b:108, 109). Once an event is installed in collective memory, it attracts power to itself (whether or not traditional centres of cultural power are responsible for its installation), a power that is ‘self-perpetuating’ and that resists efforts to displace the memory of that event, even if the interests of official power centres would prefer to do so.

This point requires special emphasis for Jesus research, and especially that scholarship’s use of the gospel materials, and we will return to it in the next chapter. There is an obvious synchronic dynamic to the gospels whereby they represent one instance of the Jesus tradition. But scholars have often overlooked the way the gospels embody in themselves the tradition’s diachrony.<sup>52</sup> Despite Kelber’s thesis, for example, that the written gospels present the possibility of greater freedom *vis-à-vis* the oral gospel tradition (and are therefore subversive of that oral tradition; cf. 1983xvi–xvii; 2005:227–228), previous expressions of the tradition remain an integral aspect of the written gospels’ context of reception; ‘part of the context for any new commemoration is the residue of earlier commemorations’ (Olick 1999b:382).<sup>53</sup> Olick continues:

Changes in historical images, however, are not just one time interactions between the meanings of the distant past and the needs of the present. Rather, from the moment being remembered, present images are constantly being reproduced, revised, and replaced. Many authors therefore trace the history of representations of the past over time. In doing so, however, we must not treat these histories as successions of discrete moments, one present-to-past relation after another; *images of the past depend not only on the relationship between past and present but also on the accumulation of previous such relationships and their ongoing constitution and reconstitution.* (Olick 1999b:382; emphasis added)<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> The discussion of this diachronic aspect of the gospels has predominantly been limited to the emplotment of *different* gospels along a temporal axis and constructing developmental *trajectories* in which the various texts represent different *moments* of that development. Such procedures lack any consideration of how each of the gospels mediates between present tensions and the constraint of previous expressions of the Jesus tradition (as well as how they become a part of that constraint for future expressions). And when such questions are raised, the discussion immediately turns to the question of isolatable (and primarily) written sources that have been taken up into the texts as we have them; thus the development of pre-synoptic tradition is envisaged strictly in terms of the development of the synoptic tradition proper. Cf. the next chapter for a detailed discussion. For an approach that is sensitive to these issues, cf. Thatcher 2005 [Gospel of John]; DeConick 2005 [Gospel of Thomas].

<sup>53</sup> The reference to Olick does not necessarily contradict Kelber’s thesis, but it does provide an important nuance. Olick’s point, in context, is that changes in commemorative patterns through time are not merely ‘changes from’ but also ‘changes in reference to’ (the same point, as I understand it, that Kelber makes), but Olick takes pains to argue the point. The question of the written traditions’ relation to oral performance is too important to gloss over without nuance.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Schwartz 2000:67–107 for an interesting discussion regarding how previous commemorative efforts (and their artefacts) enabled and energised later efforts.

Second, in addition to ‘the structure of available pasts’, the past leaves its psychological impact upon the minds and behaviour of individuals and groups (phenomena that are not *merely* psychological but are *also* social)<sup>55</sup> and restricts the lengths to which present interests can go in reconstituting the past (Schudson 1989b:109–112). Schudson identifies four dynamics that restrict the individual’s psychological ability to remake history: trauma, vicarious trauma, channel, and commitment (1989b:109). Schudson defines ‘trauma’ as consequential events, not necessarily consequentially negative events. This applies to both personally and vicariously experienced traumas, experiences that people or groups ‘cannot ignore even when they would like to, cannot divert their attention from without courting anxiety, fear, and pain’ (1989b:110). The relationship between the structures of available pasts and of individual choices are closely related. Through traumatic experiences (especially those of others) the past becomes didactic; they provide ‘not only information about the past but appropriate emotional orientations to it’ (1989b:111). By ‘channel’ Schudson refers to the ‘inertial pull’ of historical precedent. Even rare or unique events ‘may have extraordinary influence on people and organizations long after the fact’ (1989b:111).<sup>56</sup> As we experience events in the present we summon earlier events to suggest appropriate ways of thinking about and responding to present issues,<sup>57</sup> whether automatically or after some degree of conscious reflection (cf. Schudson 1992:167, 183). Finally, Schudson defines ‘commitment’ as the attachment an individual or group feels to ‘what is called identity or character or, with a more social aspect emphasized, reputation’ (1989b:111). Even when rational consideration would suggest that present self-interest of the individual or group would be better served by severing the past and moving on, the individual’s or group’s commitment to its sense of identity often renders this option inconceivable. Here the link between memory and identity, discussed above, becomes one of the mechanisms by which the past exerts its own pressure upon the present *while simultaneously* ensuring the past’s continuing malleability in the face of fluctuations in social and personal identification.

Third, the competition between rival definitions and conceptualisations of the past also limit the extent to which the past is susceptible to being made over. ‘People’s ability to reconstruct the past just as they wish is limited by the crucial social fact that other people within their awareness are trying to do the same thing’ (Schudson 1989b:112). The presence of alternate definitions of reality and of the past by rival (or simply coexistent) groups constrains efforts to provide self-interested images of the past. Paradoxically, the more contested the past becomes the more salient and resistant to change it will be (cf. also Fine 1996:1186).

---

<sup>55</sup> Cf. the discussion of the dialectical entanglement of the individual and the collective, social identity, and social memory (§3.2.a., above).

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Connerton’s argument regarding ‘an inertia in social structures’ (1989:4–5).

<sup>57</sup> Schwartz concurs: ‘The earliest construction of an historical object limits the range of things subsequent generations can do with it’ (1991:232).

### 3.3.c. Past and Present: Interaction, Tension, Negotiation

Must we, then, choose between a model of a malleable past and one of a rigid past? Schwartz, rejecting an approach where either the past or the present is made epiphenomenal of the other (even if the relationship varies for different historical events) and proposing that both models share a 'single, unifying property' that unites them despite their differences (1991:222), explores a model by which the past consists of a stable core to which later conceptions and interests are appended or stripped away in response to present needs (Schwartz 1991).<sup>58</sup> Recalling the past, then, construes and structures historical 'facts' to make them meaningful and relevant in the present. It does so, however, within the constraints of objective history and under the pressure exerted by previous conceptualisations of the past, both of which figure in the 'stable core' that resists restructuring at the whims of present interests. Thus,

the presence of inherited memories in the midst of invented memories is not an anomaly requiring reconciliation. Because the present is constituted by the past, the past's retention as well as its reconstruction must be anchored in the present. As each generation modifies the beliefs presented by previous generations, there remains an assemblage of old beliefs coexisting with the new, including old beliefs about the past itself. (Schwartz 1991:234)<sup>59</sup>

Schudson refers to 'the power of contingency' and 'the power of continuity' (1992:3) and argues that investigations into the past must account for both.<sup>60</sup> Ben-Yehuda explicitly set for himself the purpose of supporting or disconfirming Schwartz's 1991 synthetic thesis (1995:22), and with some 'minor' exceptions, he concludes that 'the Masada mythical narrative is an excellent illustration of the wisdom of Barry Schwartz's analysis' (1995:274; cf. pp. 297–299).

The model by which peripheral (though not unimportant or insignificant)<sup>61</sup> historical elements are added or emphasised, stripped or neglected, to a stable and established historical

<sup>58</sup> Cf. also Schwartz 1998b; Ben-Yehuda 1995:274, 299; Olick 1999b:399.

<sup>59</sup> This not only applies to one generation's reception of tradition and history from the previous generation; our experience *of* the present very largely depends upon our experiences *in* the past. In a vein similar to Schudson's discussion of 'commitment', above, Connerton suggests that 'we experience our present world in a context which is causally connected with past events and objects, and hence with reference to events and objects which we are not experiencing when we are experiencing the present. And we will experience our present differently in accordance with the different pasts to which we are able to connect that present. Hence the difficulty of extracting our past from our present; not simply because present factors tend to influence — some might want to say distort — our recollections of the past, but also because past factors tend to influence, or distort, our experience of the present' (1989:2; note the ambiguity Connerton attaches to the term 'distortion'). Empirically, Coser reports having personally 'experienced the present differently' in accordance with his 'different past': 'Much of what I had experienced until my twenties [prior to Coser's emigration to America] made but little sense to my new friends, and, reciprocally, I could not make much sense, lacking points of repair, when talking to American age-mates, and later classmates at Columbia. I was excluded from their collective memory and they from mine' (1992:21).

<sup>60</sup> 'Even though the past is regularly reconstructed this is done within limits, stopped by the hard edges of resistance the past provides. . . . But a social science insensitive to historical contingency or to local variations will inevitably find itself surprised, its generalizations tripped up when a turn of events or a new location changes the context of actions. What we should be seeking is a social study that acknowledges the contingency and continuity of human affairs' (Schudson 1992:207).

<sup>61</sup> This point requires some emphasis: suggesting that memory consists of a 'stable core' to which details and emphases are added and removed is not meant to suggest that these 'peripheral' aspects are insignificant or incidental. Often the transformation of a historical image effected by the addition, re-



image is therefore both theoretically and empirically confirmed (cf. Ben-Yehuda 1995:301). This does not *ipso facto* necessitate that this stable historical core (a persistent historical reputation or image) and objective history (what ‘really happened’) correspond to each other (Fentress and Wickham 1992:6; Zhang and Schwartz 1997:190). Rather, it suggests that historical images, once constituted, tend to endure through time.<sup>62</sup> Social memory exhibits a stability distinct from its relationship to actual historical events. Further, this stability inheres at the level of meaning rather than on a ‘textual’ level.<sup>63</sup>

The process of conceptualization, which so often disqualifies social memory as an empirical source, is also a process that ensures the stability of a set of collectively held ideas, and enables these ideas to be diffused and transmitted. Social memory is not stable as information; it is stable, rather, at the level of shared meanings and remembered images. (Fentress and Wickham 1992:59)<sup>64</sup>

Thus the *stability* of social memory does not ensure its *accuracy*. But memory’s stability, especially in the face of social change, has been underemphasised in Jesus research: ‘Tradition sustains memory, even as society changes and as new cultural groups arrive’ (Schwartz 2000:192). Analyses of social memory have to take into account how stable images persist through time and social change, and how, as images of the past develop, evolve, shift, and fluctuate, they frequently remain recognisable nevertheless (even, in some cases, across centuries).<sup>65</sup>

Social memory does not focus on issues of ‘historicity’, though it does address questions regarding the closely related issue of the past’s stability in communal and individual thought.<sup>66</sup> Connerton makes a similar distinction between the task of historical reconstruction (determining issues of historicity) and social memory. Historical reconstruction focuses on ‘traces: that is to say the marks, perceptible to the senses, which some phenomenon, in itself inaccessible, has left behind’ (1989:13). Historical inquiry’s interest in ‘the marks’ that remain serves another programme: that of getting ‘behind’ the traces to reconstruct the phenomena that left them behind. Collective memory can be, but is not necessarily, concerned with evidentiary issues; thus, ‘it is still possible for the historian to rediscover what has been completely forgotten’ (1989:14).

---

moval, and/or re-emphasis of new details (without altering the stable core) are dramatic, a point which underscores the fact that the ‘peripheral’ aspects that are susceptible to manipulation in the present can be (and often are) pivotal.

<sup>62</sup> Kirk and Thatcher, citing Olick (1999b:382), use the term ‘ripple’ (2005:33).

<sup>63</sup> The term ‘textual’ here is intended broadly to include visual imagery (e.g., statuary, portraiture, art, etc.) and other ‘material’ features of images of the past.

<sup>64</sup> The point, however, is not that collective memory is *always* unstable as information; rather, collective memory and its relationship to the objective past is more complex. ‘Social memory is, in fact, often selective, distorted, and inaccurate. None the less, it is important to recognize that it is not necessarily any of these; it can be extremely exact, when people have found it socially relevant from that day to this to remember and recount an event in the way it was originally experienced’ (Fentress and Wickham 1992:xi).

<sup>65</sup> Cf., e.g., Schwartz 2005a:49

<sup>66</sup> ‘The most pressing problem is still why memories and commemorations are as stable as they are’ (Zhang and Schwartz 1997:190).

Though we may need to critique Connerton's conceptualisation of social memory,<sup>67</sup> his conclusion is valid: Historical reconstruction and social memory are similar but distinct, but the prospect of doing the former independent of the latter suggests the possibility of verifying the 'truth-value' ('historicity') of social memory. The relationship between history and images of the past, then, will have to be assessed on other grounds.<sup>68</sup>

### 3.4. The Social Construction of Reputation

Though scholars commonly refer to Jesus' 'reputation',<sup>69</sup> the social and discursive practices by which reputations develop and function rarely receive sustained reflection. Closer analysis of reputation suggests that the memory of historical figures is discursively constituted; the images and narratives appropriate to a person's life are never straightforward and automatic. One's reputation often (if not always) depends upon other people's efforts 'to make an ordinary person great, or, more commonly, to bring the person's greatness to public attention' (Schwartz 2000:67). Two points are immediately useful. First, reputation is 'a socially recognized persona: an organizing principle by which the actions of a person . . . can be linked together. On one level a reputation constitutes a moral gestalt that is linked to a person — an organizing principle for person perception' (Fine 2001:2). Second, reputation is socially constructed, perceived, and utilised in social interaction; it 'is not the opinion that one individual forms of another; rather, it is a shared, established image. Reputations are embedded within social relations, and as a consequence, reputation is connected to the forms of communication embedded within a community' (Fine 2001:2-3). Reputations are social products dependent upon social contexts: they are produced, contested, accepted, transformed in group interaction. They arise in relation to established images of a group's past, and they shape and constrain future images of that past.

Every group has its heroes; every group also has its villains, and they need both. Durkheimian analysis of society's remembrance of its heroes and villains, emphasising social consensus and cohesion, does not problematise the rise (or fall) of the men and women that a given group remembers as memorably great or infamously evil. Often, such issues do not require analysis; a person universally regarded as heroic comes to symbolise society's values, beliefs, and goals for more or less obvious reasons; similarly, persons universally regarded as reprobate serve

---

<sup>67</sup> He seems to refer to social memory as 'an unbroken tradition from eyewitnesses' (cf. Connerton 1989:14; though Connerton's intention is unclear at this point), a sense that is much more restricted than what social or collective memory refers to for this project.

<sup>68</sup> Healy (1997) convincingly suggests against the dichotomisation of history and memory; similar to the approach taken here, he suggests a symbiotic relationship between the two rather than approaching them as qualitatively different. 'To resolve these tensions simply by writing of popular memory or counter-memory as a force opposed to the oppression of history would be illusory. Here I am more concerned with the uneasy interdependence of history and memory than with a vision of history as having been wrenched from its symbiotic unity with memory' (1997:74).

<sup>69</sup> Cf., *inter alios*, Dunn 2003:670-694; Harvey 1982:107; Sanders 1993:149-151. All three authors, and others, refer to 'Jesus' reputation' in their discussions of the miracles, especially the healings and exorcisms. As this section (§3.4) will demonstrate, 'reputation' requires its own explanation; it cannot simply be invoked to explain something else (*viz.*, traditions of Jesus' healings and exorcisms).

to increase group solidarity by means of graphically demonstrating the limits of society's tolerance for certain behaviours.<sup>70</sup>

Groups, however, remember more from their past than the heroic and the villainous. Even for individuals for whom widespread consensus exists, a society's remembrance of historical figures depends upon the activities of reputational entrepreneurs.<sup>71</sup> According to Fine, the goal of reputational entrepreneurship is two-fold: 'to propose early on a resonant reputation, linked to the cultural logic of critical 'facts' and then to make that image stick, diverting other interpretations' (1996:1177). Reputational entrepreneurs perform a vital role in the successful construction of a dominant historical image, especially when ambiguities block widespread consensus regarding a person's historical reputation. Expanding on a Durkheimian model of group solidarity, Fine draws on the sociology of social problems to trace the mechanisms by which reputations — especially difficult ones — move from potential to actuality (1996:1161).

### 3.4.a. Dynamics of Reputational Entrepreneurship

Fine identifies three dynamics in the process of reputational entrepreneurship (1996:1159, 1162–1163). First, the identification of 'self-interest' serves as an important factor in the decision to invest time and resources into constructing, proposing, and defending a historical reputation, especially when the general public is ambivalent or divided about the figure in question. 'Memory-making requires effort: before any one individual can be regarded as worth remembering, other individuals . . . must deem that person commorable and must be able to persuade their audiences to agree' (Schwartz 2000:297).<sup>72</sup> But issues of self-interest are not straightforwardly rooted in either the past or the present; as we have already seen, the past by which groups legitimise their ideological interests also constitutes those interests.<sup>73</sup>

If the base motivations of self-interest are rooted in events and circumstances located in *both* the past *and* the present, then self-interest is not a simple factor that can be invoked in ideo-

---

<sup>70</sup> For analyses of society's heroes and villains, cf. Schwartz 1991; Ducharme and Fine 1995, respectively.

<sup>71</sup> The term 'reputational entrepreneur', which I am taking primarily from the works of Fine (2001) and Schwartz (2000), is equivalent to 'moral entrepreneur' (cf. Ben-Yehuda 1995) and is derived from the sociology of deviance. 'As Becker notes, deviance is defined through the activities of "moral entrepreneurs," who take it upon themselves (and on behalf of those that they represent), to define behaviors in light of a proposed value system' (Fine 1996:1161; cf. the discussion of deviance and moral entrepreneurship in Malina and Neyrey 1988:33–67).

<sup>72</sup> According to Fine, who does not remove the historical subject from considerations of her own reputation, 'the figure whose reputation is at issue has the primary responsibility and the strongest motivation for defending against attacks; of secondary importance are those figures who rely upon resources or patronage provided by the leader' (1996:1177).

<sup>73</sup> Fine suggests that Harding's reputation as incompetent was primarily rooted in the present political interests of his Democratic adversaries as well as of those (Republicans) who could have proposed an alternative reputation but remained silent (1996:1177–1182), while the analysis of the memory of Confucius (Zhang and Schwartz 1997) suggests that the importance of the past outweighed the influence of political interests during China's Cultural Revolution. The example of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (Bodnar 1992:3–9; Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991), on the other hand, provides an instance where the motivation for commemoration fluctuated between past and present interests. It seems doubtful that any instance of memory is ever a matter of one only and not some combination of both.

logical analyses of commemoration; instead, it requires its own careful analysis.<sup>74</sup> Schudson (1992:165–184) utilises the concept of ‘pre-emptive metaphor’ to explore the ways the past asserts itself in the present apart from (and, sometimes, prior to) the machinations of present political interests (cf. 1992:183). But the concept of pre-emptive metaphor is not the only complicating factor in analysing the dynamics of self-interest in the work of reputational entrepreneurs. The meaning-making function of memory and the past, discussed above, also constitutes a factor in the construction of self-interest.<sup>75</sup> Groups behind both official and vernacular cultural expressions ‘seek to know the past to learn lessons. . . . People are not invariably seeking to legitimate their present interests. Sometimes people do not know what their present interests are and know that they do not know. They seek information to arrive at a view’ (Schudson 1992:213). Images of the past influence self-interest even as self-interest motivates and shapes images of the past.<sup>76</sup>

Second, besides the motivations provided by perceived self-interests, the success of reputational entrepreneurs depends on their ability to construct and present a credible narrative to an audience predisposed to accepting the narrative.<sup>77</sup> We will discuss issues pertaining to what is (or is not) a credible narrative below;<sup>78</sup> the point here is that the anticipated likelihood and consequences of proposing a credible narrative affects the determination of self-interest; producers of historical reputations, by virtue of belonging to the same culture as their audiences, usually have some idea (of whatever quality) how their products will be received.<sup>79</sup> The feasibility and costs (material, social, political, etc.) of proposing a narrative that fits into and shapes a larger cultural logic must be factored into the determination and construction of self-interest by potential reputational entrepreneurs.

Third, besides self-interest and narrative facility, Fine also identifies institutional placement as a factor of reputational entrepreneurship. The people proposing an image of an historical figure must be in a position to have their proposal taken seriously by their audience. Even

<sup>74</sup> Here is a critical point at which Bodnar’s analysis of ethnic American commemorative patterns (1992) becomes unsatisfying. For example: ‘Despite all the emphasis on ethnic homelands and cultures in the gardens [in Cleveland, Ohio], they were never allowed to stand completely devoid of messages that explicitly celebrated the American nation’ (1992:103). Bodnar’s differentiation between official and vernacular cultural expressions (cf. §3.4.a., above) leads him to refuse the possibility of ethnic commemorations celebrating both the past (the communities’ ethnic homelands) and the present (their current national residence); the presence of symbols that ‘celebrate the American nation’ are presumed to be the result of hegemonic forces, and the possibility that the interests of ethnic groups in America were more complicated than simply recollections of their homeland is never even considered.

<sup>75</sup> Note that self-interest is here understood to be not simply *a* (or *the*) dominant factor in social construction but is itself constructed by social forces.

<sup>76</sup> None of this, of course, should be surprising; our findings regarding self-interest are very similar to those regarding the past itself: ideological interest, like the past, is always mediated in the context of the present, but that context is itself constituted, in part, by the past upon which it is playing.

<sup>77</sup> Barthel poignantly illustrates the rhetorical nature of generating historical narratives. Before a historical image can be proposed and appreciated by the public, ‘you have to deduce whose side it’s on’ (1996:67; cf. pp. 67–69).

<sup>78</sup> Cf. the discussion of cultural logic and the acceptance of constructed reputations, §3.4.b.iii.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Fine 1996:1182–1185; Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991.

those inhabiting positions of social and cultural hegemony, however, cannot simply expect that the reputations they construct will be widely received (cf. Schwartz 2000:72–73). Prominent structural location is not the sole consideration in legitimising a potential reputational entrepreneur's authority to (re)shape the past. There are other means of attaining an authoritative perspective of the past, and these are frequently keyed into the social group for which (or in which) an image of the past is being proposed.<sup>80</sup>

The three dynamics of the reputational entrepreneurship identified by Fine — motivation, narrative facility, and institutional placement — are vital for analyses of narratives and images that reputational entrepreneurs produce. These three variables enable us to analyse more effectively the significance of narratives that become socially dominant (especially in relation to other narratives that are sustainable by the historical record but are never widely received). We are also equipped to ask questions and seek plausible answers concerning the likelihood and possible significance of the observation that a particular entrepreneur (or group of entrepreneurs) succeeded in proposing dominant historical images, especially in cases (like those of the gospels) where entrepreneurial success may (or ought to) generate some surprise.<sup>81</sup>

### **3.4.b. Social and Discursive Dynamics of Historical Reputation**

History, in the most general sense of the flow of events through space and time, does not 'mean' anything or have any particular lesson to teach.<sup>82</sup> Individuals and groups concerned with history portray past events in such a way that a potential meaning becomes visible, a particular lesson evident. As for events, so also for people. A person's life presents sufficient evidence to support multiple, even contradictory, images, lessons, reputations (Fine 1996:1164, 1182). 'The selection of facts, actions, or processes from the past means that the "truth" as reported in historical accounts only includes a few aspects of reality. . . . Some items of information are emphasized and gain importance while others are discarded and ignored' (Ben-Yehuda 1995:276).<sup>83</sup> To understand how a person's historical reputation develops, then, we have to account for social processes of interaction, assertion, contention, and dominance. But we cannot simply assert that reputations are socially constructed. From what materials are reputations constructed? For what purposes are reputations put together and published? How — and why — are reputations accepted or rejected by their audiences? Once we have addressed these questions, we should be better equipped to understand the construction, reception, and propagation of historical reputation (memory) and the relationship of that memory to the historical figure they represent.

---

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991:388–390.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. §5.3., below.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. §3.3.a., above; H. White 1978:83–84.

<sup>83</sup> Ben-Yehuda goes on to conclude, on the basis of this observation, that 'it is impossible to develop absolute criteria of selection in historical research . . . Therefore, to a large extent, history is subjective and is dependent on individual historians, but not entirely so' (1995:276; cf. Healy 1997:74).

### 3.4.b.i. Social Construction and its Constraints

Joseph Schneider, among others, has pointed to a tension within historical and sociological constructionist research ‘between a view that sees the natural world, especially in the form of social context, giving rise to various or alternative accounts of what *is* (the “mediative” position), and the view that these accounts, definitions, and claims are “constitutive” of reality’ (1985:223–224; original italics).<sup>84</sup> Strict constructionist approaches analyse reputational construction (including concepts of labelling, deviance, and identifying/constructing social problems) from the perspective that historical reputations are the result of ‘claim-making’ activities (Ben-Yehuda 1995:21); ‘the battle [to successfully define a person or event] is all there is’ (Fine 1996:1166). The strict constructionist perspective suffers numerous weaknesses. Fine, noting that ‘most historians — and citizens — feel comfortable with at least a partially objective view’, charges that strict constructionism ‘provides no guidance for explaining the reputation of those for whom solid consensus is reached’ (1996:1164–1165, 1166). Similarly, Schwartz (2000:ix–x) charges that ‘to focus solely on memory’s constructed side is to deny the past’s significance as a model for coming to terms with the present’, and that strict constructionism (a) focuses too strongly on how groups differ in their conceptions of the past while neglecting how these conceptions resemble one another, and (b) has been inconsistently applied to historical inquiry.<sup>85</sup> Finally, and this point will be especially poignant for Jesus research, Schwartz points out that strict constructionist perspectives, while shedding light on *how* a person’s reputation is manipulated for present purposes, fails to explain *why* that person became a model *for* the present in the first place (cf. 2000:253–255).<sup>86</sup>

On the other hand, contextual constructionist approaches acknowledge the definitive role of claim-making activities in the rise and dissemination of reputations, but also maintain that ‘objective’ factors exert their influence on the decisions and processes of social claim-making behaviour (Ben-Yehuda 1995:21).<sup>87</sup> Ben-Yehuda’s analysis of the ‘Masada mythical nar-

---

<sup>84</sup> Fine (1996:1166–1167) refers to these two views as ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ constructionism, respectively; Ben-Yehuda (1995:20–21) as ‘contextual’ and ‘strict’ constructionism, respectively. Both Ben-Yehuda and Fine set up the constructionist views along side an ‘objective’ view (cf. Schneider’s use of ‘mediative’). Fine adds a third perspective to the objectivist–constructionist opposition: the ideological perspective. This view, that reputation ‘is an expression of ideology that manipulates the past to serve the present and builds up or tears down reputations for one’s political interest’ (1996:1165), is largely applicable to Bodnar’s (1992) work.

<sup>85</sup> Fine adds, ‘A perspective that emphasizes a single ideological bias presents too simplistic a view in a pluralistic society. Many voices exist that could, if they chose, put forth claims about presidential [or any other historical] reputation. Reputations are not inevitable; they may be changed or contested’ (1996:1166; cf. also Schudson 1989b:112).

<sup>86</sup> Cf. §5.1., below.

<sup>87</sup> This should not be construed to suggest that history uninterpreted factors into analyses of historical reputation or social memory; instead ideological and cultural expressions of the past are motivated and limited by, rooted in, and/or reflective of actual historical events or characteristics of people. ‘Objective’ in this sense is roughly equivalent to ‘external’, as in factors *external to* ideological or cultural factors influence (but do not determine) the way groups understand and appropriate the past. Cf. Schwartz 2000:6: ‘Considering Lincoln’s image as a mere projection of present problems is as wrong as taking it to be a literal account of his life and character’.

rative' works from this perspective, taking Josephus's account of the events surrounding Masada as the objective (external) history and analysing the relationship between the Israeli myth of Masada and Josephus's account across various periods of Israeli societal changes.<sup>88</sup> Fine, instead of relying on societal changes, suggests that 'objective factors are mediated through political strategies and discursive practices' (1996:1167; cf. 1182, fn 26).<sup>89</sup> The two are not unrelated; social change can follow behind and be brought about as the result of new and effective discourse even as shifts in discursive practices can be necessitated by changes in society.

Reputation, then, develops in the nexus of 'historical facts' and discursive manoeuvring, both constrained by an already established cultural logic. This nexus is itself dynamic and fluid as discursive practices and social structures change through time. As Fine notes, the unmediated flow of historical events is utilised in the development of reputational narratives selectively; that is, social actors always mediate the 'reality' of historical events. Images of the past are always selective, always interested. But the mediation, selection, and interest of historical events is nonetheless *rooted in actual history*. 'Like the evaluation of social problems, the labeling of political figures occurs within the context of an overabundance of evidence' (1996:1187). The selectivity of human perception and historical reconstruction functions not simply as a dynamic of ideological or social control that distorts reality for the purposes of established interests; in light of the massive amount of information available for processing, selectivity *enables* knowledge of the past.<sup>90</sup> As we have said, multiple reputations are possible for a figure or event.<sup>91</sup> Though the available historical evidence limits the range of reputations that can plausibly be constructed for historical figures, plausible narrative structures also affect the significance of the historical facts sustaining those structures. As the parts (i.e., disparate historical facts) shape the whole (i.e., a unifying reputational narrative), so the whole affects the parts.<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> Schwartz's analysis of Abraham Lincoln's reputation through nearly six decades proceeds similarly, though the precise content and structure of the objective history behind Lincoln's reputation (i.e., Lincoln's actual character and participation in historical events) is never systematically demonstrated.

<sup>89</sup> Fine, adopting a contextual constructionist perspective, provides two cautions: contextual constructionism 'must explain the neglect of positive events and traits in the creation of the memory of incompetence'. Also, 'a "middle-ground" position, such as this weak [constructionist] view, must accept the seeming contradiction in recognizing the power of events in shaping reputations, while simultaneously admitting that situated and self-interested perspectives on those events shape socially credible reputations' (1996:1167). The reputation of incompetence, which is central to Fine's analysis of Harding's place in American memory, is not irrelevant to the issues surrounding Jesus' reputation, to which we will turn in Part III.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. E. Zerubavel 1991; H. White 1978:81–83.

<sup>91</sup> The point that 'multiple reputations are possible for a figure or event' should not suggest that these reputations all arise at roughly the same time, in roughly the same space, or that they necessarily compete with one another until one historical image becomes dominant, at the expense of all the others. Schwartz explores the ways in which new reputations can arise even after other reputations have enjoyed dominant status, and that society, in finding meaning in more than one image, is able to maintain multiple — even contradictory — images simultaneously (cf. 2000:256–292).

<sup>92</sup> Not only are multiple combinations of 'facts' into historical narratives possible from 'what actually happened', but multiple interpretations (and narrative structures) are possible from the selection of facts that have actually been preserved in social memory. In this sense, 'No memory can preserve the past. What remains is only that "which society in each era can reconstruct within its contemporary frame of

As we said above, processes of sifting, construing, and interpreting historical evidence influence the construction of historical reputation. As interested groups propose and debate images of the past, they draw upon and shape the surrounding cultural logic by which those images make sense. The relationship between ideological discursive practices and the meaning-making language of cultural logic is thus mutually affective; it is *sociopolitical*.<sup>93</sup> Discourse is *sociopolitical* because it is rooted in and constrained by the social context surrounding the discourse.<sup>94</sup> Simultaneously, discourse is *sociopolitical* because it attempts to influence or shape the cultural logic that makes sense of historical images and mobilises behaviour in the present.<sup>95</sup> To understand ‘the stable reputation of a political figure’, we must ‘examine what constitutes plausible alternative models and why these models were not selected’ (Fine 1996:1187). At times, the political aspect of reputation-construction fails fantastically and results in the dramatic refusal to accept a proposed reputation (cf. Ducharme and Fine 1995:1325); at other times, it results in the establishment of divergent images that are (a) widely accepted, (b) recognizable to a diverse aggregate of groups, and (c) held together in tension (cf. Schwartz 2000:256–292); at still other times it results in the popular acceptance of a rite or symbol without resulting in any widespread consensus about what that rite or symbol refers to (cf. Bodnar 1992:3–9; Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991). But again, we must remember that history — understood here as the external, inchoate flow of time and events — plays a role in the construction and reception of historical images: ‘Interested parties can cobble together the “facts” of history to create renditions of reality. That we can do this does not, of course, mean that any creative bricolage will stick’ (Fine 1996:1160).

#### 3.4.b.ii. The Interested Use of Constructed History

Images of the past, then, are neither disinterested representations of objective history nor products and tools of ideological forces severed from the continuous flow of events in time and space. The relationship between history and representations of the past is much more com-

---

reference.” . . . Cultural memory exists in two modes: first in the mode of potentiality of the archive whose accumulated texts, images, and rules of conduct act as a total horizon, and second in the mode of actuality, whereby each context puts the objectivized meaning into its own perspective, giving it its own relevance’ (Assmann 1995:130; citing Halbwachs).

<sup>93</sup> The following discussion, as well as the literary device by which I discuss the term ‘sociopolitical’, is heavily indebted to E. Zerubavel’s discussion of the ‘sociomental topography’ of human memory (2003; esp. p. 2)

<sup>94</sup> J. D. Crossan, R. A. Horsley, and others who argue that Jesus pursued a programme of social egalitarianism miss this very point. While ‘Jesus the egalitarian activist’ resonates with twenty-first century reviewers, such arguments fail to notice that such a programme would have been incomprehensible within a first-century Palestinian context.

<sup>95</sup> Use of the term ‘mobilise’ is not meant to assume that memory coerces or manipulates people to perform or commit resources to causes they would otherwise resist. Rather, the mobilisation of behaviour is an aspect of memory’s meaning-making function. As people come to understand their present experiences by virtue of particular images of the past, possible avenues of behaviour — including which are more desirable than others — become apparent, and both internal and external sources of motivation enable groups of people to agree upon and pursue appropriate courses of action. ‘Memory work has at best a minimal instrumental function: it does not create and mobilize resources or make armies more effective. Its function is semiotic: to make tangible the values for which resources and armies are mobilized’ (Schwartz 2000:251–252).



plex and requires careful consideration. But history as ‘a rhetorical resource’ (Fine 1996:1176) also requires attention. Images of the past are put to work, conscripted into the service of interested parties. History matters (Schudson 1992:2). But present interests do not hold the past captive; as we have seen, the past that legitimates and orientates behaviour in the present participates in the construction of the needs and demands of the present (cf. Schudson 1992:206, 213). Memories of social heroes and villains illustrate and reinforce societal values and boundaries. But the use of the past in the present is more complicated than that. Images of the past can follow as a result of changes in society (cf. Schwartz 1991) as well as work to motivate them (cf. Ben-Yehuda 1995:159), though the distinction is never hard and fast. Images of the past, including constructions of historical reputation, ‘are not only made, they are *used* for purposes beyond characterizing the figure to address the circumstances or community in which he acted. To be valuable for the present, history must be didactic’ (Fine 1996:1175–1176; original italics).

In this connection, Schwartz’s model of the past ‘matched to the present’ as ‘a model *of* society and a model *for* society’ is once again relevant (2000:18; original italics; cf. §3.3.a., above). The past functions (a) to make sense of the present (even as the present makes sense of the past) and (b) to motivate behaviour within it. This distinction, however, is only analytical; ‘both aspects are realized in every act of remembrance’ (Schwartz 2000:18). Our discussion concerning the uses of the past in the present has been closely tied to our earlier discussion of distortion and constructionism. ‘Distortion’, we have said, ought not to be taken too strongly. But when does distortion — or construction — become fabrication, and how can we know when we have passed that point? In his analysis of how the events and people of World War I were keyed to the events and people of the Civil War, Schwartz contends that ‘the role of “fabrication” — the intentional effort of one or more individuals to manipulate or even falsify the meaning of the past — must be discounted. . . . Influential people do not always consciously manipulate; they often believe their efforts to affect others’ opinions are in the general interest’ (2000:254).<sup>96</sup> Okay, but can we generalise this point? No answers come forward readily, but this question will become especially current in our discussion of the gospel writers’ efforts to construct Jesus’ reputation.

### **3.4.b.iii. Reception as a Constraining Factor**

As we think about how the past is constructed and used in the present, we must keep in mind that dynamics of production are not the only forces at play. We have seen that dominant cultural groups do not always conspire to manipulate the masses over whom they attempt to maintain their dominance; when contention arises between groups concerning appropriate images of the past, powerful cultural interests are not always successful. Kirk, with reference to Schwartz’s work, warns against assuming

---

<sup>96</sup> Schwartz does not, however, dismiss the role of fabrication, ‘because it implies a distinction between entrepreneurs who share their audience’s values and those who induce their audience to adopt values that only entrepreneurs would otherwise approve’ (2000:254).

that most members of society, save the elites, are incorporated into a false consciousness manifest in their naïve acceptance of a fabricated social memory, a view that if for no other reason falters on the fact that subordinated groups are demonstrably and robustly (if discreetly) capable of contesting elite constructions of the past and shaping alternatives. (Kirk 2005b:14)

Y. Zerubavel, like Kirk and Schwartz, also problematises reception: ‘invented tradition can be successful only as long as it passes as tradition. . . . An awareness of its deliberate construction inevitably undermines its acceptance as tradition’ (1995:232).<sup>97</sup> These observations suggest ‘a tension infrequently addressed in collective memory [as well as biblical] studies. . . . Many case studies document historical reputations being “produced” and “sold,” but we have good reasons to hesitate before committing ourselves entirely to a “production of culture” model’ (Schwartz 2000:72–73). This model assumes that reputational failure results from a lack of production, a lack of effort from those who could have manufactured a successful reputational claim; it also neglects the significance of a group’s cultural logic, which enhances its predisposition to respond positively or negatively to a reputational entrepreneur’s constructive efforts.<sup>98</sup> Schwartz refers to this as ‘a supply-side theory that attends to the production of images but ignores their reception. Reception, however, is always problematic’ (2000:254–255; cf. Zhang and Schwartz 1997:207).

Ben-Yehuda’s analysis of the role and consequences of the Masada mythical narrative in Israeli national identity similarly depends on the observation that the Orthodox social context was not receptive of any positive image of Masada. Masada’s elevation to the status of national myth had to await an Israeli society that could embrace such a myth (1995:50–82). Similarly, nineteenth-century American commemoration of the nation in artwork commissioned for the U.S. Capitol Building was restricted by turbulent social forces that would not abate until after the Civil War (Schwartz 1982). Though dynamics of reception are — and have always been — consequential aspects of the construction of reputation (and of the past in general), this is the point at which many ‘historical Jesus’ studies falter (e.g., Kelber 1983; 2005).<sup>99</sup> The point is not that reception is *determinative* for reconstructing the history behind historical reputations, but that reception’s importance is belied by a large body of scholarship that fails completely to take it into consideration. The result is that many conclusions concerning the ‘real’ Jesus generated by this research are in need of re-evaluation.

The reception of historical images and reputations is closely related to the ways in which ‘the past imposes itself on us’ (Schudson 1992:xiii).<sup>100</sup> There are two important mechanisms by which the past achieves this imposition. First, while history is not ‘just one damn thing after an-

---

<sup>97</sup> Y. Zerubavel’s reference to ‘*deliberate* construction’ (emphasis added) reminds us of Schwartz’s distinction, referred to below, between manipulation and obligation in the relation between culturally dominant and marginal groups.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Schwartz 2000:72ff.; Ducharme and Fine 1995:1325.

<sup>99</sup> Interestingly, Kelber is at other times very aware of the importance of audience reception of texts, especially oral texts (e.g., Kelber 1995), which is consistent with his extensive use of Foley’s work.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. §§3.3.b.; 3.3.c., above.

other', history is 'the record of one damn thing *precluding* another, the record of events moving people and institutions irretrievably in this direction and not that one' (1992:1; original italics). In this sense, history is 'path-dependent'; as certain events happen and others do not, some events are cut out of the possibility of 'next-steps' in the historical sequence and others are made more likely 'next-steps' (1992:2). Second, proposed historical images vary in the degree to which they resonate with the cultural logic contextualising the image being 'marketed'. While political-ideological theories of memory emphasise the role of power and resource distribution in their approach to successful history-telling (or, more precisely, history-making), a balanced approach to the construction of memory and reputation considers cultural-economic factors while also attending to the relationship between proposed memorial structures and cultural logic.

Barry Schwartz (1991; 2000), for example, takes as a point of departure a consistent connection, of whatever rigidity, between existing cultural logic and historical images proffered to that logic. Some reputational entrepreneurs, to be sure, sought to exploit public perception, others sought to alter it, and still others reflected that perception to varying degrees of success. However, a link still exists between the 'production of images' and pre-existing 'public perception' (1991:223). In other words, portrayals of historical figures or events — whether they seek to reinforce and stabilise public opinion or to radically subvert it — all have a strong anchor in the public opinion to which they are addressed. But even when substantial changes in a group's or society's cultural logic occur, as in post-Civil War America, the vicissitudes of historical images and narratives do not necessarily efface an underlying stability that persists in the face of such changes. The conclusion, then, is that 'collective memory is dualistic when a society remembering an apparently alien past is constituted by the very past it is remembering' (1991:226). Though historical reputations have to resonate with the larger cultural logic, society is able to entertain complex conceptualisations of the past that maintain images whose relevance has faded even as it adapts those images to increase their relevance (cf. 2000:256–292).

Having recognised this 'dualistic' quality of social memory, we see that cultural logic is flexible to a considerable degree even as it imposes the past on the present. This flexibility does not suggest that the role of cultural logic is flimsy (or inconsequential); rather, it is all the more adaptable and, therefore, robust as a dynamic in the reception of constructed reputations. For this reason it is less surprising when we discover that, despite his access to considerable funds and media coverage, Richard Nixon could not rehabilitate his blackened reputation (Schudson 1992:185–202), or that, in the midst of intense political and ideological battles raging in Progressive Era America, 'the mass media . . . placed Lincoln in a progressive, not pro-corporate, or even pro-business, light. Moreover, immigrant and working-class people knew very well that the affluent were paying for the propagation of this image [of a Progressive Lincoln], but they saw beneath this beneficence a sense of obligation, not manipulation' (2000:204).

Diane Barthel nuances our conceptualisation of ideology to account for the ‘sense of obligation’ Schwartz observes. As individuals who ‘perceived a need for social change’ pooled their efforts to bring it about, ‘they did this for their own reasons, whether self-serving or public-spirited’. These ‘self-serving’ and ‘public-spirited’ motivations both factored in efforts ‘to sell their idea to a broader public’ and ‘to devise more explicit justifications for the proposed change’. Thus, both types of motivations ‘are ideologies — complex arguments about the way the world should be’ (1996:10). In fact, we are probably dealing with two *types* of motivations less than with two *aspects* of motivation. Nevertheless, political and capital interests do not always dominate; even when they do, they often find themselves obligated to submit to the contours and patterns of larger social interests. This is not always a problem; as the case of Lincoln’s commemoration in the early 1900s suggests, dominant interests are not always opposed to the interests of society as a whole.

### 3.4.c. The Construction of Difficult Reputations

As suggested above, the dominance of heroic or villainous historical reputations is not necessarily problematic. But what, if anything, are we to make of the remembrance — and commemoration — of difficult pasts? What constitutes a ‘difficult past’? By what processes are these memories created and sustained? And can a difficult past ever achieve widespread consensus? We have already discussed the ideological (rhetorical) use of the past, though we noted that coercion or manipulation are not always characteristic of uses of the past. But defining the past can become competitive; ‘In some cases, control of history may be contentious, and the claims of one group may be countered by another that wishes to interpret the same events or person through a different lens’ (Fine 1996:1161–1162; cf. Zelizer 1995:214). Not only *how*, but also *whether* to remember the past may require debate.<sup>101</sup> The term ‘difficult pasts’ (or reputations) is appropriate in such instances.

#### 3.4.c.i. Remembering and Forgetting: Villains and Failures

The function of the reputational entrepreneur becomes especially prominent in the case of an ambiguous past. ‘The maintenance of reputations requires self-interested custodians’, but sometimes reputations are not maintained even as memories are. This seems especially so in the case of the remembrance of failure: ‘The label of failure is not objective, but depends upon the absence of a credible alternative perspective. To be recognized as a failure suggests the absence of supporters who could propose a historical justification for one’s positive reputation; thus the figure is an “orphan,” scorned by rivals and neglected by ostensible allies’ (Fine 1996:1162).<sup>102</sup>

---

<sup>101</sup> *How* Washington or Hitler ought to be remembered are matters of little debate; *whether* they ought to be remembered is even more secure. But what about Warren Harding? Or, more to the point, what about a τέκτων, executed as a political subversive, from a small Galilean village in the early years after his death?

<sup>102</sup> The problem of becoming an ‘orphan’ is dramatically increased when the person being remembered is typed not a failure but a villain. It is one thing to forget Harding’s positive qualities in light of his dominant perception as a failure; it is another thing altogether to efface Benedict Arnold’s heroic

Not that reputational entrepreneurs fail to materialise in the remembrance of failure; rather, remembering failure involves the absence of *sympathetic* entrepreneurs (cf. Fine 1996:1173).

By what processes, then, do historical figures who represent neither society's highest virtues nor its most degenerate vices become installed in memory? In such cases, who determines what lessons can be appropriately gleaned from history, and how do they manage to convince others? And why do these ambiguous figures linger in the institutional, linguistic, cultural, and political patterns of social life when considerably more significant persons and events fail to be preserved in the collective memory?<sup>103</sup> Answers to these questions all involve the role of reputational entrepreneurs, but before we look at the construction of ambiguous reputations we will need to examine the process of remembering villainous figures.

The memory of negative people and events obviously involves processes of stigmatisation. By hosting and inviting participation in 'dramatic public reactions to activities that offend shared values', a group not only establishes unacceptable behaviour but also inscribes (or reinforces) internal values and motivations within its members and restrains them from deviant behaviours. In this way, the memory of evil is a dynamic of social control.<sup>104</sup> Public response to the behaviour of the outcast 'often is expressed through a process akin to an extended degradation ceremony, in which the identity of the offender is transformed into that of a deviant and outcast, and becomes defined as evil' (Ducharme and Fine 1995:1310). A person is thereby stigmatised, and though 'tarnished reputations may shed some of their stigma over time', the result of stigmatisation is 'largely irreversible' (1995:1310). Interestingly, cases of commemorating negative reputations — that is, of stigmatisation — represent a bringing to consciousness the fact of social *forgetting*, of becoming especially and vividly aware of what is specifically *not* remembered.<sup>105</sup>

But the memory of such persons is not merely the result of the particularly dramatic and undesirable consequences of their actions; society preserves the memory of deviant people not merely to 'make an example' of them. In their analysis of the memory of Benedict Arnold, Ducharme and Fine suggest two processes by which negative historical reputations are constructed and established: '(1) the reconstruction of biography, through selective emphasis on his-

---

military record in light of his dominant perception as a traitor and archetypal villain (cf. the processes of demonisation and the construction of nonpersonhood; Ducharme and Fine 1995).

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Ducharme and Fine 1995:1326.

<sup>104</sup> This is not to revert to a manipulative, adversarial model of societal interaction. Sometimes social control is manipulative; sometimes, however, shunning undesirable figures is a response to genuinely held values and beliefs from members of all levels of society.

<sup>105</sup> Rather than a *lack* of memory, the social forgetting involved in the commemoration of the villainous may be more accurately described as remembering *obliquely* (cf. Schudson 1992:xiii–xvii). What happens when such memories are recalled and brought to the fore of the collective memory is an interesting question. Schwartz (2000) address the resurgence of Lincoln's reputation at the turn of the twentieth century; Ben-Yehuda (1995) and Y. Zerubavel (1995) analyse the 'recovery' of the memory of Masada; Prager (1998) similarly discusses the 'recovered' memory of childhood sexual abuse. 'Recovering' lost memories is in itself a fascinating subject. In the case of the historical Jesus, we are in a similarly interesting position to raise questions regarding what happens when the object of collective forgetting (arguably an intention of the Roman practice of crucifixion) becomes installed as a (the) central feature of collective remembering.

torical events; and (2) the evaluation of motives, that is, the process by which accounts are presented, challenged, honored, ascribed and assessed' (1995:1310–1311).<sup>106</sup> They also note that, while the processes of commemorating heroes and villains share similarities, there are some differences. They isolate two specific processes, demonisation and the transformation into nonpersonhood, as distinctive to the commemoration of the evil person (1995:1311–1312).<sup>107</sup>

Demonisation involves stripping a person's reputation of any positive (or ambiguous) elements, 'so that the commemorated figure is seen as fully, intensely, and quintessentially evil' (Ducharme and Fine 1995:1311). The reputations of heroic figures go through a similar process, whereby their virtues are idealised and their flaws overlooked;<sup>108</sup> the collective memory of villains, however, is significantly less tolerant of ambiguity than is the memory of the heroic. 'The process', say Ducharme and Fine, 'is especially visible in the case of a prominent figure who has had a seemingly virtuous career prior to his or her villainy, where the moral heroic aspect of the self must be discarded' (1995:1311). Relatedly, the 'transformation into nonpersonhood' invests the villain's entire reputation in 'a single highly condemned act', an amazing simplification in light of the complexity of any (and every) life history. This 'essentialisation' — the reduction of a complex biographical narrative into one simple narrative that portrays the life of the person in black and white (or just black) terms — effaces the person 'so that all that remains from the public's perspective is the evil core. "Nonpersonhood" describes, not the erasure of the *whole* person, but the denial of the virtuous aspects of self in the villain's commemoration' (1995:1311–1312; original italics; cf. pp. 1323–1324).

Turning back to the question of ambiguous reputations, if heroic figures tend toward having ambiguous aspects of their lives dampened, and ambiguity in the memory of villainous figures is effaced altogether, then what of persons whose lives embody ambiguity itself? Remembered failures are not, strictly speaking, actually installed in collective memory. Once again, the *collective memory* appears more as *collective forgetting*, whereby

the person fades into the background in the face of the establishment of the *causes* of that failure. Their remembrance involves how they exemplify those qualities that led to their failure . . . The commemoration of the historical self seems less important than for the great or the evil. Thus, a two-step process emerges: to define the figure as a failure and to define the 'lessons' of that failure (Fine 1996:1162; original italics).

Thus a measure of anonymity unknown in the commemoration of the consensually great or evil exists in the memory of the incompetent. In the process of the first step — defining the figure as

---

<sup>106</sup> In connection with their analysis of the traitorous reputation of Benedict Arnold, Ducharme and Fine unpack these 'two sets of evidence . . . produced by those involved in the degradation process': 'First, the process of applying and solidifying the pivotal identity of "traitor" is enhanced by the reconstruction of the offender's biography, such that events once seen as either virtuous, unremarkable, or irrelevant are reinterpreted and reclassified as confirmation of the deviant identity. . . . Second, the underlying motives for the actor's offense are sought, assessed, and ascribed. These include the offender's accounts of his actions, as well as others' imputations of motive' (1995:1316).

<sup>107</sup> Cf. §7.4., below

<sup>108</sup> Though cf. Schwartz 1991:227–228; 2000:77–89 for examples where changing social dynamics motivated people to find 'the dirt' in the lives of the people society looked up to.

a failure — all motivation to search out and inscribe in public discourse the contours and milestones of the individual's life disappears. In the second step the group tries to figure out how to avoid the problems that befell what's-his-name.

The process of defining appropriate lessons from the life of the failure is particularly important for this project. Though the life of any historical figure comprises complexities that can 'authentically' support multiple, even contradictory, lessons, the determination of which lessons to draw from a person's life reveals most clearly a group's present circumstances, concerns, and needs.<sup>109</sup> As the historical figure behind the mediocre reputation fades into history, the lessons drawn from their life remain and become attached to other figures perceived to embody similar lessons. Sometimes, however, people for whom reputations of failure or incompetence at first seemed likely shake off the accompanying anonymity and are remembered in their own right. It is to this phenomenon that we will now turn.

### **3.4.c.ii. Remembering and Forgetting: Re-creating Heroes**

Our final question regarding difficult pasts is, How can difficult pasts sometimes achieve widespread consensus and become dominant historical images? Certainly we must first affirm that such a transition is not only possible, but also easy enough to document empirically. The point already made, that Masada was a forgotten symbol in the collective memory of Orthodox Judaism for nearly two millennia before rising to prominence in Israeli national consciousness, attests to the power that difficult pasts can come to wield when they do become dominant symbols.<sup>110</sup> The rise of Lincoln's reputation at the turn of the twentieth century, briefly noted above, would be another example of a difficult past coming to a position of dominance and receiving widespread acceptance.

Schwartz's analyses (1982; 2000), as well as Ben-Yehuda's (1995), root the transition from difficulty to dominance in changes in society and the cultural logic by which society understands and talks about its past and its identity and needs in the present. Though Fine emphasises 'political strategies and discursive practices', instead of social change, in the aligning of 'objective factors' with the present (1996:1167; cf. 1182, fn 26), the cases of Lincoln and Masada suggest that these strategies and practices are insufficient — but not inappropriate — for understanding how difficult pasts come to achieve consensus. Changes in cultural logic may account for the widespread acceptance of a formerly difficult past. Discourse that formerly jarred with the

---

<sup>109</sup> Certainly some aspects of a person's life are especially salient and thrust themselves onto society as the lessons that *ought* to be learned. In the memory of the mediocre, however, this seems less frequent than in the memory of the truly great (or truly evil). When society remembers people and events for whom there do not appear to be any compelling reasons for commemoration, the motivations — as well as the contents — of those memories seem especially, though still not exclusively, located in the present.

<sup>110</sup> We should point out that the motivation for Ben-Yehuda's study of 'myth-making in Israel' lay precisely in the tension between Masada as a dominant symbol and the only emic discussion of the events surrounding Masada (Josephus, *War* 7.275–406). This tension was only made apparent when the historical 'facts' underpinning Masada's use as a national symbol were questioned by an 'outsider' whose attachment to the myth/symbol was not as psychologically or socially consequential (1995:3–7).

dominant cultural logic becomes less discordant as that logic changes through time. Social change, however, may also (and usually does) provide the motivation for changes in reputational discourse, as the rise and prominence of images of Lincoln the folk hero and Lincoln the epic hero attest.<sup>111</sup>

#### 3.4.d. Reputation and Social Cohesion

One final point about reputational entrepreneurs and their constructive efforts. Reputations are symbolic; they mediate between past and present as they frame and programme behaviour and circumstances in the present via the images they sustain. Reputations, like commemorative ceremonies that exalt and honour important events in the past, are therefore multivalent. They mean different things within different narratives to different people. As such, reputations function like ‘umbrellas’ under which different perspectives, attitudes, and values are aggregated without necessarily being integrated. Nevertheless, such symbolic structures encourage and actualise social cohesion without mitigating the diversity and divergence of opinion that lies beneath the surface.

Schwartz rejects the assumption that ‘the most impressive rites are dedicated to the people whom society uniformly reveres’. Instead, ‘lack of such consensus . . . reveals a loose connection between belief and ritual’ (2000:63). Schwartz, mediating between Kertzer (1988) and Durkheim (1915), argues that ritual does not necessarily create social cohesion by ‘reinforcing shared values’, but rather that the power of ritual is to produce communal solidarity in the absence of a consensus about what that ritual means. Nevertheless, ‘Controversial figures . . . promote solidarity only on condition that they represent noncontroversial realities whose sacredness all recognize, ultimate realities on which a fundamental consensus rests’ (Schwartz 2000:64).<sup>112</sup> The examples of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and President Harding suggest that historical reputations also promote social solidarity without necessarily forging consensus on what the commemorated symbol means.<sup>113</sup> Like rituals, however, historical reputations have to

---

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Schwartz 2000:143–187, 224–255. Ducharme and Fine also note the interplay between discursive practices and social change, pointing out that the same society may exhibit different levels of tolerance for deviant behaviour within their ranks, depending upon (among other things) the presence or absence of external threats (1995:1310).

<sup>112</sup> This not only obtains in the case of Lincoln’s funerary commemoration but also in the ‘meaning’ of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial: ‘The Memorial’s contradictions not only betray the state’s inability to effect a uniform interpretation of the past; they also affirm the nation as a reality whose salience transcends the state’ (Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1997:407). Schwartz concludes: ‘Durkheim was wrong, then, to overlook the many ways in which rituals produce solidarity without consensus, just as Kertzer observed; but so far as the ritual support of ultimate realities is concerned . . . Durkheim was right’ (2000:64).

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991; Fine 1996. Supporters of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial were drawn from the ranks of both anti-war protesters from the 1960s and governmental interests who wanted to commemorate American glory through the construction of another war memorial. ‘Recreating the context and process out of which the Vietnam Veterans Memorial developed, we came to see it not as a monument that ignores political meanings, but as a kind of *coincidentia oppositorum* — an agency that brings these opposed meanings together without resolving them’ (Pacifici-Wagner and Schwartz 1991:392). Similarly, Harding’s reputation was accepted and propagated by his political allies as well as his adversaries, though for very different reasons (Fine 1996:1182).



maintain some link to ultimate values or beliefs for which consensus can be achieved, even if, as in the case of Harding's reputation, the value being maintained is political expediency.

### 3.5. Concluding Remarks

Three foci have structured our discussion of social memory: (a) the interpenetration of the social and the individual in matters of identity and memory, (b) the interpenetration of the past and the present in matters of reconstructing and reexpressing the past in the present, and (c) dynamics of the social construction and utilisation of historical reputations, which is actually a specific instance of (b), above. However, the issues discussed under the heading of each foci exhibited a significant level of cross-contamination, so that, for example, the past's constraining functions in and upon the present required significant attention in two sections.<sup>114</sup> Throughout the discussion the overarching concern has been to explicate the way in which social memory research over the last two decades has problematised and explored the way memory functions in re(-)presenting the past. As Kirk and Thatcher (2005a) take pains to demonstrate, Jesus research has seriously underestimated, and marginalised, memory as an analytical category useful for exploring the 'historical Jesus' (and other related topics).

We have not yet arrived at the point where we can approach the memorial artefacts of the early communities of Jesus' followers with the tools and perspectives supplied by social memory research. While we have a more complicated and sophisticated appreciation for the phenomenon of memory — what it is, how it works, and why — we have not yet adequately explored the nature of the evidence before us: the extant gospel texts. How were these texts produced? How were they received? What contexts functioned most determinatively as interpretative frames for the traditions contained in them? How did they function within their communal contexts, whether as material or traditional artefacts, as cultural or polemical resources, etc.? While these issues are indeed very complicated, one consensually admitted fact provides an entry point from which we can begin to explore them: the Jesus tradition, with whatever relation to the extant texts, was originally *oral* tradition.

The study of oral tradition, and especially folklore studies, has had a demonstrably more significant impact on New Testament studies than has social memory theory, especially in gospels and Jesus research. Form criticism, for example, developed as a particular response to the oral nature of the early Jesus tradition. Though form-critical assumptions have come under severe fire in recent decades, research into the functions and dynamics of oral tradition have not been static during the last eighty years. Therefore, the next chapter explores some of the recent developments of oral traditional research and provides some discussion of the related field of oral historical research, a field which has itself had an impact on Jesus research in Byrskog's sig-

---

<sup>114</sup> Cf. §§3.3.b. and 3.4.b.i., above.

nificant monograph, *Story as History — History as Story* (2000).<sup>115</sup> Once we have examined the dynamics of oral tradition and oral history and attempted to distil their implications for our approach to and apprehension of the written gospels, we will turn to those texts, and specifically to their depiction of Jesus' statements regarding his healings/exorcisms and their significance (cf. Part III).

---

<sup>115</sup> To anticipate one of the features of the next chapter's discussion, the fields of oral traditional and oral historical research, here categorized as 'related', are largely unaware (or, at least, largely non-recognisant) of each other. As the work of some anthropologists have shown (for example, Tonkin 1982; 1990; 1992; Vansina 1985) the distinction between 'tradition' and 'history' is not as forthcoming as many analyses assume (cf. Bauckham 2006, who is heavily influenced by Vansina's schema).

## Chapter 4 Performance, Structure, Meaning, Text

Where literacy is limited, the telling of a story is mediated to those who cannot easily read by those who can. The reported story is a base for such storytelling. Where the length of a text is limited, the telling of a story will necessarily be expanded beyond the text on which it is based.

Antony F. Campbell,  
*'The Storyteller's Role'*, 429

As an artistic matter, we can't hope to read ancient, medieval, and other manuscript-based but oral-connected poetry without considering its true dynamics. Much is at stake here.

John Miles Foley,  
*How to Read an Oral Poem*, 46

### 4.1. Introduction: Oral Traditional and New Testament Research

As we have seen, memory is a complex phenomenon (or range of phenomena) rooted in but not limited to psychological processes within an individual. As we turn our attention to concepts whose importance for biblical research has been waxing for over two decades (especially 'orality', 'literacy', 'performance', and 'text'), we will see that each of these is likewise complex. Unlike social memory research, New Testament scholarship has taken some account of 'orality studies'. The influence of oral traditional research on our field has both positive and negative consequences. Positively, many of the concepts and questions discussed in this chapter will be familiar to New Testament critics. Negatively, considerable confusion attaches to many of the central concerns facing us, not least the nature of 'orality' and its significance for exegesis and historical reconstruction. The current chapter attempts to cut through this confusion and offer a reading programme that nuances contemporary critical reception of the gospels.<sup>1</sup>

### 4.2. Reading, Writing, Speaking

Memory will continue to serve an important analytical function in our discussion of oral tradition and history. Beyond memory, however, questions arise about how oral messages (traditional, autobiographical, and so on) function in society. To complicate matters further, oral messages rarely, if ever, operate without relation to written texts and the social functions of literacy (except, perhaps, in pre-literate societies).<sup>2</sup> The relationship between the spoken and written word has been at the centre of discussions of oral tradition for over three decades, though scholars have not yet developed a generally accepted theory of orality, literacy, and the integration of

---

<sup>1</sup> In Part III this programme will be applied to sayings traditions centred on Jesus' healing and exorcistic activities.

<sup>2</sup> Ong (e.g., 1982:6) refers to pre-literate groups as 'primary oral cultures', which he distinguishes from 'secondary oral cultures' (the electronic 'orality' of radio, television, etc.) and 'residual orality'.

the two in society.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps, then, we ought to begin by surveying how recent work on written and oral verbal art have understood some of the key issues involved.

#### 4.2.a. Problems of 'Literacy' and 'Orality'

The use of 'literacy' to attempt to describe a specific set of phenomena or skills (or, worse, one specific phenomenon or skill) has been notoriously difficult.<sup>4</sup> Rosalind Thomas notes an 'extraordinarily sophisticated range of literary and intellectual activity' in Greek society over a span of centuries and demonstrates that written and oral phenomena were never exclusive categories, even through the second century CE. Even the 'highly literate' had their doubts about written texts, and most of public life, including the experience of the written word, was lived orally.<sup>5</sup> 'Whether or not a written text existed, oral transmission, performance, and discourse were predominant. The divisions were drawn along very different lines from ours' (1992:4).<sup>6</sup> As a result, 'The tendency to see a society (or individual) as either literate or oral is over-simple and misleading. The habits of relying on oral communication (or orality) and literacy are not mutually exclusive (even though literacy and illiteracy are). . . . the evidence for Greece shows *both* a sophisticated and extensive use of writing in some spheres *and* what is to us an amazing dominance of the spoken word' (1992:4; original italics).<sup>7</sup> Not only are 'literacy' and 'illiteracy' graded phenomena that elude universal assessment, but, even if we could 'count heads' and isolate a specific percentage of the population as 'functionally literate' (a non-specific term), we would still have not determined anything probative about the uses and effects of writing upon a society.<sup>8</sup> Instead of attempting to calculate literacy levels in ancient Greek society, Thomas follows Paul Saenger's distinction between 'phonetic literacy' and 'comprehension liter-

---

<sup>3</sup> The term 'orality' is unfortunate, if primarily because it is so widespread (even the area of inquiry with which we are concerned is frequently labelled 'orality studies') and yet difficult to define. In general, 'orality' is frequently understood as the opposite of 'literacy'. But both terms refer to realities that are so conceptually broad and diverse that the labels signify too much, and therefore signify anything at all only vaguely and with difficulty. We will, therefore, restrict as much as possible the use of 'orality'; 'literacy' will require definition in the contexts in which it appears. Cf. the discussions in Thomas 1989:9; 1992:6–8; Tonkin: 1992:14. Foley (esp. 1995a) rarely refers to 'orality' in his analyses.

<sup>4</sup> Stock refers to 'the imprecision of the idea of literacy' (1983:7). Similarly, 'Literacy is a label which covers many different skills and kinds of use. There are those who can read but not write, or are able to recognise road signs but not to read shop names; and those who can manage their literate needs quite well, but would be defeated by the lexicon and syntax of most academic books. The line is not so easy to draw between "able to read" and "able to understand" — it is increasingly being recognised that reading and writing are cognitively complex practices' (Tonkin 1992:13). If any widespread agreement exists, it is that we cannot subsume both reading and writing under a single rubric if we hope to come to any real understanding of either skill-set. Harris observes that some historians 'have defined literacy by reference to reading ability, which is normally more widespread, and sometimes has been much more widespread, than the ability to write' (1989:4).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. also Achtemeier 1990 and the literature cited there.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. also the discussion in Shiner (2003:14–16) regarding 'the preference for oral delivery' in 'the ancient Mediterranean world'.

<sup>7</sup> Foley (2002) makes the same point; for example: 'A given culture may use literacy for some of its verbal transactions and not for others . . . the very same individual may depend upon oral tradition for certain activities but on texts for others' (2002:68).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Foley 2002:69.

acy' (1992:9).<sup>9</sup> Who (or how many people) can read matters less than what kind of access to written traditions and texts people have.

Thomas's subsequent conclusions about the distribution of literacy skills in ancient Greece are remarkably optimistic (which is not to say unrealistic).<sup>10</sup> Even so, she notes that the skill-sets comprising 'literacy' were not evenly distributed across social groups; 'the written texts of poetry and literary prose had a reading audience confined to the highly educated and wealthy elite, and their secretaries' (1992:11). In antiquity, 'literacy', in a sense approaching modern Western notions of literacy, never penetrated below the level of social élites and those who served them. Nevertheless, the concept of 'phonetic literacy' does suggest that access to written texts, especially texts not intended for circulation amongst the social élites, extended to a more significant percentage of the population, a point that will be reinforced shortly.<sup>11</sup>

If 'literacy' is a difficult concept to nail down, 'orality' is likewise, if not more, problematic.<sup>12</sup> Scholars coined the term to avoid the value-loaded connotations of literacy's usual opposite: illiteracy.<sup>13</sup> Theoretically, "orality" should strictly mean the habit of relying entirely on oral communication rather than written. . . . [that is,] communication by word of mouth alone' (Thomas 1992:6).<sup>14</sup> But recent research suggests that oral patterns of thought and expression have already infused the creation, transmission, and reception of written texts in most, if not all, cultures that utilise writing.<sup>15</sup> Such research rarely confines itself to media of expression;<sup>16</sup>

<sup>9</sup> 'Phonetic literacy' refers to 'the ability to "decode texts syllable by syllable and to pronounce them orally", close to oral rote memorization', whilst 'comprehension literacy' is "the ability to decode a text silently, word by word" and understand it fully' (1992:9, quoting Saenger). Phonetic and comprehension literacy should not be reified into distinct categories; neither should they be thought to exhaust the gradations of literacy in any society. Thomas is careful to avoid both of these errors throughout *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece*. Inasmuch as 'comprehension literacy' presumes the ability to read silently, its applicability to ancient literacy is questionable, though the stress here is on the other two elements of Thomas's discussion (viz., 'word by word' and 'understand it fully'). See Achtemeier 1990; but contrast Fusi 2003:90–126; Shiner 2003:14.

<sup>10</sup> 'The ability to read or write very simple messages, often in capitals, was probably not rare; and in cities like Athens where there was a profusion of democratic documents, most citizens had some basic ability and perhaps 'phonetic literacy' was pretty widespread' (Thomas 1992:11).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. §4.2.b.i., below.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Foley (1995b:170): 'Orality alone is a "distinction" badly in need of deconstruction, a typology that unfairly homogenizes much more than it can hope to distinguish; it is by itself a false and misleading category'.

<sup>13</sup> 'Illiteracy' has continued to be a meaningful category, perhaps even *because* it is differentiated from orality: the former suggests an inability to read and/or write, the latter refers to alternate modes of expression. Similarly, 'non-literate' and 'pre-literate' suggest further nuancing in reference to an individual's or society's possession of writing as a technology of communication, though scholars have had a more difficult time differentiating between non- or pre-literate societies and so-called oral societies.

<sup>14</sup> In fact, Martin Jaffee defines 'oral-literary tradition' as 'those verbal products of a culture which have pretensions beyond everyday speech' (2001:7–8), by which he means any oral message other than 'everyday speech'.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. the discussions of 'oral-derived texts' in Foley's analyses (esp. 1991; 1995a), as well as the essays in Bakker and Kahane 1997b. Even Foley, whose interest is precisely in the distinctive ways that oral and oral-derived works of verbal art generate meaning *vis-à-vis* written verbal art, insists upon a strong link between the two: 'Oral and written poetry are certainly alike in some situations. Indeed, how else could it be? . . . There remains a genetic relationship between the kinds of verbal art we find in texts and those we encounter in performance. Given this reality, it would be foolish to argue against broad

rather, it typically extends to matters of composition, communication, transmission, and even to social patterns that structure individual thought.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, we find compelling reasons to demur at the concept of an 'oral mentality', and especially at the hopelessly vague 'oral culture', both of which continue to be influential within New Testament studies.

Research into oral tradition and its function within wider cultural patterns, including the use of written texts, has pointed out for well over a decade the blunt force trauma our analyses suffer when we wield the imprecise concept of 'oral mentality' against them.<sup>18</sup> Critics have begun to recognise that technologies of communication — and, simultaneously, of thought — are infused with structuring *potential*,<sup>19</sup> and that individuals and societies can realise this potential in numerous and unpredictable ways.<sup>20</sup> Anthropological fieldwork has documented numerous and diverse uses for which a society may utilise technologies of reading and writing, and many of these have little to do with the predominate Western conception of 'literacy'.<sup>21</sup> Likewise, contemporary experience even in Western societies debunks the theory of literacy's inevitable and triumphant ascendance at the expense of oral verbal art.<sup>22</sup>

Given the expansive currency theories of literacy's disruptive cognitional effects have enjoyed in the latter half of the twentieth century, we should realise that current research has

similarities between two kinds of poetry *that are historically and genetically related*' (2002:37–38; emphasis added).

<sup>16</sup> Oesterreicher distinguishes between the medium of language (oral or written) and the conception of language (oral or literate), though he also acknowledges the nebulous but necessary 'mixed phenomena, which somehow resist a simple oral/literate classification' in his discussion of types of orality in text (1997:192). Thus, while the media of language may be dichotomous (and this is still a point of discussion), 'the differences in linguistic conception . . . cover a whole continuous spectrum, ranging from extremely informal oral-type expressions to extremely elaborate, formal literate-type language. Between these two poles, innumerable intermediate degrees of linguistic conception are possible. That is to say, the informal-formal distinction can be considered as no more than a first step in the right direction' (1997:192–193).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. the works of Walter J. Ong and those influenced by him (viz., Achtemeier 1990; J. Dewey 1995; Kelber 1983; 1987b; 1995; *inter alios*). As an example of the perspective being argued against, Ong proposes basic distinctions between oral and literate ways of thinking, referring to the 'psychodynamics of . . . primary oral cultures', and argues that literate patterns invariably come to dominate oral ones (though this domination is neither instant nor total). Societies in which this domination is underway are 'residually oral cultures', suggesting that patterns of orality 'hold out' in the face of the onslaught of literacy: 'the thought forms of primary orality variously assert themselves *with ever-diminishing force* as the technology of writing, later reinforced and transformed by print, is interiorized in the psyche' (Ong 1983:xiii–xiv; emphasis added).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. the essays in Bowman and Woolf 1994a, esp. Bowman and Woolf 1994b.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Finnegan (1989:122): Differing communication technologies 'can offer *opportunities* (both good and bad), ones which people may or may not choose to follow up' (original italics). Finnegan refers to the 'potential' of new communication media at 1989:123.

<sup>20</sup> E.g., Bäuml provides a more nuanced perspective than either Kelber or Ong: 'Though I do not necessarily subscribe to a theory of two different "mentalities," one "oral" and one "literate," I do contend that the tools with which one thinks affect one's thinking, that the way in which one thinks has its social consequences, and that therefore control of the tools of thought is of the utmost importance for the maintenance of power' (1997:37). Though written texts and literacy are never merely tools of hegemonic posturing, Bäuml's point is well taken. Cf. also Ford 1997:107.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Foley 2002:58–78.

<sup>22</sup> As an example of the robustness of oral verbal art in twenty-first century American society, see the discussions of slam poetry found throughout Foley 2002, esp. chapters 4 and 7 (= the Fourth Word and the Seventh Word).

pursued a greater sensitivity to the diverse and multifaceted phenomena of verbal art exhibited globally. Consequently, recent analyses have ‘done more to dispel fictions than to establish general insights or principles’ (Bowman and Woolf 1994b:2–3); we now know more about what literacy *does not* do than what it does.<sup>23</sup> Not that scholars have abandoned the quest for understanding the general, even universal, qualities of literacy *vis-à-vis* oral expression in favour of particularist research; rather, scholars have reconceptualised the question of literacy’s generalities/universalities.<sup>24</sup> While we can only understand the development, proliferation, and effects of literacy as cultural phenomena within the constraints of specific cultural systems, ‘one does not have to believe in technological determinism . . . to believe that some innovations might make a difference or even that the difference made by particular innovations might not be completely unpredictable’ (Bowman and Woolf 1994b:4). Cultural dynamics may determine literacy’s consequences, but dynamics of literacy likewise constrain the uses to which a cultural system may put written texts.<sup>25</sup>

Brian Stock’s distinction between ‘literacy’ and ‘textuality’ provides an important aspect of the perspectival shift enacted by approaching the advent of written communicative technologies as *a* (rather than *the*) factor of cognitive social structure:

Literacy is not textuality. One can be literate without the overt use of texts, and *one can use texts extensively without evidencing genuine literacy*. In fact, the assumptions shared by those who can read and write often render the actual presence of a text superfluous. And, if common agreement obviates the need for texts, disagreement or misunderstanding can make them indispensable. Texts, so utilized, may be symptomatic of the need for explanation and interpretation, even at times of functional illiteracy. (Stock 1983:7; emphasis added)

Though New Testament research has tended to hold up the surprisingly low levels of literacy in the ancient world (particularly Palestine and Galilee), Foley has rightly pointed out that, ‘given [the diversity of the phenomena we call “literacy”], brute measures like percentage literacy or the mere existence of some sort of writing must not lead us down the garden path of assimilating

---

<sup>23</sup> Bowman and Woolf provide a brief summary of recent conclusions about literacy, all of which form what they call the ‘negative credo’ of literacy studies: ‘Literacy is not a single phenomenon but a highly variable package of skills in using texts: it may or may not include writing as well as reading and is generally geared only to particular genres of texts, particular registers of language and often to only some of the languages used within multilingual societies. Moreover, literacy does not operate as an autonomous force in history, whether for change, progress and emancipation or for repression. Literacy does not of itself promote economic growth, rationality or social success. Literates do not necessarily behave or think differently from illiterates, and no Great Divide separates societies with writing from those without it. The invention of writing did not promote a social or intellectual revolution, and reports of the death of orality have been exaggerated’ (1994b:3). Similarly, Finnegan 1990:144–145.

<sup>24</sup> As an example: ‘It may seem particularly tempting, for instance, to discern analogies between medieval and classical philology. Both disciplines analyze cultures with historically increasing literacy. However . . . our notion of “transition from orality to literacy” needs a thorough reconsideration for each and every culture and/or period, since the course of such a transition depends on many historically specific intra- as well as extra-medial variables’ (Schaefer 1997:230). Cf. also Olick 2006:8.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Finnegan 1990, which balances an appreciation for the analytical advances opened up by ‘orality’ with a devastating critique of the consequences of reifying (and universalising) ‘orality’.

other cultures' literacies to our own' (2002:69).<sup>26</sup> We require a more precise, culturally specific model of literacy to facilitate our understanding of how written information could be accessed in first-century CE Galilee and Judea. One critical option, which our own conceptions of what 'truly' constitutes 'reading' obscures but which nevertheless merits our consideration, was already mentioned by Stock (1983:7): that illiterate individuals and groups could have robust and compelling access to written traditions.<sup>27</sup>

The notion of an 'oral mentality' or 'oral culture' is rooted in outdated anthropological presuppositions regarding 'the supposed special mentality of non-literate (and "primitive") peoples with their so-called reliance on "tradition" and unchanging norms, and their involvement with magic and religion' (Finnegan 1976:259).<sup>28</sup> Suggestions of a disruption between oral and literate mentalities spring from dynamics inherent within our own literate perspectives that nevertheless depend in important ways upon patterns of oral presentation, performance, and transmission. Evidence gathered from across the world does not require these suggestions (cf. Finnegan 1976:260).<sup>29</sup> If we hope to understand the evidence of the symbiotic relationship between oral and written patterns of communication and expression, we have to avoid idealising so-called oral cultures (primary, residual or otherwise). Societies in which the spoken word was more influential than in modern Western societies were susceptible to similar political and ideological dynamics and forces operative in Western society, though these dynamics and forces found varied expression and development in different cultures.

Thus a social group cannot make whatever it will of literacy, but neither will literacy have inevitable and predetermined consequences. Three common and interrelated implications

---

<sup>26</sup> Cf. also Fusi 2003:71–81; e.g., 'Harris' [*sic*] decision to use percentages forces him to reduce the mass of data . . . to a mere technical account, where "literate" and "illiterate" become like pebbles to be placed on one of the two plates of a balance, just to see which one of the two weighs more' (2003:75).

<sup>27</sup> Consider the following, which is axiomatic for Kelber (1983:xv): 'Human consciousness is structured into thought by available forms of communication. Thinking is indebted to the medium through which knowledge is acquired.' In light of recent research and our current discussion, this is in need of qualification: Thinking is indebted to the medium through which knowledge is acquired, but the uses to which a group puts innovative communicative technologies are themselves indebted to pre-existing cultural patterns (including cognitive cultural patterns) through which any potentials afforded by new communicative media are recognised and actualised (cf. Thomas 1992:63). In other words, factors other than communicative technologies impinge upon *how* 'human consciousness is structured into thought' by those technologies (cf. Finnegan 1989:116–17).

<sup>28</sup> Finnegan goes on to caution oral-formulaic scholars: 'Since some of the speculation about "the oral mind" may perhaps appear to derive some support from the earlier notion about "primitive mentality," it is worth stressing that this idea has been under heavy fire for some time in modern anthropology and is at best a highly controversial notion' (1976:259; cf. also Finnegan 1990). Abraham's comments (1985:555–556, cited in Finnegan 1989:115), are poignant: 'Oral peoples are either regarded as backward and uncivilized . . . or they are innocent prelapsarians who have not yet entered into the alienating process of capitalistic production and exchange'.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas, who builds approvingly upon Finnegan's work, suggests that 'orality is often idealized, invested with the romantic and nostalgic ideas connected with folklore, folk culture, and folk tradition, or the "noble savage". "Oral culture" is often used interchangeably with folklore, folklore is seen as "oral tradition", and with little critical examination, but much idealism, orality and "oral societies" take on the romantic and exaggerated attributes of folk culture. In other words they become more than merely descriptive tools and start to imply a whole mentality or world view *which is partly born of a reaction to the modern world*' (1992:6–7; emphasis added).



of the rise and proliferation of written texts emerge as relevant for our purposes: (a) written texts provide an impetus for social restructuring and reorganisation around specific textual and interpretative traditions; (b) written texts attain symbolic value and perform 'non-literate' functions in connection with but not limited to their communicative function; and (c) written texts affect societal power relations.<sup>30</sup> We cannot reduce writing to frozen speech; it does not merely displace or replace orality, and it is not simply 'in service of' orality.<sup>31</sup> Literacy, as one social factor, interacts with other social factors (including patterns of oral expression) to organise human experience and behaviour and to structure social relationships in culturally specific ways. Social groups already organised their experience and behaviour and structured power relations prior to the advent of writing. The 'consequences' of literacy, therefore, might not be as socially transformative as we often assume: 'Writing might *preserve* and perhaps *exaggerate* earlier customs' (Thomas 1992:63; emphases added).<sup>32</sup> The present task, however, is to turn to the three 'implications of literacy' identified immediately above.

#### 4.2.b. The Social Functions of Literacy

If questions about the dispersion of the skill-sets usually subsumed under 'literacy' are not the most pressing problems facing us, and if the advent of literacy does not inevitably result in the disruption of oral patterns of thought, behaviour, and communication, then how should we proceed? Recent research has turned its attention away from pursuing generalisable, universal 'consequences of literacy' to focus on specific, culturally bounded dynamics of literacy and orality within a particular society.<sup>33</sup> Much of this research has maintained its comparative perspective, but the particularist bent of recent work has resulted in paying more careful attention

---

<sup>30</sup> Given the current climate of research and the simplistic conceptualisations of power and power relations that characterise most historical research, let us say at the outset: literacy does not *either* liberate *or* oppress. Rather, the effect of literacy on power relations is a complex dynamic of liberation and oppression which can both reinforce and restructure power relationships. Cf. §4.2.b.iii., below.

<sup>31</sup> *Contra* Kelber 1983; J. Dewey 1995. Though writing can be any of these things, it is these reductionist tendencies that we are trying to avoid. Thomas is helpful here: "To a large extent archaic Greek writing does seem to be at the service of speech, repeating verse, enabling the objects to "speak" as if they were animate, preserving and reinforcing the pre-literate habits of the society, extending and deepening the customs of poetic and visual memorials. Yet many of the casual graffiti seem to bear a rather different relation to speech with their dedicatory abecedaria, single letters, personal names, and the writers of these seem set on exploring a quite different range of possibilities offered by the written word' (1992:65).

<sup>32</sup> Plato's high literary dialogues are themselves 'modelled quite directly upon oral conversation or oral narrative' (Tarrant 1996:132), forms which certainly existed before and were transmitted by Plato's (written) texts. Additionally, in the introduction to the *Theaetetus*, Plato is able to proffer the image of Euclides and Terpsion *hearing* the Socratic drama as it was reenacted by a slave; thus 'Plato was able to envisage the author of such a drama being there to enjoy the reading rather than reading himself, experiencing the effect that the dialogue has on the listener' (1996:133). If it was possible in ancient Greece to imagine an author experiencing his text in the role of an audience member, then it seems all the more reasonable to assume that the author, in the process of creating a text, was able to imagine the range of possible reactions of the audience to a particular turn of phrase or mode of expression (*pace* Kelber: 'Writing enables one to produce language . . . without a direct commitment to audiences'; 1983:109). It is difficult to imagine with Kelber an author who writes without some formative, even determinative, notion of an audience, indeed, whose experience as part of an audience is not heavily influential upon his (or her) written text.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Finnegan 1990:140–145.

to the specific evidence generated from individual cultures. Within this cross-disciplinary perspective, our three dynamics (written texts as social identity, cultural symbol, and locus of power) have received considerable attention.

#### 4.2.b.i. Written Texts as Loci of Social Identification

The construction and maintenance of group identity comprises an important dynamic of the interface between oral and written modes of communication. Texts (the textually codified messages, the physicality of textual artefacts, and the oral and written discourse enveloping textual traditions) perform social functions in social contexts that transcend the actual signs inscribed upon parchment or papyrus or stone (L. Alexander 1998b:398–399). Texts mediate meaning and orientation, ordering human experience according to socially meaningful patterns and providing expectations for experience and behaviour. But the polysemy of texts, prominent in postmodern approaches to reading, also results in the *same* texts mediating differing meanings and orientations to *different* groups. Once written texts began to proliferate in societies theretofore unacquainted with writing, those texts did not efface (immediately or inevitably) their established oral traditions. Rather, ‘oral discourse . . . began to function within a universe of communications governed by texts. On many occasions actual texts were not present, but people often thought or behaved as if they were. Texts thereby emerged as a reference system both for everyday activities and for giving shape to many larger vehicles of explanation’ (Stock 1983:4).

As texts (and their interpretative traditions)<sup>34</sup> ‘emerge as a reference system’ for behaviour and orientation, they become central points round which group identities develop and cohere. Jaffee extends this concept beyond the selection and interpretation of texts to consider the fluidity of handwritten manuscripts. Whilst scribes still copied books by hand, and especially without firm boundaries between texts and their interpretative traditions, ‘the “correct” text of a book was linked to the social boundaries of the community that preserved it. That community would harbour and reproduce its particular manuscript traditions. These could overlap in many ways with the traditions of other communities who happened to have preserved the same book, but there would also be important local differences’ (2001:19).<sup>35</sup> But we are not describing groups in which every member has direct access to the written texts ordering the group’s symbolic universe. The communal function of texts applies to literate and nonliterate members of

---

<sup>34</sup> By ‘interpretative traditions’ I have in mind the same phenomena discussed by Jaffee as ‘text-interpretive traditions’, which he defines as ‘a body of interpretive understandings that arise from multiple performances of a text (written or oral). They come to be so closely associated with public renderings of a text as to constitute its self-evident meaning’ (2001:8). As stated by Jaffee, text-interpretive traditions can be focussed around oral or written traditions. Similarly, text-interpretive traditions can themselves be oral or written, and they can also develop their own interpretive traditions (cf. also Ben-Amos 1999:vii).

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Nickelsburg 2003:9–28 for a careful discussion of the fluidity and stability of manuscripts; the question of ‘canon’ is not restricted to which texts are authoritative but also, in a ‘scribal culture’, which *version* of those texts are authoritative. Importantly, the example of Qumran suggests that a singular social group can retain ‘multiple versions’ of ‘the same’ text (2003:11–12).

society,<sup>36</sup> so long as the values and traditions established by (or merely through) the text are made accessible via channels other than individual silent reading. Recall Stock's distinction, mentioned above, between literacy and textuality; illiterate people can have comparatively robust access to textual traditions and can utilise them to conduct their affairs and pursue their interests.<sup>37</sup>

The gravitation of social groups round authoritative texts that are elevated to positions of social prominence results in what Stock calls 'textual communities' (Stock 1983:88–92). Stock's analysis of Medieval heretical or reform movements concludes that they 'may not have shared profound doctrinal similarities or common social origins, but they demonstrated a parallel use of texts, both to structure the internal behaviour of the groups' members and to provide solidarity against the outside world' (1983:90). Perhaps surprisingly, the essential element in this use of texts 'was not a written version of a text' but rather 'an individual, who, having mastered it, then utilized it for reforming a group's thought and action' (1983:90).<sup>38</sup> The text itself was not necessarily the critical factor but rather the social identity of the group, its ethical demands and patterns of behaviour (including its critique of the larger society), and, frequently, the growing influence of the group as evidenced by its increasing numbers and access to physical and cultural resources (1983:90, 91–92).<sup>39</sup>

#### 4.2.b.ii. Written Texts as Cultural Symbols

Written texts often have a symbolic value other than (but related to) the text's communicative value.<sup>40</sup> A textual community's commitment to its texts often surpasses (or, at least, is adjunct to) its commitment to the written message inscribed upon papyrus and fixes upon the text as a physical object. 'Writing takes on symbolic power in a society when members of that society, literate and non-literate, begin to attribute legal or religious authority to written docu-

<sup>36</sup> We ought also include the range of Harris's 'semi-literate' individuals within society (1989:5).

<sup>37</sup> As regards textually motivated social reorganisation or reinforcement, it is unimportant whether literate members of a group have better (= more accurate) access to the group's textual traditions than illiterate members. What matters is that the group's textual traditions and group members' use of those texts are mutually reinforcing, and that competition or cooperation between groups will take place at the level of textual traditions — both oral and written — rather than at the level of the text (which is not to say that reading the actual text is not a factor in intergroup interaction).

<sup>38</sup> If I understand him correctly, Foley overemphasises the importance of 'an individual' in Stock's model of textual communities (cf. Foley 2006a:69–70). The point — again, if I understand properly — is that written traditions are socially mediated, obviating the need for 'literacy' according to the modern, Western model of an individual, silent reader. Foley, of course, is not unaware of this: 'With medieval manuscripts, the primal act of reading initiated a "trickle-down" dynamics' (2002:70).

<sup>39</sup> Thatcher (1998) analyses Josephus' accounts of Jewish factionalism and the escalation of violence prior to the outbreak of war with Rome in light of Stock's model of textual communities. Considering the dramatic scale and consequences of the Jewish Revolt upon Judean society, the effects of literacy and the development of textual communities can be immensely important for social organisation and behaviour.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas suggests the textual and symbolic uses of written messages were mutually implicating: 'I would not want to deny that the written contents of inscriptions were read if they were needed. But this is not incompatible with their having a monumental and symbolic role as well' (1992:86). Nevertheless, 'a written document may have had an immensely important function even though it was seldom read. Written records may have a significance other than that carried by the written words alone' (1989:38).

ments. Texts can then participate in personal and cultural myths and behavioral patterns, making them ideological reference points' (Thatcher 1998:133).<sup>41</sup> The ancient use of texts was not restricted to modern, 'rational' expectations about how texts function (as objects meant to be read); perhaps just as importantly, people have made 'non-literate' (symbolic) uses of writing.<sup>42</sup> As we saw, texts could establish social identity, a 'non-literate' use of texts that seems familiar even in a postmodern context. Thomas also identifies the symbolic value of texts as monuments that represented *in their material existence* that which was inscribed upon them; such texts 'were often thought of primarily as symbolic memorials of a decision rather than simply documents intended to record important details for administrative purposes' (1992:84–85).<sup>43</sup>

#### 4.2.b.iii. Written Texts as Dynamics of Power Relations

The essays collected in Bowman and Woolf (1994a) explicitly examine the connection between literacy and power in the ancient world; they provide a careful discussion of power that resists descending into a simplistic look at how hegemonic cultural forces use written texts to further their own interests (1994b).<sup>44</sup> We cannot analyse power as a static consideration; it is variable, used for multiple purposes, and operates alongside other cultural dynamics.<sup>45</sup> At a basic level, though, Bowman and Woolf differentiate between two aspects of the connection between literacy and power: power *over* texts and power *exercised by means of* texts (cf. 1994b:6–7). We have already seen that texts do not simply serve cultural centres of power (though they can do that); texts also influence the construction of power relations. Power and literacy are mutually affective.<sup>46</sup> Thomas (1994) demonstrates that political uses of literacy can liberate or oppress and may

---

<sup>41</sup> Thatcher goes on to illustrate this point with reference to Josephus (*War* 2.228–231; *Apion* 1.42–43; Thatcher 1998:134); Goodman (1994:100) makes the same point. Thomas locates the symbolic uses of texts 'between "literate" and "oral"' and analyses the evidence for 'non-documentary' uses of writing in ancient and classical Greece, noting first of all that such use is not restricted to 'the unavoidable region of magic' (1992:74). Harris mentions the magical use of writing, but suggests that scholars are only too ready to identify extra-textual uses of writing in ancient Greece and Rome as magic; 'It would be far-fetched to see anything magical in most uses of writing' (1989:29). Thomas's examination of public inscriptions, boundary and debt markers, and dedicatory inscriptions is less concerned to label these phenomena 'magical or quasi-magical' than to point out other extra-textual functions written messages could perform.

<sup>42</sup> Ford, for example, argues that archaic (pre-Herodotean) references to Homer did not merely insert the text's contents into a new discourse; those who cited Homer have made the 'short step from quoting Homer as a source of wisdom or guide to right behavior to quoting him as a badge of the speaker's education and values' (1997:98; cf. 95–98).

<sup>43</sup> Cf. also Thomas's larger discussion of texts' symbolic value, for example, as debt markers (1992:74–100).

<sup>44</sup> Cf. the discussion of the social construction of power, §3.3.a., above, as well as Finnegan 1990:144–145.

<sup>45</sup> 'The kinds of power constructed varied widely from empires to groups united by a common set of texts . . . No single, all-sufficient concept of the nature and application of "power" has been adopted for this collection, and in the treatments of various topics that follow, examples of the political and social, religious and cultural, psychological and physical aspects of power recur, in various combinations and with differing weight [*sic*] of emphasis' (Bowman and Woolf 1994b:2, 6).

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Bowman and Woolf 1994b:9; Lane Fox 1994.

even do both in the same context.<sup>47</sup> Thomas thus provides an important corrective to studies that emphasise the power dynamics of literacy and written texts.<sup>48</sup> For example, J. Dewey refers to the power dynamics of publicly inscribing laws in a Roman context. Her analysis considers public inscriptions as a means ‘to convey the prestige and power of the law [rather] than to communicate the content to the ruled. They were symbols of the power and authority of Rome’ (1995:41). Thomas’s analysis of classical Greece raises the question of whether public inscriptions in the Roman empire were ever *only* symbols of power and authority.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, when Thomas does turn her attention westward, the contrast between Greece and Rome ‘is striking. When Virgil described his idealised image of the countryside, one of its virtues was precisely that it was free of the *populi tabularia*, the public archives. The image of the urban centre as *burdened* with records — or even inscriptions — seems peculiarly Roman’ (1994:35; emphasis added). Thus public inscriptions may have *hindered* rather than served the exercise of centralised power! We require, then, more precise language which recognises that, though ‘literacy and power often seem to be intimately linked . . . both are remarkably slippery concepts’ (1994:33).<sup>50</sup>

Dewey’s conclusions about texts in early Christianity present further problems: ‘While texts were produced that later became very important within Christianity *as texts*, these texts began as aids to orality, and seemingly had little importance in themselves’ (J. Dewey 1995:51; original italics). We can affirm her emphasis upon the connections and interdependence of written texts and oral performances in early Christianity. Early Christian communities valued written texts for the traditions they codified rather than *as texts*.<sup>51</sup> Early Christian texts, however, transcended their function ‘in the service of oral communication’; they facilitated communica-

---

<sup>47</sup> In classical Athens, for example, written texts were publicly visible and made the decisions of the Assembly publicly accessible. At the same time, as noted above, the Assembly’s authority was legitimated by its use of writing and public inscriptions, and the presence of inscriptions reinforced the authority of the Assembly’s decisions (power exercised *by means of* texts). Additionally, the Assembly had control over what was to be inscribed (power *over* texts). ‘The Greek city harnessed the written word to impress its authority and record its laws . . . But this was done almost exclusively through the public inscription . . . rather than hidden documents’ (1994:40).

<sup>48</sup> Cf., for example, J. Dewey 1995; Hearon 2006:18–20.

<sup>49</sup> The concepts of ‘power’ and ‘interest’ are clearly related (cf. the discussions of ‘interest’ in Chapter 3, above), and both are subject to cultural and discursive forces. As Schudson has said, ‘The needs or interests of an audience are socially and culturally constituted. What is “resonant” is not a matter of how “culture” connects to individual “interests” but a matter of how culture connects to interests that are themselves constituted in a cultural frame’ (1989a:169).

<sup>50</sup> Thomas raises important questions that go overlooked in Dewey’s analysis: ‘Is literacy an enabling skill, or are its implications largely oppressive? Power for whom, and what kind of power (practical, symbolic, bureaucratic)?’ (Thomas 1994:33). Our answers to these questions are impacted by a number of observations such as: ‘Literacy is a variable, its implications constrained or enhanced by the context in which it is found. One finds conflicting reactions to the written word: it may open up possibilities through education, or serve only to reinforce the dominance of certain social groups. Especially important for the relationship between literacy and power is the distinction between societies in which writing exists (but is perhaps used only by scribes) and societies in which many individuals need to be able to read and/or write for themselves’ (1994:33). Inasmuch as the gospels, then, record ‘Little Tradition’ (cf. §5.3.a., below; Kirk 2006), we must entertain the possibility that they, as texts, functioned at least as much to counteract socially and economically dominant forces as to undergird them.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. §§2.3.b. and 4.3.c.

tion within the wider Mediterranean basin,<sup>52</sup> took advantage of the rhetorical prestige of written texts,<sup>53</sup> and so on. Dewey imagines a historically simplistic ‘shift to manuscript-based authority and to the hegemony and control of Christian churches by a small educated male elite’ (1995:38). Rather, we ought to speak of the shifting relationship between oral- and manuscript-based authority and should refrain from idealising or castigating either as ‘egalitarian’ or ‘patriarchal’ or ‘élite’. Again the example of Classical Greece appears relevant: ‘One can excuse Greek political thinkers for not associating the cohesive power of the *polis* with writing when there lay before them the example of Sparta — according to popular rumour, Spartans were illiterate. *Those who were interested in total control looked elsewhere for the mechanisms than the written word*’ (Thomas 1994:37; emphasis added). The situation of classical Greece does not shed direct light on early Christian power relations, but note that Jaffee has rightly levelled similar criticisms of Dewey’s analysis from the direction of Rabbinic Judaism and its relation to earlier Jewish scribal cultures (cf. Jaffee 1995:71–72).

In addition, Dewey’s assumption of qualitative differences between oral and literate cultures suffers fundamental flaws. As Finnegan (1990:143) points out, scholars often associate orality ‘with vast historical stages through which humankind is envisaged as moving in one evolutionary direction. . . . Each stage is pictured as having its own characteristics, determined crucially by its medium of communication.’ Rather than an evolutionary paradigm in which movement occurs *from* orality *toward* literacy and beyond,<sup>54</sup> we ought to recognise the back-and-forth, two-way movement between communicative technologies.<sup>55</sup> Robbins suggests a more complex system of categorisation, which includes seven points along a spectrum broader than the dichotomy ‘orality vs. textuality’ assumed by Dewey.<sup>56</sup> Jaffee argues that rabbinic examples suggest against Dewey’s idealised conceptualisation of early Christianity: ‘the culture that became Rabbinism had deep filiations with the earlier culture of Jewish scribalism, itself a male preserve as far as we know. Thus, what was mastered orally in rabbinic culture were a male elite’s texts, “oral” though they were’ (Jaffee 1995:72).

Dewey’s analysis is helpful, then, for suggesting three conclusions regarding any imagined shift *from* oral *to* written tradition. First, even if such language were appropriate, it would

---

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Thompson 1998; L. Alexander 1998a.

<sup>53</sup> Thatcher 2005:85–86.

<sup>54</sup> This paradigm is associated, e.g., in phrases like ‘residual oral culture’. For example, ‘Little has thus far been done, however, to understand reader response in terms of what is now known of the evolution of noetic processes from primary orality through residual orality to high literacy’ (Ong 1982:168).

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Foley 2002:67–69.

<sup>56</sup> Robbins 1995:77; 2006:127. Robbins’s taxonomy has its problems, particularly in that its application tends to reify ‘rhetorical culture’ (as well as his other six ‘reading contexts’), at least to the extent that he maintains that ‘the early Christian “tradition biosphere” is rhetorical *rather than* oral [or scribal or reading] culture’ (2006:127; citing Kelber 1995:159; emphasis added). According to Robbins’s description of the various ‘kinds of speaking, reading, and writing in different contexts’, the Jesus movements of the first century CE incorporated features across multiple categorisations (cf. 1995:77–82). Additionally, we must be careful not to essentialise ‘early Christian culture’. Nevertheless, Robbins points us in the right direction: our conception of the ‘oral-literate interface’ must admit of nuance.

have no probative value for understanding power relations in first-century communities of Jesus' followers. In the generations — even centuries — following the development, distribution, and reception of our written gospels, the texts' value *as texts* increased. But this does not mean that the textualisation of the Jesus tradition 'silenced' the oral milieu of early Christianity and fostered unequal power relations within the hitherto egalitarian Christian community. Second, the language of '*from oral to written tradition*' is, nevertheless, inappropriate because written (Jewish) texts always factored into the earliest communities. Even the originally oral Christian communities functioned in the shadow of a vibrant and fluid textual environment. Indeed, we can conceptualise early Christian communities as 'textual communities' centred round sacred Jewish texts, in which case the New Testament texts appear as 'interpretative traditions' of those earlier texts.<sup>57</sup> Third, as written texts arose within the early Jesus movements, they did not displace the living influences of the oral tradition, either its content or its performative traditions.<sup>58</sup> In the context of communities already established within and committed to their oral traditional milieu, the textualisation of their oral traditions would have been received as *instances* of those traditions rather than their replacements.<sup>59</sup> It remains for us, then, to explore a more appropriate model of early Christian oral and textual traditional dynamics.

### 4.3. Performance Theory and the Jesus Tradition

When we turn to performance as the moment of actualising the Jesus tradition (bringing it from potentiality to actuality), a number of interpretative questions immediately present themselves.<sup>60</sup> The first involves the question of performance and its relation to traditional composition: Granted that we are concerned with *oral* Jesus tradition, both *before* the first written gospel and *continuing through* the multiplicity of written gospels, in what sense does the tradition (at the concrete level of wording and sequence) take shape in the moment of oral performance? In other words, in what sense(s) does the *content* of oral tradition arise out of the interactive performative context? My use of the term 'actualisation' already suggests my position *vis-à-vis* the ques-

---

<sup>57</sup> Cf. §4.2.b.i., above; Jaffee 2001:8; Ben-Amos 1999:vii.

<sup>58</sup> By 'performative traditions' I mean 'the sum of performative strategies through which oral-literary tradition is summoned from memory and delivered in diverse publish settings' (Jaffee 2001:8). In addition, the larger point being made is the inverse of Jaffee's assertion that 'the existence of an oral-literary tradition does not require an absence of literacy or writing' (2001:8). That is, the existence of literacy and/or writing does not require the absence of a living, vibrant oral tradition. Again, 'Distinct cultures can and do preserve a written literary tradition that is quite distinct from its oral-literary tradition. The traditions function at different registers of the overall culture and need not intersect' (2001:8).

<sup>59</sup> Koester has made similar observations with respect to the second century CE evidence regarding the gospels' reception: 'What Papias says about Mark reflects the use of categories which are drawn from the oral tradition . . . Papias says about Matthew that he composed "the sayings" (τὰ λόγια). In neither statement does Papias use the term "gospel." *Even in their written form, these traditions about Jesus and of Jesus' words do not carry any greater authority than that which was transmitted orally.* The written gospels' authority is assured by the same technical terms which had been established for the oral tradition' (1990:33; emphasis added).

<sup>60</sup> What follows is heavily indebted, directly and indirectly, on the pioneering work of Milman Parry and Albert Lord. For a summary of the Parry-Lord (or Oral-Formulaic) Theory of oral tradition, as well as a comprehensive bibliography, cf. Foley 1988. For critical assessments see Finnegan 1976; Benson 1966.

tion of what happens to the *content* of tradition within a performative context.<sup>61</sup> ‘Actualisation’ has the advantage of affirming the extra-performative existence of the material being performed whilst simultaneously reminding us that, outside of performance, that existence is ‘unactualised’: it exists as potential. ‘The tradition’, of course, is no less real for being ‘unactualised’. If we may anticipate the results of this section’s discussion, we will conceptualise ‘what is spoken’ in a given oral performance of the Jesus tradition as ‘particular realized cases’ of the abstract ‘set [*tableau*] of possible literary objects’.<sup>62</sup>

#### 4.3.a. Actualising Tradition in Performance

Kelber emphasises performance as the moment of composition: ‘transmission and composition converge in oral performance. Although the speaker used traditional materials, she or he was composing while speaking . . . *The idea was not to reproduce what was said previously, but to (re)compose so as to affect the present circumstance*’ (Kelber 1995:150, citing Lord 1960:5, 101; emphasis added). But why does Kelber oppose ‘reproduc[ing] what was said previously’ with ‘affect[ing] the present’? This opposition is not only unnecessary; it jars against Kelber’s helpful recognition of ‘traditional materials’ in oral performance. More likely, communities of Jesus’ followers valued and repeatedly performed their traditions with the conviction that ‘what was said previously’, at least in broad strokes if not with verbatim exactitude,<sup>63</sup> was relevant and ought to ‘affect the present circumstance’. Thus the question remains unanswered: In what sense is the tradition ‘composed’, its content and structure determined, in performance?

Despite the need to qualify Kelber’s work, we affirm that ‘transmission and composition converge in oral performance’ (Kelber 1995:150).<sup>64</sup> Transmission refers precisely to the (re)construction and (re)verbalisation of what already exists within memory. Performance does

---

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Hearon 2006, who also uses ‘actualisation’ to describe what happens to the Jesus tradition in performance.

<sup>62</sup> Chatman 1978:18, quoting Todorov 1971:103. Though Chatman (and Todorov) are explicitly engaged in *literary* criticism, the phrase ‘literary objects’, in this project, refers to ‘verbal art’ that exhibits ‘pretensions beyond ordinary speech’ (cf. Jaffee’s definition of ‘oral-literary tradition’ [2001:8]; the notion of ‘verbal art’ is discussed at length in Foley 1991; 1995a; 2002). More importantly, Chatman in this section argues for a deductive poetics in which ‘definitions are to be made, not discovered . . . We need not expect actual works to be pure examples of our categories. *The categories plot the abstract network upon which individual works find their place*’ (1978:18; emphasis added). That conception bears similarities to the concept here of an abstract ‘Jesus tradition’ contextualising and infusing performances of the tradition with significance.

<sup>63</sup> The concept of ‘verbatim exactitude’ is itself problematic. Though ‘word-for-word’ copying or reproduction has been an important concept for the practice of source criticism — and, so, for all gospel criticism that assumes its results — anthropologists and Homericists have long known that the definition of a ‘word’ varies between cultures and is not limited to our notion of a lexically distinct linguistic atom. Foley points out that a number of South Slavic bards ‘claimed verbatim accuracy without fulfilling that claim. Further questioning, however, made it apparent that their concept of “word” was of a larger expression, usually a line or more in length, which could itself undergo substitution and modification. From their point of view, then, the claim of “word-for-word” accuracy was quite correct’ (1988:115, fn 21; cf. also Foley 1995a:2; 1997:58, 239; 2002:11–21).

<sup>64</sup> Cf. also Lord 1960:5. Lord later reminds us that ‘performance is indeed significant, that context is important, and that without a sympathetic knowledge of context the text may well be misunderstood and misinterpreted’ (Lord 1986:380). This is the point we are currently trying to bring to contemporary gospels research.



not compose tradition *de novo* but retells it from memory as performer and audience interact in the shadow of the tradition's performative history.<sup>65</sup> Oral tradition is not, in this sense, 'composed' in performance (that is, composed *ex nihilo*); rather, an oral tradition lacks a fixed textual form.<sup>66</sup> Once written versions of the Jesus tradition began to proliferate within early Christian communities throughout Palestine and Syria (even the whole Mediterranean basin), these texts were not received as *the fixed form* of the Jesus tradition (cf. Sanders 1969:36–37). The evidence of the extant surviving gospel tradition suggests that, when accessing and transmitting the Jesus tradition, a fixed verbal or sequential corpus of tradition mattered less than did the story and proclamation of Jesus, both of his message and of his person (cf. Schröter 2006:116).

Thus, in a very real sense, the verbal and structural form of the tradition is instantiated in oral performance. The tradents of the Jesus movements actualised the story of Jesus' life — his teachings, what he had done, and what had been done to him — in performance. The words necessary to actualise this story, or these stories, were not the primary focus; they served the tradition being performed. Not that we should understand each performance as a decontextualised event, cut loose from previous performances or from the non-performative forms the tradition took.<sup>67</sup> But if the tradition lacked a fixed textual form, then we must look elsewhere to understand the inseparable dynamics of stability and variability within traditional units as well as within the gospel tradition as a whole. Recent Oral-Formulaic research suggests performance (rather than text) may hold the key to these dynamics of tradition: 'Performance involves both performer and audience and it is the very interaction of these two that results in a given text' (Dundes 1988:x). This perspective, where the text *results from* the interaction of performer and audience, differs dramatically from that of standard gospel criticism, where the text *mediates* author/reader (or author/audience) interaction.

I propose that the stability and variability of the tradition is rooted in Jesus' followers' collective memory, the memory of Jesus' teaching and healing activity in Galilee *as well as* the memory of various performances (= retellings) of that activity and the force those performances

---

<sup>65</sup> Vansina is helpful here: 'As opposed to all other sources, oral tradition consists of information existing in memory. It is in memory most of the time, and only now and then are those parts recalled which the needs of the moment require' (Vansina 1985:147). Though Vansina speaks of tradition being 'in' memory, he is not assuming a simplistic, storage-system model of memory: 'memory is not an inert storage system like a tape recorder or a computer. Remembering is an activity, a re-creation of what once was. It uses for this purpose not just this or that bit of information, but everything available in the information pool that is needed in this circumstance, reshaped as needed for this particular re-creation' (1985:147–148). Vansina is right to imply that the reconstruction of an event is not limited to the memories of that event but also draws upon the entirety of memory (Vansina might say 'culture') to fill in what 'should' have and probably did happen (cf. Fry 1981:73–74).

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Foley 1988:11: 'As a careful fieldworker who made a practice of listening to many versions of the same narrative, [Vasilii V.] Radlov noticed that a singer's rendition of a given song was neither purely memorized nor created wholly anew with each performance, but that bards practiced an art that allowed variation within limits, without realizing, of course, that they were not reciting a song "word for word"'.  
<sup>67</sup> E.g., sacred material objects, communal institutional structure, sacred art or music, etc.

exerted on the community itself.<sup>68</sup> A particular performance of tradition transmits *the same thing* that earlier performances transmitted, even if the verbal and sequential structure of the latter performance did not (and could not have) reproduced exactly the verbal and sequential structure of earlier performances. The tradition is the story; the tradition is the memory. It is not confined to the oral- or written-textual shape of any particular performance.<sup>69</sup>

When we affirm, then, that oral tradition is composed in performance, we mean that the performative environment forges the tradition's textual shape. But that textual shape is one embodiment of the tradition; the tradition's existence — its essence — is not confined to that textual shape. Performance 'actualises' the tradition, and both performer and audience enter into and perceive the performance in reference to the 'ambient tradition'. The performance, then, does not simply give expression to a tradition that exists only in the memories of a performer and his audience; performance takes place in 'the context of a special social event' (Bakker 1997:27) and draws together past and present, reaffirms traditional social values and understandings, and connects a group (in its present) with its traditions (its past). These traditions already surround the group in forms other than the memories of its members (for example, in its material, institutional, and behavioural traditions).<sup>70</sup> The tradition's textual shape arises in performance, but the tradition itself exists prior to and outside of performance. If we may import an analogy from structural linguistics, the tradition exists as *langue*; performance forges *parole*. We can understand Foley's comments in terms of this analogy: 'We could observe that any performance/version is fundamentally a "tale within a tale," with the avenues of implication necessarily running both ways. The present tale both enriches and is enriched by the larger, implied tale — itself unperformed (and unperformable) but metonymically present to the performer and audience' (1995a:48, fn 44). A linguistic system does not exist apart from its actualisations in concrete, individual utterances, but that system transcends and contextualises individual utterances.

---

<sup>68</sup> We are inquiring into what lends, for example, the story of the healing of the paralytic (Mark 2.1–12 pars.) its unity and makes it recognisable as *that* story across multiple performances, if not its textual identity, which shifts across the extant examples we have before us. Cf. §4.3.b., below.

<sup>69</sup> Thus Mark 2.1–12 is not 'the Markan version' of the healing of the paralytic, nor Matt. 9.1–8 'the Matthean version', nor Luke 5.17–26 'the Lukan version'. While each passage may exhibit traces of the performative tendencies of their respective evangelists, we have no basis upon which to presume that Mark felt constrained, each time he performed this traditional unit, to do so exactly as it was found in Mark 2.1–12. Neither can we presume Matthew and Luke felt such constraints. On the basis of the predominant Two-Source Hypothesis it is patently obvious that neither Matthew nor Luke felt constrained to perform or write down the tradition as it was found in Mark. An implication of this approach, which Kelber misses, is that the stability of the traditional 'text' may be rooted as much in the continuity of the social group as in the tradition itself. Subverting the tradition means subverting the ingroup and reconstituting social identity according to new traditional structures. If, then, the written text of Mark's gospel was meant to subvert the oral traditional 'texts' that preceded it, one of the results we would expect would be the formation of recognisably new and different 'Christianities'. Whether or not this was, in fact, what happened, the issue is not examined in Kelber's work.

<sup>70</sup> My assertion that 'traditional social values and understandings' are reaffirmed in performance does not deny that oral tradition and oral performance can be subversive (cf. Kelber 2005:228); when oral tradition subverts (rather than expresses) previous tradition and social structures, however, it does not, cannot, rely as heavily on previous performances of that tradition, within those structures, to generate meaning (cf. Foley 1991; 1995a).

So it is with the Jesus tradition and its actualisation in performance (including our written gospels).

#### 4.3.b. Sedimenting Performance through Time

Now that we have nuanced our conception of the tradition's 'composition-in-performance', a second interpretive question arises: How does the iterative, diachronic experience of recurring performances affect the shape and reception of the tradition? Bakker calls attention to the ways in which memory and the act of remembering link 'the verbalizing consciousness in the present and the perceiving consciousness in the past' (1997:14). In other words, the consciousness of the performer is aware at once of being in both the present (in the current performative context) and the past (of perceiving and participating in the events being narrated *as well as* being aware of earlier performances). Bakker proposes a 'dynamic conception of truth . . . in which the past is not so much an event referred to as a *state of mind in the present*, an act of remembering, not so much in the sense of a retrieval of a fact from memory as in the sense of a *reexperience* of an original experience that took place in another time' (1997:12; original italics). Thus multiple experiences are implicated in and resonate with each traditional performance; performance brings the past near and fuses it with the ever-increasing multiplicity of previous performances.<sup>71</sup> Thus even 'bits' of the tradition are received in terms of the tradition *in toto*; the performance of, say, the straightening of the 'bent' woman in Luke 13.11–13 would have evoked not simply the contextualising Israelite tradition but also the entire tradition of Jesus as healer and exorcist.<sup>72</sup> Loveday Alexander, interacting with Lord 1978, notes,

Oral tradition should not be thought of simply as a series of unconnected units. *The individual episodes presuppose the existence of a connected narrative, a cycle of tales related to a particular individual . . . [T]he 'life' [i.e., the 'connected narrative'] is in some sense implicit in the individual episodes — even, in broad outline, the sequence from birth to death.* (L. Alexander 2006:20; emphasis added)<sup>73</sup>

Just as Gregory Nagy (1997) pointed to the important diachrony of traditional performance, in which various perspectives and meanings are layered (or, better, intertwined and simultaneously invoked) in each performance, Bakker's distinction between 'the original, extroverted consciousness perceiving or undergoing the real event . . . and the verbalizing, introverted, and understanding consciousness that is active in the present' (Bakker 1997:26–27) helps us appreciate the interaction between previous performances and performance in the present. 'The evidence presented to [the performing] consciousness, in fact, is not only the *present discourse* but

---

<sup>71</sup> The concept of the 'nearness' of the past in oral performance must be kept in balance with a recognition that people in the ancient world were more than capable of also recognising the difference between the present and the past. Bakker refers to 'the tension between the idea of the past as something *near* and recreated in the context of the performance yet at the same time something *distant*, something with regard to which one can adopt an "objective" stance' (1997:12; original italics).

<sup>72</sup> Cf. the references to this tradition in §5.3.b., below.

<sup>73</sup> In her discussion of 'the gospels as school tradition', L. Alexander will reconfirm the present point: 'What the anecdotes do imply, as Lord noted with the epic cycles, is an underlying story, acting as a mental frame of reference for assessing the significance of a particular anecdote' (2006:24).

also, and more so, the memory of *previous discourses*, the cumulative total of all the previous reexperiences, in short, the epic tradition' (1997:27; original italics).<sup>74</sup> Each performance finds itself under the ever-increasing constraint of previous performances, so that the tradition itself becomes institutionalised over time. We do not suggest that, over time, performances succumb to the pressure to exactly replicate previous performances; after all, 'the tradition' that is institutionalised includes the interplay of stability and fluidity.<sup>75</sup>

We thus understand more readily the continuity and development of the tradition. In the first instance, the textual shape of the tradition does not limit the tradition it gives shape to within the context of a particular performance. In the second instance, the experience and memory of previous performances constrain future performances without limiting the tradition to particular verbal expressions.<sup>76</sup> Even within this context of verbal multiformity, certain words, phrases, scenes, and themes appear especially salient as aspects of the tradition, but this in no way detracts from the tradition's multiformity. The tradition is itself both an organic unity, capable of being actualised in various contexts and circumstances without becoming unrecognisable as 'the tradition', as well as multiform, capable of variegated and diverse expression without excessive pressure to either mirror or correct other performances.<sup>77</sup> Multiplicity of performances by a single storyteller and performance by a multiplicity of storytellers imbues each particular performance with a metonymic quality that invokes the memory of earlier performances and establishes expectations for future ones.

---

<sup>74</sup> Notice Bakker's equation of 'the cumulative total of all the previous reexperiences' with 'the epic tradition'; this is an important point: the memory of previous performances, which imposes itself on subsequent performances, is the Jesus tradition and not simply the memory of that tradition at one remove. Cf. also Lord 1960:13, who emphasises that singers are a part of the tradition itself, rather than merely its handlers.

<sup>75</sup> Bakker moves from 'the cumulative total of all the previous reexperiences' to add depth to the concept of 'formulae', especially as it has been conceptualised in biblical and gospel studies. 'The observation that understanding and recognition of Homeric discourse is not only a matter of the present moment but also of previous reexperiences, may direct our attention for a moment to the formulaic nature of epic discourse, in its "postmodern" understanding: not — or not *only* — as a mechanism to facilitate oral composition but as a means to create *involvement*, to increase the understanding of the audience by familiar phraseology, to situate epic discourse in the physical here and now of the performance, and to locate that here and now in the diachronic space of the tradition. Formulas, then, are not so much *inherently* traditional phrases as phrases with *traditional intent*, acknowledged elements of the performer's traditional strategies' (1997:27; original italics).

<sup>76</sup> Social memory theory also acknowledges the role of previous acts of remembrance in the future remembering of past events; cf. the discussion of the past's constraint of the present in §3.3.b., above.

<sup>77</sup> The reference to 'excessive' pressure is, of course, problematic; when does the weight that previous performances bear upon subsequent performances become 'excessive'? While this is certainly a valid objection, the point here is that performances do constrain what comes after — that is, performances stabilise over time — but the Jesus tradition in the first century nowhere exhibits the compunction to reproduce the textual shape of previous performances. This point is especially important considering our own predilections for exact verbatim citation and attribution and the corollary presumptions of redaction and ideological critique which have been determinative for twentieth- and twenty-first-century analyses of the synoptic texts.

### 4.3.c. Referencing Tradition within Performance

But now a third interpretative question presents itself: What relationship connects the actualised, embodied text-in-performance and the abstract tradition of which it is but one expression? Kelber's earliest treatment of the oral Jesus tradition,<sup>78</sup> in which he approaches Mark as a rupture of the oral gospel tradition, makes evident this question's importance.<sup>79</sup> Of course, in Kelber's larger programme this 'rupture' is a function of his analysis of Mark's disruption of the 'oral synthesis'<sup>80</sup> characteristic of the oral gospel tradition; it functions as part of his dichotomy of *reading* tradition versus *hearing* tradition, a dichotomy now largely discredited.<sup>81</sup> We shall have cause to consider the larger relationship between oral and written tradition later, but if we can posit for the moment that even a written gospel is, in effect, a performance of the Jesus tradition, the question remains: How does one instance of the Jesus tradition, as *parole*, relate to the abstract Jesus tradition, as *langue*? By what means does a performance refer to, express, assume, comment upon, correct, emphasise, incorporate, excise, subvert, etc. the tradition as a whole? Before we turn to these questions, a more basic one requires our attention: Ought we to look for any relation at all between particular texts in performance and the tradition itself?

#### 4.3.c.i. Relating Performance and Tradition

The question of *whether* a text-in-performance relates to the tradition it actualises presents no challenges; to what else could it relate? Not that orally performed traditions bear this relationship to an 'ambient tradition' while written traditions do not. The recent and current interest in 'intertextuality' testifies to the extra-textual reference every written work must make. A written work severed from all literary precedent is both unimaginable and socially incomprehensible. Nevertheless, as we took pains to demonstrate in §2.3., New Testament scholarship largely assumes that the traditions entextualised in the written gospels are relatively free of larger traditional connections,<sup>82</sup> or, more commonly, if connections with the contextualising tradition are admitted, that tradition is conceived of as a *textual* entity.<sup>83</sup> The near-equivalent, returning to

---

<sup>78</sup> E.g., 1983:14–15.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. also 1987a; 1987b. While I have here taken a particular stand regarding Kelber's conceptualisation of the relation between the oral and the written gospel (esp. Mark), it should be honestly admitted that Kelber's own position fluctuates and is at least somewhat contradictory (cp. the statements that firmly distinguish oral and written traditions [e.g., 1983:14–15, 19, 91, 93–94, 115] with those that blur such distinctions [e.g., 1983:17, 23, 44, 70]).

<sup>80</sup> 'Language and being, speaker, message, and words are joined together into a kind of unity. This powerful and binding quality of oral speech we shall henceforth refer to as *oral synthesis*. It is not a universal rule governing orality, but it is more nearly true of spoken words than of written ones' (Kelber 1983:19; original italics).

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Finnegan 1990; Foley 1997:61–62; 2002:65–66; even Kelber 1995:159–160.

<sup>82</sup> For example, scholars frequently attribute this or that unit of Jesus tradition to 'post-Easter faith' as if that faith was not itself already contextualised by Israelite tradition more generally and the Jesus tradition in particular.

<sup>83</sup> For example, inasmuch as the traditions found in Luke's gospel do not originate from the evangelist, they stem from his literary sources (Mark and Q, [or, according to neo-Griesbachians, Matthew], perhaps also L). Thus the question is simply pushed back further, so that any tradition that does not originate with the authors of Mark or Q (or, again, Matthew) stem from their sources, until we have reached the end of our ability to postulate written sources for our extant texts. This approach is most bril-

the analogy from structural linguistics, would be to analyse *parole* in terms of (and in comparison to) similar *parole* without recognising the connections of both to the *langue* of which they are but individual instances.<sup>84</sup> When we approach the gospels as primarily related to that hypothetical, abstract construct (the Jesus tradition) and conceive their interrelationships not as editions or redactions of one another but as interdependent, textual expressions of that tradition itself, we effect a critical paradigmatic shift that challenges both the methods and the results of previous analyses. The written gospel traditions are not ‘formally bounded, complete items’ (Foley 1995a:xi); they refer to and incorporate the abstract Jesus tradition they instantiate, and they must be read accordingly. The gospels do not refer primarily or exclusively to other ‘formally bounded, complete items’, that is, to other written gospels or sources.

Thus we find ourselves in the comparatively uncontrolled position of reading our texts not primarily in reference to other extant texts, which have a concrete, tangible existence, but in reference to a hypothetical construct: the abstract, untextualisable Jesus tradition.<sup>85</sup> We ought not set out to reconstruct the ‘Jesus tradition’ itself, establishing its contents and structure and, if it were possible, its verbal shape; such a project would be akin to mapping out language comprehensively, to write not *parole* but *langue* itself. That such a task is, even by definition, inconceivable does not prevent us from understanding *parole* in reference to the language-system it instantiates. Still less does it relegate our linguistic analyses to myopic readings of one utterance against other, similar utterances on the basis that linguistic systems are hypothetical constructs unavailable for analysis.<sup>86</sup> Similarly for New Testament research: we ought not read extant ex-

---

liantly employed by Crossan (1991), whose ‘bracketing of singularity’ is motivated by the recognition that ‘something found [in Crossan’s earliest chronological stratum] but only in single attestation can have been created by that source itself’. This makes multiply attested traditions safer for the ‘determination’ of the historical Jesus (cf. the book’s front cover) because ‘something found in at least two independent sources from the primary stratum cannot have been created by either of them’. Thus the logic of bracketing singularity: ‘Plural attestation in the first stratum pushes the trajectory back as far as it can go with at least formal objectivity’ (1991:xxxii–xxxiii). Crossan’s conception of the Jesus tradition developing along ‘trajectories’ will also prove determinative for his book, but it becomes evident as we read *The Historical Jesus* that the identification and analysis of those trajectories are based on the assumptions that (a) the Jesus tradition exhibited development from text to text, (b) that innovation was the result of an author’s historical and/or theological genius, and (c) that the tradition existed primarily, if not exclusively, within the extant and hypothetical texts Crossan utilises in his analyses. All of these assumptions are problematic.

<sup>84</sup> From another angle, Foley makes a similar charge against ‘intertextuality’ (1995a:xi): ‘Even in an age learning to prize “intertextuality,” we can observe that the very etymology of that critical term denominates two or more formally bounded, complete items that interact — so that their separate contexts are more or less sharply defined, and the individual text maintains an absolute status uniquely its own. Even though the field of interpretation is enlarged and deepened, textual heuristics tacitly demands that we privilege the individual document above all else.’ Cf. also Esler 2005:155.

<sup>85</sup> Though in fact New Testament scholars have, to varying degrees, been comfortable reading the gospels against hypothetical reconstructions of traditional sources, Q simply being the most widely accepted and vigorously defended example.

<sup>86</sup> Though we could never write everything a linguistic system (i.e., *langue*) enables us to write — to attempt to do so misunderstands what *langue* ‘is’ — we can write grammars which systematise abstract language structures (I owe this point to Loveday Alexander). Thus we probably ought to analyse our gospels in terms of establishing a *grammar* of the Jesus tradition — looking for *how* Jesus’ earliest tradents generated meaningful statements about him — rather than in terms of establishing the *redaction* of the Jesus tradition.

pressions of the Jesus tradition against (or in relation to) each other but in terms of the larger traditional corpus itself. That this corpus does not exist in one authoritative, definitive textual edition complicates, but does not obviate, our task. Instead, we begin to perceive the problem inherent in the scholarship that establishes one expression of the Jesus tradition (e.g., Mark or Q) as the standard against which other expressions are read simply on the basis that Mark or Q is the 'earliest' gospel or is 'closest to the historical Jesus'.

If we approach the written gospels, like oral performances of the Jesus tradition, as traditional expressions received in the context of an abstract traditional potentiality, then the stability and variability of the synoptic traditions begin to take on a different significance. The twin phenomena of stability and variability have motivated much synoptic criticism and lie at the root of the synoptic problem. Now, instead of approaching the similarities and differences between the synoptics in an attempt to understand the evangelists' editorial practices, we come to the texts as expressions of a larger tradition, itself capable of multiform and variegated instantiation. In institutional gospel research Mark's gospel (or whatever text-form we employ as the standard of comparison) is not capable of multiform expression,<sup>87</sup> and so scholars suppose that changes from Mark's text are ideologically, theologically, or stylistically motivated. Within the new perspective of the gospels as texts rooted in a living oral tradition, the gospel-texts now emerge as 'immanent' texts,<sup>88</sup> created 'by a process of composition and reception in which a simple, concrete part stands for a complex, intangible reality' (Foley 1997:63). The texts of the gospels, then, for all their similarities and differences, reference the same traditional corpus, though in different ways, for different purposes, and, often, to different ends. 'In effect', says Foley, 'the immediate context,<sup>89</sup> always an artificially limited horizon for the play of this kind of verbal art, opens onto the more realistic "text" of the ambient tradition' (1997:66).

We hypothesise, then, that the gospels, as actualisations of the abstract corpus of Jesus tradition, open onto and incorporate that larger, abstract corpus, '*pars pro toto*, as it were' (Foley 1997:63), on the basis of two observations, one literary and one historical. Literarily, the situated nature of words demands that those words both occur in context and recur with reference to their appearance in other contexts (cf. Foley 1995a:xi). Intertextual research into the gospels draws attention to the way the gospel texts refer to and incorporate other texts, especially Hebrew/Israelite biblical traditions that figure differently into the gospel texts. Few critics today,

---

<sup>87</sup> Even theories involving *Ur-Markus* or Deutero-Mark (or any other early or revised gospel edition) postulate standardised, fixed textual forms rather than emphasising the fluid textual form of Mark's gospel. Many studies emphasising the gospels' 'orality' similarly posit the fixity of the written text.

<sup>88</sup> Foley defines the 'immanence' of traditional verbal art as '*the set of metonymic, associative meanings institutionally delivered and received through a dedicated idiom or register either during or on the authority of traditional oral performance*. The grammars of "words" at various levels — the formulaic phraseology, the typical narrative scenes, and the story-pattern as a whole — are understood as highly focused, densely encoded systems of integers that open onto implicit and ever-impinging worlds of signification' (1995a:7; original italics).

<sup>89</sup> 'The immediate context' to which Foley refers translates, for this project, into the actual 'text' of the gospel, whether in oral performance or as written text, as well as the context of its reception (i.e., the performance arena, the social and rhetorical location in which reading occurs, etc.).

then, would deny that the gospels make traditional references; at stake here is the nature of those references. Historically, for nearly a century and in varying degrees, critical scholarship has attempted to account for the historical near-certainty of oral gospel traditions in its readings of written gospel traditions. New Testament scholarship, in a rare consensus, recognises that people were *telling* Jesus stories before, during, and even after they were *writing* Jesus stories. While a significant portion of that scholarship has implicitly assumed the evangelists were not individuals with considerable experience performing these traditions,<sup>90</sup> we ought to consider the probability that the evangelists were tradents of the oral Jesus traditions and that their texts relate to the history of their performative experiences.<sup>91</sup> While we will shortly affirm that the gospel texts represent performances, of a sort, of the Jesus tradition, we emphasise here that the *authors* of the gospel traditions were also *performers* of the Jesus tradition. They were not merely writers composing in a traditional idiom; they were performers speaking and living within that idiom.

#### 4.3.c.ii. Receiving Tradition within Performance

If the gospel texts open up wider vistas upon the expansive landscape of the Jesus tradition as an organic whole,<sup>92</sup> how do they do so? This question strikes at the heart of the present discussion. A performative approach to the synoptic gospels, and an inquiry into the oral traditions' relation to the historical Jesus, has the potential to transform how we envision the processes by which the texts make references to extra-textual realities (whether traditional realities or historical ones, though these are not categorically discrete). Even more, a performative approach to written gospel traditions affects how we assess the quality of those references. For now, however, we return to the work of John Miles Foley,<sup>93</sup> whose seminal work turns a spotlight upon the

---

<sup>90</sup> That is, references abound in the secondary literature to the evangelists 'being familiar with' or 'incorporating' oral tradition, phrases which imply, at least, that they are outsiders with respect to oral Jesus traditions and that they insert those traditions, or are influenced by them, primarily as authors and not as teachers who themselves each have a history of performing those traditions in communal contexts. A particularly strong expression of this assumption is found in Ong 1987:11: 'When Mark undertook to put the old oral heritage of stories and preaching about Jesus into writing, this was in effect what he undertook to do: to reorganize the oral kerygma so as to bring out its current relevancy. That is, he undertook to interpret the oral kerygma. His written Gospel was essentially interpretation.' Once we make this assumption explicit, however, we realise the problem precisely because the evangelists apparently had, or considered themselves to have, sufficient authority to establish in writing (and even to redact and create!) authoritative versions of the Jesus traditions. Luke's preface is particularly interesting in this regard; the evangelist apparently takes responsibility for ensuring his audience's grasp of ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν (Luke 1.4).

<sup>91</sup> The fragments of Papias's writings preserved in Eusebius suggest that Mark, at least, was familiar with the oral proclamation of the Jesus tradition (through Peter); our gospels' traditional ascriptions likewise connect the texts with authoritative (= experienced) sources of the Jesus tradition. Even if we reject Papias's remarks regarding the gospels' authorship, we can find no reason to assume any of our extant written texts represent any of the evangelists' 'first try' at composing Jesus' story. For extensive treatments of the Papias fragments, as well as a defence of our gospels' ascriptions, cf. Bauckham 2006.

<sup>92</sup> In case it has not yet been made clear, this positive affirmation is one of the working hypotheses of this project; my purpose has not been to set out to prove this affirmation but rather, upon a presumption of its plausibility, to work out its consequences for gospel and historical Jesus research.

<sup>93</sup> We first introduced Foley's work in §2.3.b., and we have interacted with him off and on since then. We turn now to an extensive consideration of the contribution his work can make to 'historical Je-



ways in which traditional verbal art makes gestures beyond itself and situates itself firmly within traditional universes.

As we try to understand how gospel texts generate meaning, Foley's emphasis on the mutual responsibility of the reader/audience, as a partner in the communicative circuit, in interaction with the author/performer offers a promising first step. For oral-derived texts, the author must be sufficiently fluent in the traditional idiom to signal to his or her audience what is being written and how they ought to receive the text. The audience, however, must also be conversant in the traditional idiom in order to pick up the author's cues and to properly apprehend the text. Foley builds upon the observation that context and words interact to generate meaning<sup>94</sup> and suggests, 'Transferring to the performance arena of traditional oral and oral-derived poetry, we could observe that the interaction of item and context mutes the denotative force of traditional units of utterance and foregrounds the special metonymic, performance-based meaning selected by the situated "words"' (1995a:9).<sup>95</sup> More will be said presently upon the notions of the performance arena and the 'special metonymic, performance-based meaning' of oral-performative language; here we emphasise that the audience of oral-derived texts must be able to access the metonymic meaning of oral traditional language to apprehend the text as performance. Failure to do so results in 'denaturing' the text, that is, in reading the text outside its relationship to its contextualising tradition.<sup>96</sup>

To understand how oral-derived texts 'instruct' their audiences regarding their proper engagement and interpretation,<sup>97</sup> Foley turns to the receptionalist theories of Hans-Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser (1991:38–60; 1995a:42ff.).<sup>98</sup> Whereas, in receptionalist terms, the 'work' is located between the text and the reader and describes the interaction between the signs encoded

---

sus' and gospels research (cf. Horsley and Draper 1999, as well as the works of Horsley and of Kelber, for New Testament scholarship that has already been impacted by Foley's research).

<sup>94</sup> 'Dell Hymes issued this early statement on the interplay and relationship between linguistic items and their context: "Contexts have a cognitive significance that can be summarized in this way. The use of a linguistic form identifies a range of meanings. A context can support a range of meanings. When a form is used in a context it eliminates the meanings possible to that context other than those that form can signal; the context eliminates from consideration the meanings possible to the form other than those the context can support. The effective meaning depends on the interaction of the two"' (Foley 1995a:9).

<sup>95</sup> For a discussion of Foley's very specific use of the terms 'denotative' and 'connotative', cf. Foley 1991:xiv–xv.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Foley 1995b:171.

<sup>97</sup> Foley will later refer to 'self-tutorials' on how to read a particular text; cf. 1995a:140–141.

<sup>98</sup> Foley recognises and readily admits that theories of Receptionalism were developed in regard to strictly literary verbal art forms (cf. 1995a:42), and he proposes certain modifications to the works of Jauss and Iser in order to make their theories appropriate for the analysis of oral traditions and oral-derived works (cf. 1991:39; 1995a:45–47). The usefulness of a Receptionalist perspective, then, is that it 'entails a full consideration of the dynamics of performance and tradition. Instead of the text we have the performance, instead of the implied reader the implied audience. Signals and gaps in the libretto are still the focus of the methodology, but the signals have metonymic, immanent meaning, and the negotiation of gaps depends not only on a given audience member's individual preparation but on strategies in place under the interpretive contract of the performance tradition. With these qualifications, or accommodations, central tenants of Reception still hold: the performance and audience member co-create the "work," and that experience is set in motion by the recognition of a response to cues that constitute the "text."' (1995a:46).

encoded in the text and the imagination of the reader (1995a:42), for our purposes the multi-form tradition is actualised verbally, including cues and signals that instruct the audience how to apprehend the particular text in the context of the ambient tradition.<sup>99</sup> Note that a plurality of readers introduces a plurality of ‘works’ in regard to a single literary text; in oral performative tradition and oral-derived texts the text-in-performance is itself multiform, complicating and variegating the interpretations possible as performer and audience interact to produce traditional meaning. Foley, recognising the instability such a theoretical approach can quickly import into our analyses, counters by citing the stabilising influence of performance and tradition. Interpretation is constrained by

the unifying roles of performance, the event that frames the communicative exchange, and tradition, the body of immanent meaning that always impinges upon the linguistic integers of the metonymic idiom. The single performance of a traditional oral work is both something unique, a thing in itself, and the realization of patterns, characters, and situations that are known to the audience through prior acquaintance with other performances. The performer will surely contribute importantly to this or that instance or event, making the single occurrence in many ways unparalleled, and we should most certainly not make the mistake of assuming that originality is only a rare feature of traditional oral art. Nonetheless, the performer of such a work depends much more heavily upon the encoded, immanent reading of his or her idiomatic language than does a highly literary artist. (Foley 1995a:45–46)

We can, therefore, address the problem of interpretation via the ongoing dialogue between performer and audience, who meet at the nexus of performance and tradition to actualise tradition and generate meaning.<sup>100</sup> This is fine for actual oral performances and the analysis of living oral traditions, which critical interpreters can still access to observe their performative dimensions and incorporate those dimensions into analyses of the text-in-performance. But how does this translate to the circumstance in which we find ourselves, where the objects of our analyses are not oral performances but *texts* that, in all historical probability, bear some relation to oral performances of the Jesus tradition? Foley recognises a typological spectrum of written texts rooted in oral tradition, from the transcribed performance, on one extreme, to ‘literary’ texts composed outside of performance but rooted in oral tradition at the other.<sup>101</sup> We stress that we refer not to two or more ‘categories’ of oral traditional verbal art but rather to hypothetical

---

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Kelber 1995:159; Foley 1995b:171. The audience’s role in shaping the tradition in performance is not merely as a stimulus to which the performer reacts or adjusts; the audience, as an integral component of the communicative circuit, is a critical factor not just for the work’s *reception* but also its *production* (cf. N. White 1994:173–175; Foley 1997:58–59). Similarly, Bakker and Kahane call attention to the ‘complex interactions between the “makers” of discourse and their addressees: literary discourses and ordinary spoken utterances alike are increasingly seen as not exclusively composed by an author or generated by a speaker but as “jointly created” by the two parties in the communicative process’ (1997a:3).

<sup>100</sup> Note Foley’s programmatic statement: ‘*The Singer of Tales in Performance* is first a book about *word-power*, that is, about how words engage contexts and mediate communication in verbal art from oral tradition. It is also, and crucially, about the enabling event — *performance* — and the enabling referent — *tradition* — that give meaning to word-power’ (1995a:1; original italics). The latter two concepts — performance as the enabling event and tradition as the enabling referent of oral traditional verbal art — are determinative for the analysis of *The Singer of Tales in Performance* as well as for the current project.

<sup>101</sup> E.g., 1995a:82; cf. Foley’s taxonomy in 2002:39 (which we discuss in §4.3.d.i., below).

points along a spectrum. Though our determination of a text's location along that spectrum invariably affects our analyses of the performative dynamics affecting a text's composition and reception, those dynamics will be operative for any type of text with roots in oral tradition.<sup>102</sup> Here lies the heart of our criticism of literary approaches to the synoptic gospels and the synoptic problem, itself a literary problem: not only that continuing oral tradition was one of a number of 'sources' for our extant gospels, but that the gospels themselves are rooted in and expressions of the organic, unified, multiform tradition.

Returning to Foley's appeal to receptionist theories of reading, we note that apprehending and interpreting traditional verbal art, for Foley, is not simply a task of attending to textual signals, even with one eye out for those signals' metonymic reference. Understanding traditional verbal art also involves attending to lacunae within the text, lacunae that require the audience to enter into and fill out the text-in-performance.<sup>103</sup> Any work 'lacking opportunities for the perceiver to contribute from his or her own experience to the fashioning of a coherent present apprehension will appear over-determined and expressively pallid' (1995a:6). Foley refers to Iser's 'gaps of indeterminacy' and emphasises again the requirement of the audience to 'depend on their working knowledge of traditional implications' (1995a:7) to successfully apprehend a traditional text. Here the positive (registering and decoding textual signals) and negative aspects of interpretation (filling in a text's 'gaps of indeterminacy') constrain each other, so that the text does not determine its interpretation and the audience cannot interpret it willy-nilly. Instead, the audience fills in the text's gaps in a manner consistent with the text's positive signals, a process Foley, following Iser, calls 'consistency-building'.<sup>104</sup> New Testament scholarship has long been aware of the presence of lacunae within the gospel texts themselves, but the failure to focus attention on the texts' rootedness in oral traditional performance, and the consequences entailed therein, has left many of our efforts at consistency-building anaemic, severed from the texts' traditional environment.

We nevertheless admit forthrightly: we have to deal with not actually oral performances of the Jesus tradition but only written texts, and we have to approximate the texts' relationships to oral performances. The primary difficulty such an admission presents to gospel criticism regards our efforts to understand how our extant texts were composed, and in fact we spent some time clarifying how we conceptualise the composition and actualisation of gospel traditions in oral performance.<sup>105</sup> But our inability to enter into and experience ancient performances of the Jesus tradition does not mitigate the importance of looking for and analysing textual strategies

---

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Foley 2002:39–52.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. 1995a:29–30, 43. Much research into 'orality' exaggerates the distance from which a 'reader' accesses a written text in order to distinguish more sharply 'orality' from 'literacy' (e.g., Kelber 1983; Shiner 2003:171; *inter alios*). Iser's work, as well as Foley's adaptation of it, suggests that readers are much more involved in the reception of written texts, and that this involvement is similar to (though not exactly the same as) an audience's involvement in oral performance.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Foley 1995a:43.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. §4.3.a., above.

that facilitate the texts' reception. New Testament research needs to broaden its focus on the texts' *composition* to consider the texts' *reception*. Both the evangelists and their audiences would have been familiar with and participants in oral performances of the Jesus tradition. Once the texts of the gospels were committed to writing, is it really likely that those texts represented radical departures from the oral tradition that preceded and continued to develop alongside them?<sup>106</sup> We cannot presume that our texts preserve records of single performances, such that 'gospel composition' becomes transcription; still less can we continue to presume that our gospels are *the* 'Markan', 'Matthean', or 'Lukan' version of the tradition. Rather, our texts were written in the context of oral performances of the Jesus tradition and would have been received by their audiences as performances that, though transformed into written texts, preserved extratextual references to the Jesus tradition as a whole.

#### 4.3.c.iii. Signifying Tradition through Performance

But the question still remains: How do oral-derived texts extend beyond the denotative meanings of their textual signals to signify metonymically, and how do they suggest to their audiences this wider significative force? Foley's investigation into the 'word-power' of traditional idioms becomes important: broadly conceived, word-power is a textual signal's ability, under specific circumstances, to evoke wider contexts and enable communication between performer and audience. Word-power operates in the conjunction of performance as the enabling event and tradition as the enabling referent; oral-derived texts facilitate meaning within the context of performance, in which the work is actualised, and in reference to the organic unity that is 'the tradition'. Word-power is the ability of traditional terms, themes, and story-patterns to make reference to the tradition efficiently and effectively, provided that performer and audience are both sufficiently fluent in the traditional idiom to communicate in the performative register.

As an entry into the dynamic associations between oral-derived text, the tradition contextualising the text, and the textual and extra-textual strategies that facilitate communication between performer and audience, Foley delineates three aspects of oral performance that bear upon the interpretation of oral traditional verbal art: performance arena, register, and communicative economy.<sup>107</sup> Each of these mark off performance as the occasion in which words take on larger, traditional meanings, and they empower words to incorporate those traditional significances implicitly (Foley 1995a:9). Let us briefly turn to these three aspects of oral performance to

---

<sup>106</sup> Kelber's (1983) thesis that the written gospel tradition was related more by contrast than consistency to the oral gospel tradition was difficult to sustain throughout his book; that thesis was all but retracted by Kelber's later comments on *The Oral and the Written Gospel* (cf. 1995:159–160). See also Downing 1985:97, who, toward different ends, also questions implicit but dominant assumptions in New Testament scholarship regarding texts, the authors of texts, and the relative social isolation of authors who, according to these assumptions, exercise almost tyrannical control over the content and form of their texts (e.g., Kelber 1983:14–15; 2005:227–228).

<sup>107</sup> Cf. Foley 2002:114–117 for a condensed discussion of performance arena, register, and communicative economy.

understand how they function in actual performance; then we can begin to postulate how they might be transformed as they are encoded within a particular tradition's entextualisation.<sup>108</sup>

1. *'Performance arena' refers to the locus of oral traditional performance.* The emphasis here is not upon *place* but upon *situation*; the performance arena can delineate the place where performance takes place, but it does so as an aspect of its larger function of setting apart a particular circumstance for the performance and reception of tradition. 'Performance arena', then, conveys 'geographical and ritualistic overtones' and 'implies a recurrent forum dedicated to a specific kind of activity, a *defined and defining site* in which enactment can occur again and again without devolution into a repetitive, solely chronological series' (Foley 1995a:47; emphasis added). The notion of performance arena also carries implications for our understanding of 'repetition' in oral tradition, a concept that figures prominently in the work of many New Testament scholars concerned with the oral Jesus tradition.<sup>109</sup> Performances are not simply 'repetitions' of what have gone before,<sup>110</sup> but are (semi-)autonomous events in themselves, events that are apprehended in reference to the tradition itself and not only to previous performances of the tradition. Thus, 'for events that are not repeated but *re-created*,<sup>111</sup> the performance arena describes the place one goes to perform them and the place the audience goes to experience them' (Foley 1995a:47; original italics).<sup>112</sup>

As indicated above, performance arena does not simply demarcate 'sacred' or performative space; neither does it separate 'ritual' or 'sacred time'. While it can perform these func-

---

<sup>108</sup> The modulation from traditional performance to traditional text is, indeed, one of Foley's primary concerns in *The Singer of Tales in Performance*; that is, he builds upon ethnographic work done among Native American cultures that attempts 'to open up more faithful understanding of certain species of verbal art by attention to their "untextuality," that is, to their richly contexted array of meanings that can be communicated only through the special, "dedicated" set of channels that constitute the multivalent experience of performance, and that . . . can be accessed in diminished but still resonant form through the augmented rhetoric of the oral-derived traditional text' (1995a:27-28). This 'richly contexted array of meanings' is an aspect of the traditional text, but it is also incumbent upon the audience to be able to access these meanings within performance or within their own reading experiences; thus Foley appeals 'to what lies beyond any collection of linguistic integers by insisting on the value-added signification of these integers as perceived by an audience suitably equipped to accord them their special valences' (1995a:28).

<sup>109</sup> E.g., the works of Kelber and Gerhardsson, cited in the bibliography.

<sup>110</sup> Ong, of course, draws strong links between repetitive oral tradition and the oral mentality that depends on repetition in order to prevent the past from slipping away from memory: in an oral noetic economy 'better too much repetition than too little. Too little repetition is fatal: knowledge not repeated enough vanishes' (1977:120). It is, however, more probable that factors other than an oral, even evanescent, mentality are at play in the repetitive and formulaic nature of much of oral as well as textual tradition. Rosenberg suggests that repetitive, predictable language in sermons that are 'spontaneously composed and orally performed' 'enables members of the congregation . . . to participate in the performance, to contribute to it . . . to help make what is at the moment being created' (1986:139, 150). Repetitive language is, then, not simply a property of an oral mindset nor a means of comforting an audience listening to narratives with which it is already familiar; rather, it can function as a means by which the audience's role in the performance of tradition is enabled and defined as well as by which the ambient tradition is invoked.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Lord 1960:101; Kelber 1995:150.

<sup>112</sup> Similarly, Bakker refers to performance as the spatial and temporal location in which the past is re-presented: the past is brought into the present 'within the context of a special social event and through the actions of a special, authoritative speaker' (Bakker 1997:15).

tions, it does so as an aspect of its larger task of framing performance. Thus it can set apart the 'here' and 'now' of performance, but it also sets apart the performance as a special sphere of discourse. The performance arena demarcates a new 'way of speaking' that 'is focused and made coherent as an idiom redolent with preselected, emergent kinds of meaning. Within this situating frame the performer and audience adopt a language and behavior uniquely suited (because specifically dedicated) to a certain channel of communication' (Foley 1995a:47–48). The significance of textual signals and cues (i.e., words) within the performance arena shifts from those signals' denotative reference and toward their traditional, connotative reference that, from an etic perspective, are external to those signals' lexical meaning.<sup>113</sup> Additionally, gaps within the text-in-performance are 'filled in' with reference to the tradition that is the enabling referent of that text. The performance arena is the site (or sites) in which the communication between performer and audience shifts from the unmarked, 'everyday' level of discourse to the special discourse of tradition, a discourse which is itself designed to function precisely within that arena.<sup>114</sup>

2. *'Register' refers to the idiom of oral traditional performance.* If 'performance arena' refers to the locus that marks off traditional performance from the 'ordinary' world (including the special discourse of performance), then 'register' refers to that special discourse as distinct from 'unmarked' discourse. Within the contextualising influences of the performance arena, 'the interaction of item and context mutes the denotative force of traditional units of utterance and foregrounds the special metonymic, performance-based meaning selected by the situated "words"' (Foley 1995a:9). The 'primary burden' of a traditional register, according to Foley, 'is to stimulate the audience to an experience of a particular sort, based on the syntax of the event situated in a performance tradition' (1995a:49). Of course, for a reader of texts, especially of ancient texts, to whom access into the performance arena is prohibited, even recognising the presence of a traditional metonymic idiom is difficult, let alone analysing the register and mapping out the ways in which it opens onto the immanent tradition. Thus we do not attempt to comprehensively determine the relationship between the oral-derived text and its situating tradition; understanding the performative register is a matter of dialogue and continuing investigative effort. Nevertheless, we presuppose, if only as a working hypothesis, that the language preserved in the written gospels is traditional language and functions as a register that enables the oral-derived text to signify the tradition it actualises.

It would, however, be a mistake to suppose that the relationship between performance arena and register is one-directional, that stepping into the performance arena signals that everyday discourse is being set aside and the traditional idiom taken up. Modulating from the un-

---

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Foley 1995a:133.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. Foley 1995a:48: 'The discrete verbal sign . . . can bloom into its full, pars pro toto signification only within the performance arena. Attending the event of traditional oral narrative in the "wrong" arena means, necessarily, misunderstanding that event; the rules, frame, all that constitutes the infelicitous context will prove impertinent and misleading as the reader or audience tries to fashion coherency on the basis of disparate codes.'

marked idiom to the special discourse of performance itself also signals to both performer and audience that the performance arena has been entered.<sup>115</sup> The distinction may appear superficial, except that, in our efforts to determine more precisely the relationship between our gospels and the ancient performance of Jesus traditions, the identification of a traditional idiom in the text may open up for us some insight into that relationship. As Foley explains,

all linguistic features that make an idiom a dedicated register also comprise its ability to function as a dedicated medium for conveyance of meaning within the performance arena. Maintenance of the illusion of verbal art depends upon fluency — both the compositional fluency of the performer and the receptive fluency of his or her co-creating audience. To step outside that idiom is thus to exit the performance arena and to leave behind the register's unique ability to provide access to implied signification. In terms of the *Ethnography of Speaking*, it is in such code-switching that the secret of keying performance (as the enabling event) lies; with respect to *Immanent Art*, it is through such bi- or even multilingualism that metonymic connotations resident in tradition (as the enabling referent) are activated. (Foley 1995a:53)

Inasmuch as the gospels preserve traces of the traditional register of oral performance, we can begin to inquire (a) how that register incorporates traditional metonymic signification, and (b) how the texts relate to the oral performative practices of the early communities of Jesus' followers who, whether or not they had access to written sources or gospels, regularly performed the Jesus tradition in communal contexts. If we can show that the texts were composed in the traditional idiom, then we have some ground for supposing that the compositional and receptional strategies of these communities were similar for both oral and written versions of the tradition.

3. *'Communicative Economy' is enabled by the performance arena and register.* Communicative economy is not morphology but metonymy,<sup>116</sup> a way to refer to the 'value-added signification' of traditional integers within a performative context, whether an oral event within a performance arena that utilises a traditional register or an oral-derived text that keys performance via textual signals and utilises a traditional register transposed into textual rhetoric. Foley, returning to the Receptionalist perspective he advocated earlier, identifies the economy of meaning intrinsic to

---

<sup>115</sup> Foley (2002:15) provides an interesting example of an oral traditional performer modulating from the traditional idiom of epic song-making to the 'unmarked' language of everyday speech, all without any observable shift of location: "Then, however, the conversation takes another turn, as Vujnović asks whether "Salko," his interviewee's first or given name, is also a word. Yes, he's told, although we should note that the target has shifted: the implied context is now everyday communication rather than the epic way of speaking. On these grounds "Salko" of course qualifies as a unit of utterance, an atom of speech. Once again we have a preliterate singer making a sophisticated distinction between two varieties or registers of language'. The important point, as Foley notes, is that the performance arena (i.e., 'the implied context') has indeed shifted, as signalled by the change in linguistic registers.

<sup>116</sup> In the Oral-Formulaic Theory, Milman Parry defined 'thrift', or 'economy', as 'the degree in which [a formula type or system] is free of phrases which, having the same metrical value and expressing the same idea, could replace one another' (Foley 1988:24–25, citing Milman Parry). The emphasis of the Parry-Lord concept of 'economy', then, is placed on the lack of choice to express a given idea in a particular metrical condition and is employed to facilitate understanding of the phenomenon of oral composition-in-performance (cf. Lord 1960; Kelber 1983, who also emphasise the rapidity of composition-in-performance). Foley, however, is keen to distinguish formulaic 'economy' from *communicative economy*, noting that 'Parry-Lord economy . . . is a morphological feature of the register, while the term "communicative economy" speaks to the dedicated, focused relationship between the register and its traditional, performance-centered array of meanings' (1995a:53, fn 58).

traditional verbal art as ‘perhaps the most crucial’ aspect of the oral-traditional idiom, though it is also perhaps the most foreign to critical scholars, literate and print-oriented as we are:

Precisely because both performer and reader/audience enter the same arena and have recourse strictly to the dedicated language and presentational mode of the speech act they are undertaking, signals are decoded and gaps are bridged with extraordinary fluency, that is, economy. While from the perspective of post-traditional,<sup>117</sup> textual communications such verbal signals as ‘swift-footed Achilles’ might seem cumbersome and unwieldy, sacrificing descriptive accuracy to the necessity to maintain the reusable ‘building block’ of generic connotation, in fact each metonymic integer functions as an index-point or node in a grand, untextualizable network of traditional associations. Activation of any single node brings into play an enormous wellspring of meaning that can be tapped in no other way, no matter how talented or assiduous the performer may be; everything depends upon engaging the cognitive fields linked by institutionalized association to the phrase, scene, paralinguistic gesture, archaism, or whatever signal the performer deploys to key audience reception. Once those signals are deployed, once the nodes are activated, the work issues forth with surpassing communicative economy, as the way of speaking becomes a way of meaning. (Foley 1995a:53–54)

The point is not simply that the formula is neither unwieldy nor uncreative; indeed, the point is not simply in reference to integers which have otherwise been the focus of oral-formulaic research. Rather, communicative economy refers to the traditional register as such, the idiom of traditional communication that marks off and is signalled by speaking within the performance arena. Whereas the Parry-Lord concept of economy or thrift drew attention to traditional ‘ways of speaking’, the concept of communicative economy as it applies to the singer of tales in performance and his audience draws our focus onto traditional ‘ways of meaning’.

#### 4.3.d. Modulating Traditional Performance into Textual Rhetoric

The point thus far has been that Jesus’ followers actualised the Jesus tradition in and through performance, and that understanding our gospels must take this into account. We must read the gospel traditions, in Foley’s words, in light of performance as their enabling event and tradition as their enabling referent. The gospels do not preserve transcripts of individual performances; neither are they scripts enabling subsequent performances.<sup>118</sup> But, if we grant that a

---

<sup>117</sup> Foley defines ‘post-traditional’ as ‘the kind of work whose meaning derives chiefly from a single text created by a single author and specifically without active dependence on an oral tradition. In the case of transitional or oral-derived texts one would distinguish between traditional and post-traditional modes of meaning, the former deriving from the work’s dependence on its roots and the latter from its textuality’ (Foley 1991:6, fn 12; cf. 1995a:54, fn 59).

<sup>118</sup> We take here a perspective on the composition of the gospels whereby the texts are not ‘simply dictations from performances’ and that ‘composition-in-writing of the surviving document[s] (or their direct antecedents) cannot be ruled out’ (Foley 1995a:63; original in italics). Nevertheless, the traditions contained within the texts were forged within the contexts of oral performance, and, as will be suggested presently, *the texts themselves were received as performances of the tradition* (cf. G. Nagy 1996a:35, 40; Doane 1991:80–81; Foley 1995a:60–61; L. Alexander 2006:23). To cite Foley again (1995a:64–65): ‘No, the manuscripts are not performances, not experiences; but yes, they not only retain the linguistic integers that constituted the meaning-laden idiom of the actual events in oral tradition, but, even more crucially, they hold open the possibility of access to the implied array of associative, metonymic signification that such a medium or register is uniquely licensed to convey. The “way of speaking” . . . once fashioned as a communicative instrument that promoted highly focused and highly economical interchange, is also a “way of signifying,” and its word-power, though necessarily diminished by the shift from performance to text, may survive.’



tradition of performance already preceded our gospels and that this tradition would have continued to develop alongside and in relation to the gospel texts, the following question now demands our attention: How would the gospels, *as texts*, have been received by their first-century audiences? Would a first-century auditor have perceived the gospel of, say, Mark as radically different from oral performances of the Jesus tradition she had already experienced? Did early Jesus communities receive Mark's messages differently than the orally performed traditions? Did the gospels' earliest readers have to choose between the messages of the oral and the written gospel traditions?

Though neither the oral nor the written gospel traditions enjoyed monolithic reception in the earliest communities of Jesus' followers, the written gospels presented images of Jesus within the context of already-established images of Jesus, and these latter were established precisely in multiple contexts of oral performance. If the written gospels did break with representations of Jesus in the earliest Christian communities, we would then have to explain how our texts became so widely accepted, and this early on. Not that the development of the oral Jesus tradition marched inevitably and directly toward the written (and especially the synoptic) gospel tradition, nor did written gospel texts represent transcribed records of oral performances. We affirm, rather, that 'the multiformity that is the lifeblood of oral tradition still nourishes the ongoing process of textualisation'. In other words, 'a continuity of reception across the supposed gulf between oral traditional performance and manuscript record means that mere commission to writing entails neither the final fossilization nor the wholesale shift in poetics that early studies in oral tradition had assumed as matters of course' (Foley 1995a:75).<sup>119</sup>

Thus we will attempt to understand how the gospels 'continue traditions of reception' (Foley 1995a:61). Unlike the event and experience of oral performance within the performance arena, the oral-derived written gospel must signal its extratextual context rhetorically if it is to preserve any trace of its performance arena. Inasmuch as the communicative event-become-text continues to utilise the traditional register, our responsibility will be to understand how the register invokes the performance arena and maps it onto the written text so that its phraseology maintains, for the audience with ears to hear, its metonymic character. In other words, the text written in the traditional register adopts familiar significative patterns that facilitate communication using densely coded traditional signals. Though we do not have immediate access to the ways in which these signals would have been decoded by their auditors, any attempt to recon-

---

<sup>119</sup> Foley (1995a:79) is very helpful regarding problematic reifications of 'orality' and 'literacy' (cf. §4.2.b., above): 'The old model of the Great Divide between orality and literacy has given way in most quarters, pointing toward the accompanying demise of the absolutist dichotomy of performance versus document. One of the preconditions for this shift from a model of contrasts to one of spectra has been the exposure of writing and literacy as complex technologies that are certainly neither monolithic nor deserving of unqualified reduction across cultures, but which, as generalized abstractions, harbor virtually innumerable differences according to tradition, genre, function, and the like. Consequently, *text can no longer be separated out as something different by species from the oral tradition it records or draws upon*; the question becomes not whether but how performance and document speak to one another' (emphasis added).

struct the gospels' generative contexts and to read them within those contexts requires us to begin to perceive their communicative economy.<sup>120</sup> The problem, of course, is that these features of oral-derived texts are matters of *reception* at least as much as they are matters of the text itself.

#### 4.3.d.i. Modelling the Textualisation of Oral Traditions

Foley has developed a fourfold typology to open up analytically the dynamics by which oral-derived texts maintain their roots in the oral traditional soil in which they have been nurtured.<sup>121</sup> The following table visualises Foley's model:

	<i>Composition</i>	<i>Performance</i>	<i>Reception</i>
Oral Performance	Oral	Oral	Aural
Voiced Texts	Written	Oral	Aural
Voices from the Past	Oral/Written	Oral/Written	Aural/Written
Written Oral Poems	Written	Written	Written

First, this model distinguishes points on a spectrum rather than four distinct categories of texts (Foley 2002:40). Second, we can immediately appreciate that this model significantly complicates our approach to the gospels, which has tended to focus on compositional dynamics. But where on this spectrum ought we locate our written gospels? Our analysis of the gospels as *texts* clearly differs from analyses of 'oral performance'; we are not dealing solely with oral/aural phenomena. Similarly, 'voiced texts' does not seem an appropriate classification of the gospels, either.<sup>122</sup> The category 'voices from the past' 'covers those ancient and medieval (and later) works that stem from oral tradition but survive only as texts' (Foley 2006b:137). This category has obvious relevance for gospels research; even scholars who prefer a literary perspective of gospel origins recognise that the tradition was orally performed between the historical Jesus and the writing of the earliest gospel sources. The difference between such scholars and this project lies primarily in the judgement whether Matthew, Mark, Luke, and/or John retain the dynamics of 'voices from the past' or whether they efface these dynamics, which characterised their sources, in the processes of their composition. 'Written oral poems', then, are texts proper, written by an author and read by readers. Inasmuch as oral-derived texts bear in their textual layer

---

<sup>120</sup> In no way would I suggest that this is a facile objective or that we, as twenty-first century critical readers, could ever be satisfied that we have successfully mapped out our texts' originative contexts and understood them within those contexts. 'Since texts are already removed from the performance and preserve only a limited and decontextualized record of that performance, they in effect make even the scholar closest to them an "outsider" who can never recover the multifaceted reality that lies behind them' (Foley 1995a:61). Nevertheless, inasmuch as we are attempting to account not only for the composition but also the reception of the texts in the first century, and still more if we are questing after the historical Jesus — in other words, inasmuch as we are attempting to do history — we must attempt to discern as much as we can of their original contexts and their significative patterns within those contexts.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Foley 2002:38–53; 2006b:137; the table comes from 2002:39; 2006b:137.

<sup>122</sup> This is not as arbitrary as it sounds. 'Voiced texts' are composed with oral performance as their goal; something about oral performance necessitates the presence of a written text, whether that 'something' pertains to the performance's genre (cf. Foley's discussions of slam poetry and Tibetan paper singing [2002]), or the high cultural status of the texts (e.g., of Torah or prophetic scrolls in a synagogue; cf. §6.4.a.ii., below), etc. During the time period in which gospel texts were originally being written, nothing about the oral performance of the Jesus tradition appears to require the presence of those texts, so our gospels were not, originally at least, 'voiced texts'.

symptoms (or relics) of their oral contexts, 'written oral poems' preserve (some of) these symptoms as habits of language rather than cues to signification. For the reader familiar with these symptoms the text may evoke reminiscences of oral performance, but the text does not necessarily intend and certainly does not depend upon these for their word-power.

In his essay on Q, Foley writes, 'Strictly speaking, then, I would characterize the oral-derived gospel texts as *voices from the past*, that is, works based in oral tradition but interacting in some way(s) with the technology of the written word' (2006b:137–138; original italics). We can identify at least two consequences of approaching our written gospel texts as 'voices from the past', one negative and one positive. First, and negatively, labelling our gospels as 'voices from the past' requires scholars to acknowledge a level of agnosticism *vis-à-vis* our texts (their composition, performance, and reception) that we have hitherto been unwilling to accept. Despite our incessant quest for answers, which this project in no way hopes to quell, 'so many of the facts surrounding the history of performances and traditions are lost to us'; thus 'we must be willing to accept some blind spots in our knowledge of these works as we try to "hear" oral poetics exclusively through the texts they have left behind' (Foley 2002:47).<sup>123</sup> This must necessarily be true because all we have left are the textual remains of the tradition we analyse, in addition to the material remains unearthed by archaeologists, materials whose connection to the texts and their traditions are equally problematic. While we have the texts, our evidence regarding processes of the texts' performance and reception remain elusive, and our knowledge about the texts can only suffer because of that elusiveness.

Second, and positively, recognising our texts as 'voices from the past' enables us to appreciate something of the complexity of our texts and their originative contexts, something gospels and 'historical Jesus' scholarship has often lacked. The negative point of the previous paragraph does not mean we know even less about our texts than we thought we did; rather, just the awareness of additional dynamics factoring into the composition, performance, and reception of our texts itself advances our knowledge about the texts, even if we have to resign ourselves to tentative statements about these dynamics. 'This category renders a crucial service by helping us face up to the real-world challenge of fundamental diversity in human expressive forms . . . If we attempt to force too much order on such diversity, if we try to impose too much from the outside by making assertions we can't substantiate, any system of media dynamics will be compromised' (Foley 2002:47). As we open ourselves up to the diversity of gospel production *as well as* gospel performance and reception, the category 'voices from the past' requires us to recognise that the texts were composed according to the rules of actualising the Jesus tradition in oral perform-

---

<sup>123</sup> The reference to 'poetics' in the immediately preceding quote ought not distract us; Foley is not concerned with 'poetry' as necessarily metrical or structured phenomena (as opposed to prose). Rather, Foley examines specifically 'oral poetry' as a broad range of phenomena that have 'always been an essential technology for the transmission and expression of ideas of all kinds' (2002:28). The model we propose here assumes the gospels are just such a technology.

ance. Even if some dynamics of the tradition's actualisation had to be reconfigured when translating the tradition into textual rhetoric, both a continuity of composition and a continuity of reception characterised the movement between the oral and written Jesus tradition.<sup>124</sup> How could it be otherwise? The present in which the gospel texts were written was itself constituted by the past in which Jesus traditions were performed orally.

#### 4.3.d.ii. Turning to the Gospels as Oral-Derived Texts

How, then, do the texts teach us how to read them? How do their textual signals guide us in navigating their gaps? How, in other words, do the gospel texts key the performances of their traditions, and how can we hear the voices of performance in their traditions?<sup>125</sup> With respect to the performance arena in which oral traditional performance occurs and which is bound up with the performative event taking place therein, the shift to written text necessarily entails the loss of the experience at the root of oral performance's word-power. 'The "place" where the work is experienced by a reader, the event that is re-created, must be summoned solely by textual signals' (Foley 1995a:80). A key distinction should be made here: the gospel texts, in their original context, would have been read aloud or reperformed in the same or similar contexts in which oral traditions were performed, so that the shift to written tradition did not, originally, represent a threat to the continuity of reception with which we are concerned. But we have access to the performance arena within which the Jesus tradition was actualised only inasmuch as that arena can be 'summoned solely by textual signals'. This is inevitably an alienating factor that extends beyond the recognition of social-scientific New Testament research that our texts are from other times and places. We have lost not simply culture but also experience:

The phenomenological present conferred by actual performance context . . . vanishes, and along with it the unique and enriching primal connection between this particular visit to the performance arena and the traditional sense of having been there before. The face-to-face interaction, not only between performer and audience but also among audience members, cannot be played out in a written text, no matter how multi-channelled that document may be. Nothing can wholly replace the personal exploration of an oral traditional performance by a person steeped in the significant geography of the event. (Foley 1995a:80)

Lest we understand 'significant geography' too literally, we must remember that the performance arena is not merely the *place* where performance happens. It circumscribes the event itself: the occasion of the performance, the shift from an everyday, unmarked idiom to the traditional, metonymic register, the ritual procedures of performance, and so on.

---

<sup>124</sup> No perfect continuity existed between the oral and written Jesus tradition, either with regards to the gospels' composition or their reception, but there was continuity nonetheless.

<sup>125</sup> The shift in perspective here needs to be appreciated: the questions here will not be concerned predominantly with the gospels' *composition* but with their *reception*. Even after over a century of source criticism our understanding of the gospels' composition is debated; perhaps we ought 'to focus instead on what can be inferred about the reception of [the gospels] from the persistence of traditional forms as a textual rhetoric. This emphasis entails a reversal of the usual heuristic perspectives: instead of trying to gauge how much has been preserved or lost, we need rather to ask what the documents can tell us about how they should be read' (Foley 1995a:73).

Approaching the canonical gospels with an eye out for how they signal their performance arenas yields immediate fruit. In view of the circumscribing nature of a performance arena, which both signals a performative context and is signalled by that context, might the beginnings of our gospels have cued the reader to receive what has been written as a specific type of communication, as a traditional work situated within the ambient tradition? The beginnings of each of the gospels are both well known and distinctive. Matthew 1.1 begins: Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ, a generic heading that closely likens Matthew's gospel to the Hebrew Bible (especially the LXX). Genesis 2.4 refers to αὕτη ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς, and Gen. 5.1 begins, αὕτη ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως ἀνθρώπων ἧ ἡμέρα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν Ἀδάμ. Not that Matt. 1.1 signals links to the *texts* of Gen. 2.4 and 5.1,<sup>126</sup> but rather Matt. 1.1 is situated, and situates the gospel that follows, within its encompassing Israelite tradition of YHWH's creation of the world and its subsequent history. Matthew's gospel thus calls forth metonymically Israelite tradition and encourages its audience to apprehend the story 'of Jesus, the Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham' within that tradition. In addition, the text of Matthew's gospel makes its situation within Israelite tradition explicit at numerous points, perhaps most famously in the Matthean passages about fulfilment, especially the Matthean ἵνα/ὅπως πληρωθῆ<sup>127</sup> and γεγράφται<sup>128</sup> formulae. The beginnings of Mark<sup>129</sup> and John<sup>130</sup> similarly situate those gospels (and their stories of Jesus) within the enveloping Israelite tradition.

Luke's preface, however, bears both similarities and differences *vis-à-vis* the beginnings of the other gospels. It is similar in that it likewise situates the gospel within the ambient tradition within which the performer and the audience apprehend the performance of the Jesus tradition; it is different in that the ambient tradition, signalled by the preface, is less clearly Jewish tradition than in the other three canonical gospels. On the one hand,

It is worth reminding ourselves at this stage that at surface level the preface actually does little to arouse anybody's expectations, at least as regards the content of what is to follow. . . . All the reader is told to expect is an account of tradition, carefully (or accurately) 'followed' and then written down 'in an orderly fashion', a written confirmation of something the dedicatee (and by implication the reader) has already heard. (L. Alexander 1993:201)

Remember Alexander's larger thesis: Luke's preface is less Greek-historiographical and more Greek-scientific.<sup>131</sup> The association of Luke's preface (and therefore Luke's gospel) with the scientific writings impacts our approach to and classification of the text: not that Luke is primarily

<sup>126</sup> In addition to these two texts, which are the only two in the LXX to mention a Βίβλος γενέσεως, there are dozens of references to important γενέσεις, to the relationship οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς to their creator, and of God's relationship to humanity (Ἀδάμ) throughout the Jewish traditions.

<sup>127</sup> Cf. Matt. 1.22; 2.15, 23; 4.14; 8.17; 12.17; 13.35; 21.4.

<sup>128</sup> Cf. Matt. 2.5; [4.4, 6–7, 10]; 11.10; 21.13; 26.24; 26.31.

<sup>129</sup> Mark 1.1: Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (υἱοῦ θεοῦ). Cf. also Mark 1.2–8.

<sup>130</sup> John 1.1: Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.

<sup>131</sup> Both Byrskog (2000:48–49, *passim*) and Bauckham (2006:117–119, *passim*) criticise L. Alexander's work precisely here, but their focus on genre classification is different than our focus here on the approach to tradition signalled by genre classification.

a medical or geographical text but rather that its *approach to tradition* is more closely linked to the Greek scientific writings. 'Luke's respect for tradition, his lack of polemic against his predecessors, his lack of concern for originality: all of these . . . can be paralleled in the scientific tradition' (L. Alexander 1993:205).<sup>132</sup> On the other hand, the gospel as a whole is so thoroughly steeped within biblical tradition that the preface cannot be allowed to link the gospel with Greek scientific traditions *at the expense of recognising* Luke's thoroughly Hellenistic Jewish flavour.<sup>133</sup> Luke's preface does not locate the gospel within a specific corpus of generically similar *texts* (Greek scientific, Hellenistic Jewish, or whatever) but rather within a *traditional milieu*, which includes other texts but also evinces commitments to 'living [oral] teaching tradition', the conservative preservation of that tradition, the adaptability of that tradition to changing social circumstances, the ongoing performance of tradition, and much else besides.<sup>134</sup> All four canonical gospels, from their opening words, situate themselves within a given performance arena, either to reinforce the point that the Jesus tradition is performed in the context of Israelite tradition as a whole (as is the case for Matthew, Mark, and John, though in differing ways) or to highlight the similarities between the transmission of the Jesus tradition and that of the Greek scientific traditions (as in Luke). The gospels' ways of speaking have signalled to their audiences their ways of meaning, communicating to the sufficiently prepared reader how (that is, within which performance arena) they ought to be received.

In terms of register, a written text communicates in the oral traditional idiom inasmuch as it receives its word-power from the enabling event of performance and the enabling referent of tradition. Of course, as writing moves further from oral tradition and reception becomes a matter of reading strategies rather than experiences of traditional performance, the significative force of the text's phraseology derives increasingly from the bounded text itself, even if we account for the text's intertexts. 'A textual rhetoric of traditional, performance-derived forms will keep the delicate umbilical of metonym and meaning in place temporarily, but as textuality develops its own significative dynamics, that umbilical will wither and eventually lose its function as a conduit of extratextual meaning' (Foley 1995a:80–81).<sup>135</sup> The problem, then, belongs not

---

<sup>132</sup> L. Alexander continues (1993:205): 'Behind the words of the preface lies a whole cultural world with a distinctive approach to literature, a world in which an oral teaching tradition is more important than written sources, a world in which even the *logos* so revered by most cultured Greeks is treated with suspicion. It is a world in which the *content* of the tradition, continually presented afresh and updated by the "living voice" of a succession of teachers, is more important than verbal fidelity to any particular written crystallization of it, and in which, therefore, the written text itself can be treated as transitional, subject to continual revision in the light of new insights or changing circumstances' (original italics). It is well said that what lies behind Luke's preface is not a whole corpus of *texts* but rather a 'whole cultural world'; Luke's preface — and the gospel as a whole — is not situated over and against other texts but within a traditional perspective. Also, as Alexander has pointed out, it is the *content* of the tradition, and not its *verbal shape*, that requires fidelity from members of the community.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. L. Alexander 1993:147–167.

<sup>134</sup> Cf. L. Alexander 1993:209–210.

<sup>135</sup> The point here is not simply that, the greater the separation of the author from the oral traditional context, the more 'literary' the written work will be; it is also (and more importantly) that as the

just to the traditional text's author (how will he compose in the traditional register, including its metonymic, connotative reference?) but also to its readers (how will they recognise and properly decode its value-laden signals?).<sup>136</sup> The gospels do not transcribe, and cannot have transcribed, all of their performative features into text, but their original audiences would have been familiar with those features and would have employed them in their reception of the texts.<sup>137</sup>

#### 4.4. Concluding Remarks

Before moving on to consider traditions of Jesus' healing and exorcistic activities, we need to draw some loose ends together. First, the programme laid out here, and pursued in subsequent chapters, is not to gauge the 'orality' of the gospel texts, a task which, if it has any meaning at all, would appear to be to say something about the composition of the texts.<sup>138</sup> Instead, we have begun with a double admission: (a) We do not have access to (and cannot reconstruct) ancient performances of the Jesus tradition; (b) What we have to deal with are texts. With those two stipulations made explicit, the task before us becomes to determine how those texts would have been received by audiences who were already quite familiar with the oral Jesus tradition. Here two more stipulations became appropriate: (a) We are not suggesting that any of our gospel texts are transcriptions of actual performances, written records of an oral presentation;<sup>139</sup> (b) Neither were the gospels intended to function as scripts to facilitate subsequent performances.<sup>140</sup> Instead, the gospels were received as performances — or 'instances' — of the tradition; they were not originally received as canonical textual expressions — as the tradition in themselves.<sup>141</sup> This differs from the predominant approach to the synoptic gospels in several important ways, the most obvious being that the gospel texts are *instances* of the ambient Jesus tradition rather than *editions* or *redactions* of each other.<sup>142</sup> Inasmuch as one performer of the tradition can be aware of others' performances as well as written versions of the tradition, this perspective does not preclude a literary relationship between the gospel texts. But it does preclude analysing the

---

separation of the audience from its oral traditional roots increases, the connection between the oral-derived text and its originative, oral traditional context will diminish (cf. Foley 1995a:82). In other words, our task is not simply to gauge the gospels' 'orality', as if that were really something helpful at all; rather, we investigate ways in which learning to appreciate the gospels in light of their performance (their 'enabling event') and tradition (their 'enabling referent') transforms and reinvigorates our readings of them.

<sup>136</sup> Cf. Foley 2002:138–139: 'Composition and reception are two sides of the same coin'.

<sup>137</sup> As Foley observed (1995a:133): 'The more densely coded and functionally focused a speech act, the more "additional" information is required to receive it in something approaching its cultural context. For members of the society, and especially for those skilled in performance of the particular genre, that enabling context is never "additional" but always implied, always immanent. Whether it constitutes a part of the utterance amounts, in other words, to a phenomenological question: for outsiders no, for insiders yes.'

<sup>138</sup> E.g., that they were composed rapidly, under the specific constraints of oral performance, etc.; cf. Lord 1960; Kelber 1983.

<sup>139</sup> Foley, appreciatively responding to Horsley 2006d and Draper 2006, warns against 'committing to the gospels as transcribed oral performances ([which] we cannot responsibly do)' (2006b:138).

<sup>140</sup> Cf. G. Nagy 1996a:32–34.

<sup>141</sup> Cf. G. Nagy 1996a:35; L. Alexander 1993:209–210.

<sup>142</sup> Cf. Dunn 2000:296, 322–323.

texts against each other — and identifying ‘tendencies’ or ‘trajectories’<sup>143</sup> of the gospel tradition — rather than in relation to the tradition of which they are but individual instances.

Second, as we concern ourselves with the ‘continuity of reception’ between the oral Jesus tradition in performance and the written gospels as instances of performance, let us focus our attention on the entire communicative moment suggested by the texts: performer/author, performance/text, and audience/reader. Earlier research into the oral gospel tradition<sup>144</sup> dichotomised the oral and the written tradition, a perspective that has now been declared defunct.<sup>145</sup> Nevertheless, we must maintain our guard against perspectives that suggest that oral tradition is the result of performer/audience interaction in a way that written texts are not. If we jettison ‘literary’ and ‘oral’ as categories of texts and think instead in terms of a spectrum, with oral performance at one extreme and text composed-in-writing at the other, the possibility opens up of texts which were composed in the shadow cast by its audience, whether by the audience’s fictional presence, internalised by the author, or by the audience’s very real presence in the ‘text-fixation’ of the oral tradition prior to it being written down.<sup>146</sup> In other words, ‘while a written text does become a thing unto itself in some respects, it only has existence and meaning insofar as it is pitched at, and appreciated by, an “audience”’ (J. Nagy 1990:222). The more we read the written gospel traditions as subverting and challenging the oral Jesus tradition, the more we have to reckon with the question of the audience and how they so willingly accepted written texts that contradicted their already established traditions. Here, then, is another reason for presupposing a continuity between the images and patterns of signification across the oral and written traditions.

Third, in light of the discussion thus far, Jaffee’s distinctions regarding ‘Torah in the Mouth’ may clarify and distinguish various aspects of the Jesus tradition.<sup>147</sup> First, Jaffee identifies the ‘oral-literary tradition’, which he defines as ‘verbal products with pretensions beyond ordinary speech [that] are cultivated for preservation and sharing in public settings’. With regard to oral-literary tradition, this chapter has proposed a distinction between tradition and traditional accounts, similar to Lord’s ‘songs and the song’ (1960:99–123) and Foley’s ‘tale within a tale’ (1995a:48, fn 44). Thus Jaffee’s ‘oral-literary tradition’ resembles ‘tradition’ as defined above; the ‘text-in-performance’ equates formally to the ‘oral-literary traditional account’.<sup>148</sup> Second,

---

<sup>143</sup> Sanders 1969 ought to have put us off such identifications, though Crossan is prolific in its reconstruction of the social and literary ‘trajectories’ and ‘vectors’ — ‘tendencies’ in disguise — of the Jesus tradition and has even built such reconstructions into its methodology (cf. 1991:xxxii–xxxiii; 1991:254–255, 276–277 as instances, nearly at random, of Crossan’s evolutionary approach to the Jesus tradition).

<sup>144</sup> Esp. Kelber 1983.

<sup>145</sup> Cf. Foley 1995a; 1995b; Kelber 1995.

<sup>146</sup> Pace Kelber 2005:227–228; cf. G. Nagy 1996a:40.

<sup>147</sup> For what follows, cf. Jaffee 2001:8.

<sup>148</sup> Recall the image we imported from structural linguistics: ‘the tradition’ is equivalent to *langue*, that is, the semiotic system within which and according to which individual expressions generate meaning; the ‘text-in-performance’ is equivalent to *parole*, that is, an individual utterance that instantiates the larger system.



Jaffee defines the 'oral-performative tradition' as 'the sum of performative strategies through which oral-literary tradition exists in and through its public performances'. The oral-performative tradition exhibits a particular 'inertia' in that the weight of previous performances constrains the flexibility of and exerts pressure upon the wording, sequential structure, and development of subsequent performances.<sup>149</sup> Finally, Jaffee defines 'text-interpretive tradition' as 'a body of interpretive understandings that arise from multiple performances of a text (written or oral). They come to be so closely associated with public renderings of a text as to constitute its self-evident meaning'. These distinctions help facilitate the preservation and continued meaningfulness of tradition within a community or social group, though they do so in varying measure.

In what follows we will approach the texts of the synoptic gospels as oral-derived texts. We will place different accounts of the synoptic tradition in parallel columns not so much to make more visually accessible the evangelists' editorial practices but rather to suggest something of the tradition of which the individual accounts are singular instances. The Jesus tradition was a living, dynamic, organically unified entity capable of variable expression for various purposes. Jesus' traditions could express differing, different, even conflicting images of Jesus through this tradition. But the multiformity of the tradition had its limits; it was possible to propose images that were unacceptable within those limits. To do so always raises the question of reception, and, insofar as the canonical gospels represent widely accepted traditional performances, they ought to be approached as expressions within the limits of the tradition's malleability and flexibility. Most importantly, the traditions from and about Jesus were forged in the contexts of multiple oral performances. In these contexts performers and audiences converged and, together, entered into what they considered the appropriate performance arenas, communicated in the traditional, institutionalised registers, and communicated with a level of economy masked by the denotative surface of the texts that survive today. These texts preserve in various ways and to varying degrees of success these aspects of oral performance, and it is our responsibility to discern and reconstruct as much as possible this originative oral-performative context if we hope to hear the voices of tradition echoing through our texts.

---

<sup>149</sup> Cf. §4.3.b., above.

**Part III:**  
*Jesus' Healings and Exorcisms  
in the Sayings Traditions*

the significance of this gesture, barks at his owner's out-stretched finger, never noticing that to which the finger points:

The first and many subsequent followers of Jesus are like that dog: Jesus points to some horizon in his parables, some fabulous yonder, something he called God's estate, which he sees but to which the rest of us are blind. Like dogs, we bark at the pointing finger, oblivious to the breathtaking scene behind us. All we need to do is turn around and look. (Funk 1996:10)

This image orientates Funk's analysis of the gospels' evidence for the 'historical Jesus'.<sup>2</sup> While we cannot debate the specifics of Funk's hypothesis here,<sup>3</sup> we note simply that Funk envisages the relationship between past and present in the first-century communities of Jesus' followers in clearly presentist terms.<sup>4</sup> Funk approaches Jesus' first-century tradents' perspective — their christology, their ideology, their 'present' — as given and attempts to analyse from that perspective how Jesus' tradents (his reputational entrepreneurs; cf. §3.4., above) reconfigured Jesus in light of their present circumstances. Funk assumes a fundamental rupture between past and present,<sup>5</sup> and he harshly criticises others who do not follow him at precisely this point.<sup>6</sup>

By way of contrast, we have already defended the view that past and present are *mutually impacting*.<sup>7</sup> We cannot assume an easy continuity between the past and the present, but neither can we approach the past and present as fundamentally disjoined. Remembering Jesus was necessarily remembering in the present, but Jesus' followers lived in a present that was *already constituted* by the past in which Jesus lived. The gospels, then, represent efforts to describe the past in light of the present. We are certainly not obligated to assume a particular stance *vis-à-vis* the quality of this description. The discussion in Chapter 3, however, problematises programmes such as Funk's, in which we approach historical elements in the texts as qualitatively distinct

<sup>2</sup> For example, 'Apocalypticism was widely embraced and endorsed in Jesus' day, while Jesus' view of things may have been odd or unusual. The best explanation for this discrepancy between what Jesus said and what his disciples said he said is this: Many of his followers were originally followers of John the Baptist; John was an eschatological prophet, to judge by the sayings attributed to him in Q; after Jesus died, his disciples, who had not understood his sophisticated notion of time, reverted to what they had learned from John and assigned that same point of view to Jesus. This appears to be the best explanation for the contradictory evidence provided by the gospels' (Funk 1996:145–146).

<sup>3</sup> Note that Funk's procedure here is strikingly similar to Wright's: 'not the detailed objective study of individual passages, leading up to a new view of Jesus and the early church. . . . [but rather] major hypothesis and serious verification' (1996:33; cf. §2.2.a.ii., above).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. §3.3.a., above, for a discussion of this perspective and its shortcomings.

<sup>5</sup> If Funk allows for any continuity between the real Jesus and his later followers' memory of him, that continuity consists of 'misunderstanding', in which his followers, 'who had not understood [him]' (1996:146), continue not to do so. Sanders rightly says of approaches that presume catastrophic misunderstanding on the part of Jesus' contemporaries, 'To suppose that [Jesus' followers'] ideas were based on a total misunderstanding is to recreate in modern form the Marcan apologetic theme of the incomprehension of the disciples. . . . There is every reason to think that he was partially enigmatic, but it is extremely unlikely that the disciples completely misunderstood' (1985:128–129; cf. also p. 376, fn 22). Cf. also Alison 1998:45.

<sup>6</sup> 'The third questers, like Raymond E. Brown and John P. Meier in the United States, take critical scholarship about as far as it can go without impinging on the fundamentals of the creed or challenging the hegemony of the ecclesiastical bureaucracy. In their hands, orthodoxy is safe, but critical scholarship is at risk. Faith seems to make them immune to the facts. Third questers are really conducting a search primarily for historical evidence to support claims made on behalf of creedal Christianity and the canonical gospels. In other words, the third quest is an apologetic ploy' (Funk 1996:65).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. §3.3.c., above.

and, therefore, critically distinguishable from interpretative elements.<sup>8</sup> Again, past and present are mutually implicating. Thus questions arise from much ‘historical Jesus’ research that assumes a facile distinction between past and present, such as, Why did Jesus’ followers, apparently in search of an apocalyptic visionary to lead them, quit John the Baptist (a bona fide apocalyptic visionary) to follow Jesus? Given the ubiquity of research that traces how Jesus’ followers reconfigured him to address their later concerns, we ask a question otherwise unasked in ‘historical Jesus’ research: Why *Jesus*? Why did Jesus’ followers choose *him* as a vehicle to address and conquer their concerns?<sup>9</sup> In the next three chapters we will attempt to formulate a preliminary answer to this question.

## 5.2. John, Jesus, and Isaiah

We can now turn to the synoptic account of Jesus’ response to John the Baptist’s inquiry, ‘Are you the one who is coming, or ought we expect someone else?’<sup>10</sup> A significant portion of ‘historical Jesus’ research has favourably judged the historicity of this tradition.<sup>11</sup> This judgement results largely from the assumption that the early church is unlikely to have created the image of the doubting Baptist portrayed in this passage.<sup>12</sup> Most critics adjudge the narrative

---

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Schröter’s ‘comments on current [‘historical Jesus’] research’: ‘If the goal is not interpretation of the texts themselves, all the elements which are considered to be attempts at interpreting the historical material have to be stripped away. The question, however, is to which [*sic*] extent it is possible to have access to purely historical data behind their interpretation in the sources.’ What is more, Schröter insists that it ‘remains necessary to explain why historically the early followers could speak of Jesus as the Redeemer and why they depicted his preaching as eschatological. Otherwise the impasse remains in which one dismisses as “less historical” or even “unhistorical” what was of decisive importance to the first Christians’ (1996:151, 152). Tonkin provides a similar perspective: ‘Professional historians who use the recollections of others cannot just scan them for useful facts to pick out, like currants from a cake. Any such facts are so embedded in the representation that it directs an interpretation of them, and its very ordering, its plotting and its metaphors bear meaning too’ (Tonkin 1992:6; cf. her entire discussion of historical representation and the facts involved therein).

<sup>9</sup> ‘What is problematic is not only the *function* of memory . . . but also the *vehicle* of memory’ (Schwartz 1998a:23; elsewhere, Schwartz raises the same problem in terms of a ‘supply-side theory that attends to the production of images but ignores how the images are received’; Zhang and Schwartz 1997:207; Schwartz 2000:254–255). Thirty years ago James Dunn made a similar point regarding Jesus’ followers’ turn to the Hebrew Bible to express their memories of Jesus: ‘It was important for the first Christians to establish the continuity between the OT and their new faith, to identify Jesus with the messianic figure(s) prophesied [original in italics]. Had Jesus not fulfilled any of the OT hopes, then presumably one of two things would have happened: either he would have won no lasting following, or his disciples would have abandoned the OT more or less *in toto* from the first. But Jesus fulfilled too many prophecies, or at least too many OT passages can be referred to him with little difficulty. Consequently, the OT was too valuable a means of evaluating Jesus and of presenting him to fellow Jews for it to be ignored’ (1977:100–101).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Matt. 11.2–6//Luke 7.18–23, a passage that is universally attributed to Q by those who hold to the Two-Source Hypothesis.

<sup>11</sup> Luz (2001:131) says, regarding the authenticity of this passage, that ‘the scholarly disagreement is quite large’, but he comes down on the side of authenticity (131–132). Meier (1994:130–131) also adjudges this tradition authentic, as do Beasley-Murray (1986:80–81); M. Casey (with qualifications; 2002:105–114); Dunn (2003:447, 450); Wright (1996:495–496); Harvey (1982:141); J. Taylor (1997:288–289); Theissen and Merz (1996:205); Allison (1998:65–67); Stanton (2001:56, 68), and others. E. P. Sanders (1985:140) appears to equivocate on this question, while the Jesus Seminar (Funk, Hoover, *et al.* 1993:177–178, 301–302); Crossan (1991:441); Kloppenborg (1987:107–108); Vermes (1973:31–32), and probably Koester (1990:139) favour attributing our passage to Jesus’ followers.

<sup>12</sup> Beasley-Murray provides a more detailed discussion (1986:80–81). Cf. §7.3., below, for a brief discussion about the problems inherent in pronouncing on what the early church was likely or unlikely to do.

introductions of both accounts redactional, which in itself says little about their historical value.<sup>13</sup> In Matthew as well as in Luke, the Baptist passively receives a report about Jesus, and in both gospels this story builds upon events already narrated (τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Χριστοῦ [Matt. 11.2]; πάντων τούτων [Luke 7.18]). Even if the narrative introductions of Matt. 11.2; Luke 7.18–19 are redactional, they agree in contextualising this episode amongst Jesus' sermon of renewal<sup>14</sup> and his healing ministry,<sup>15</sup> as well as in placing John in one of Herod's prisons.<sup>16</sup>

### 5.2.a. Titles, Epithets, and Evocations of Jesus

Matthew's reference to τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Χριστοῦ (11.2) has occasioned some discussion, though typically scholars attribute ὁ Χριστός to Matthew's 'christological exegesis' (Beaton 2005a:123).<sup>17</sup> Matthew is not necessarily saying, 'The subject-line of the report given to John read "Re: the accomplishments of the one who is messiah"'.<sup>18</sup> If he is, the historical improbability of John's disciples reporting news of Jesus to him in precisely these terms would suggest that we have here a dramatic reformulation of the past in light of the belief that Jesus is Israel's messiah. Matthew 11.2, in other words, would function within the discursive efforts of Jesus' followers to demonstrate Jesus' status as messiah, a task that clearly concerned Jesus' followers in post-Easter communities.<sup>19</sup> But need Matthew's reference to ὁ Χριστός bear such interpretative freight? As we approach Matthew as an oral-derived text, we recall that the traditions found in the text were not only composed but also received within the context of a rich and variegated history of oral reception.<sup>20</sup> Thus the patterns of signification through which the gospel generates (or evokes) meaning among its audience(s) transcend the denotative layer of the words inscribed on papyrus or parchment.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps, then, we have prematurely classified ὁ Χριστός as an instance of 'christological redaction'.

Egbert Bakker provides a helpful discussion of the consequences of shifting from a text-based to a performance-based reading strategy, especially for our understanding of what it means to refer to 'tradition' as a meaningful category for understanding our texts. Though his analysis regards Homer's epic poetry, the following applies to the gospels, too:

---

<sup>13</sup> 'Historical Jesus' scholars have been too quick to set aside passages that are 'redactional', which seems to suppose that so-called 'non-redactional' passages do not reflect the evangelists' perspectives. Tomson, writing in regards to the Matthean summaries at 4.23 and 9.35, evinces a more nuanced approach: 'Even if this must reflect the evangelist's pen, the summary seems to be adequate in the general sense' (2001:31).

<sup>14</sup> Matt. 5–7; Luke 6.20–49; cf. Horsley and Draper 1999:260.

<sup>15</sup> Matt. 8–9; Luke 7.2–17; cf. also Luke 4.38–44; 5.12–26.

<sup>16</sup> Pace M. Casey 2002:108. Of course, only Matthew mentions John being ἐν τῷ δεσμοτηρίῳ (11.2). But Luke has already stressed John's imprisonment to a greater extent than has Matthew (contrast Luke 3.19–20 with Matt. 4.12; also Meier 1994:132, 198–199, fn 89), so it is difficult for us to imagine either Luke or his audience wondering why John does not approach Jesus and ask him himself.

<sup>17</sup> Hagner (1993:300) refers to Matthew's 'christological emphasis'.

<sup>18</sup> As suggested, e.g., by J. Taylor (1997:289).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Acts 2.22–36; 3.12–16; 10.34–43; 13.26–41; 17.30–31; etc., in which the early church is portrayed as explicitly engaged in developing and defending Jesus' status. Paul, too, engages in this activity (e.g., 1 Cor. 15).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. §§2.3.b.; 4.3., above.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. the discussion in Chapter 4, especially §4.3.c.ii., above.

When many features of Homeric poetry begin to be seen in terms of the special communicative conditions of the performance-context, the traditionality of Homer, too, is affected: it shifts from the poetic words and formulas themselves to their *utterance*, and so to the stance and intention of the speaker in the context of the performance event. Tradition, in other words, is a speech act, rather than a property of epic style. (Bakker 1997:12; original italics)<sup>22</sup>

In other words, if we focus on the 'redactional tendencies' of the author, as one who exercises totalising control over the minutiae of the text, we neglect the author's context within a larger social group. The group also figures into the author's redactional (better, performative) activities, and the presence of language such as Matthew's ὁ Χριστός may *express* (rather than *coerce*) traditional understandings. Formulae and epithets, then, are more than tools that enable oral-traditional *composition*.<sup>23</sup> As an aspect of *performance*, epithets (such as ὁ Χριστός) are 'a means to create *involvement*, to increase the understanding of the audience by familiar phraseology . . . Formulas, then, are not so much *inherently* traditional phrases as phrases with *traditional intent*, acknowledged elements of the performer's traditional strategies' (Bakker 1997:27; original italics).

Χριστός, then, draws its word-power from its performative and traditional context: it 'means' within the nexus of performance, as the enabling event, and tradition, as the enabling referent. Within that nexus, ὁ Χριστός has become a standard way of referring to Jesus and, in fact, has approached synonymy with the nominal 'Jesus'.<sup>24</sup> ὁ Χριστός, then, may function here nominally, to signify simply *whose* accomplishments are being reported.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, with the possi-

---

<sup>22</sup> Notice that we are not comparing Homeric poetry's *compositional processes* with those of our gospels; neither are we comparing *transmissional processes* of Homeric and gospel traditions. Rather, we locate the similarity between Homeric poetry and the gospels in the broader nature of 'tradition' common to both: 'tradition' refers not merely to the content of oral or written texts but also to performative dynamics by which that content is actualised.

<sup>23</sup> And indeed, the application of the Oral-Formulaic Theory, and especially of the programme developed by Lord 1960, has been roundly and rightly critiqued among New Testament scholars as irrelevant to the processes and dynamics of the composition of our texts (e.g., Hurtado 1997).

<sup>24</sup> Cf. the evidence of Paul: 'Certainly it remains a striking fact that the titular significance [of Χριστός] has almost disappeared' (Dunn 1997:199). Remember, also, that Paul's letters *antedate* the gospel texts; if distinctions between the titular and nominal uses of Χριστός began to blur, certainly such blurring could occur in the performance, written or oral, of the Jesus traditions. Indeed, Paul's usage may present evidence of such blurring in the oral Jesus tradition, if we suppose that Paul performed Jesus tradition beyond that attested to in his letters.

<sup>25</sup> Notice the ambiguity in Matthew 1: in 1.1 Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ may be titular ('Jesus the messiah'); it is used in parallel with υἱοῦ Δαυίδ and υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ. But inasmuch as 'the son of . . .' (בן/בִּרְ) was a standard Semitic form of identification (e.g., in the names Βαρθολομαῖος, Βαριωνᾶ, Βαρθολομαίου, and Βαραββᾶς, and so on), the terms 'son of David' and 'son of Abraham' need not carry more significant freight than to identify Jesus as a Jew (υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ), and one with some measure of ascribed honour (υἱοῦ Δαυίδ; cf. §7.3.b.i. for a discussion of this latter term). The Jesus communities could, of course, understand these terms titularly, as their needs dictated. The suggestion in the Baptist's preaching (Matt. 3.9 par.) that the Jerusalem governing classes could be expected to claim πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ is relevant here; cf. also John's reference to τέκνα τῷ Ἀβραάμ. Inasmuch as υἱοῦ Δαυίδ and υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ are parallel, we struggle to read the former as a christological title if the latter is not. The use of Χριστός in 1.1, then, may not be titular, either. Similarly, in 1.16, Χριστός appears titular, but ὁ λεγόμενος may suggest the blurring of the distinction between titular and nominal uses (cf. Matt. 27.17, 22). In 1.17, however, 'Christ' is clearly titular; the point appears to be that there were four significant 'moments' in Israel's history: the covenant with Abraham, the establishment of the Davidic monarchy, the deportation into exile, and the arrival of Israel's messiah (τοῦ Χριστοῦ). These four points comprise a

ble exception of Herod and his advisors,<sup>26</sup> characters within the gospel's narrative do not identify Jesus as 'the Christ' until Matt. 16.16, 20.<sup>27</sup> If the evangelist intended ὁ Χριστός titularly in 11.2, its use indeed feels forced and artificial and the Baptist's question rings hollow.<sup>28</sup> But if we understand Matt. 11.2 within its traditional context,<sup>29</sup> the presence of ὁ Χριστός can be apprehended as a 'metonymic integer', in which 'everything depends upon engaging the cognitive fields linked by institutionalized association to the phrase . . . the performer deploys to key audience reception' (Foley 1995a:54). The epithet imports the whole of Jesus' activity with considerable economy (indeed, by use of a single word) into the account of the report given to John. What was told to John, in all likelihood, was not Jesus' identity as the Christ but rather his activities throughout Galilee. In other words, τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, even for Matthew and his audiences, is simply another way of saying τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ.<sup>30</sup> Matt. 11.2 does reconfigure the presentation of John's disciples talking about Jesus to the Baptist in terms of later beliefs about Jesus, but it does so without retrojecting the belief in Jesus as Israel's messiah onto John or his disciples. As we have already said, history-telling construes and structures historical 'facts' to make them meaningful and relevant in the present. It does so, however, within the constraints of those 'facts' and under the pressure exerted by previous conceptualisations of the past, both of which figure in the 'stable core' that resists restructuring at the whims of present interests.<sup>31</sup>

### 5.2.b. John Has a Question

John's question, then, involves the connection between the report he received (that is, Jesus' reputational narrative) and his expectation of 'the one to come' (ὁ ἐρχόμενος). ὁ ἐρχόμενος functions in terms of John's prophetic witness to 'one who is stronger than me' (Matt. 3.11–12),<sup>32</sup> of whom John said ἔρχεται (Mark 1.7; contrast Matt. 3.11). Additionally, John's prophetic ministry, in the gospels as well as in current scholarship, reverberates within the context of Israelite tradition, especially the expectation that YHWH's messenger/Elijah (cf. Mal. 3.1, 22 LXX) would prepare Israel for the renewal/restoration of the covenant. Scholars fre-

---

synopsis of Israel's history; the rest is just detail. Finally, 1.18 is also ambiguous and does not require a titular reading of Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

<sup>26</sup> Herod's question (ποῦ ὁ χριστός γεννᾶται; Matt. 2.4) expresses his alarm at the Magi's inquiry: ποῦ ἐστὶν ὁ τεχθεὶς βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων; (2.2). Matthew's Herod does not serve Matthew's 'christological exegesis'; rather, he equates ὁ χριστός with τεχθεὶς βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων.

<sup>27</sup> The evangelist and the audience do, however, presume Jesus' status as 'the messiah' (cf. the preceding footnotes).

<sup>28</sup> That is, the answer to John's question would already have been given him by his disciples. A similar point could be made for Luke's 'retrojection' of τὸν κύριον in reference to Jesus (7.19 and elsewhere), which Fitzmyer calls 'the absolute use of *kyrios*' (1981:202–203; cf. also Moule 1967:56–61). Interestingly, some manuscripts (including  $\aleph$  and A) have substituted 'Jesus' for τὸν κύριον (Fitzmyer 1981:665), confirming that so-called christological titles do not always have to be read christologically. The point, then, is not that the characters in the gospels are coming to recognise Jesus as messiah or Lord. Neither are the evangelists arguing for Jesus' status as such, for both they and their audiences already esteem him as both.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. our definition of 'tradition' in §4.3.a., above.

<sup>30</sup> Albright and Mann (1971:135) translate 11.2 as 'the deeds of Jesus' (cf. the weakly attested reading, τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, in D and a few other mss).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. §3.3.c., above.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. M. Casey 2002:110–111; Horsley and Draper 1999:263.

quently read ὁ ἐρχόμενος titularly (as ‘the Coming One’),<sup>33</sup> though evidence for such a figure so-called is lacking.<sup>34</sup> Rather, Second Temple-era Jews would have received traditions such as Isa. 40.3 and Mal. 3.1, 22 as instances of the pattern of God’s previous activities, which often involved the agency of prophets. The promise that future prophets<sup>35</sup> would be sent to herald and prepare the way for YHWH should not lead us to look for a specific figure.<sup>36</sup> Neither should it engender discussions about whether some Jews expected a human figure, a divine figure, or God himself to arrive on the scene.

Critics have debated whether John’s question ought to be interpreted in terms of coming to a realisation about or questioning a previous belief in Jesus. Fitzmyer (1981:664–665) rejects the reading of John’s question as ‘his first inkling of the role that Jesus might be playing’ because he has already read the Baptist’s preaching (3.15–18) as thrusting the role of *Elias redivivus* upon Jesus.<sup>37</sup> John announced Jesus’ coming to Israel not as messiah but in ‘the role of the fiery reformer . . . the “One who is to come”’. This reading, however, falters if John left the referent of ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου open or if he was not specifically referring to Jesus.<sup>38</sup> Fitzmyer’s reading is problematised further if Luke’s use of ἔρχεται in 3.16 does not itself import the expectation of *Elias redivivus* from Mal. 3.1, 23. Davies and Allison, unlike Fitzmyer, distinguish the historical significance of John’s question from its significance within the narrative: ‘His question, in its Matthean context, must reflect waning faith, for John has already perceived Jesus’ identity (3.13–17). If, however, the query be judged historical, it must have sprung from rising hope or genuine bewilderment’ (1991:239).<sup>39</sup> If we refuse a chronological intention for our gospels in the

---

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Fitzmyer 1981:666–667; Albright and Mann 1971:135. Meier (1994:132, 199, fn 90) points out that, while ‘the verb “come” . . . can take on a solemn eschatological resonance in a given eschatological context’, it is not itself ‘attached to any one eschatological figure’. Moberly (2001:187–188) similarly makes important distinctions between ‘the one who is to come’ and ‘Messiah’. For critics who read ὁ ἐρχόμενος titularly, cf. Luz 2001:132; Davies and Allison 1991:241; Hagner 1993:300; *et al.* Crossan (1991:230ff., esp. 234–235) thinks John’s ‘Coming One’ refers to God and only became titular (i.e., christological) in its application to Jesus (though it is unclear whence Crossan gets his ‘Coming One’, as he neither retains the wording of Matt. 3.11 nor accepts Matt. 11.2–6 par). Theissen and Merz (1996:201–202, fn 14) read ἔρχεται as having ‘less christological significance’ than ὁ ἐρχόμενος, but they seem to recognise that ὁ ἐρχόμενος need not be titular (‘the participle . . . by no means points clearly to Jesus of Nazareth. Originally its point of reference was open’).

<sup>34</sup> Cf. M. Casey 2002:108–109. Though I agree completely with M. Casey here, Collins makes an important point. With respect to various texts in the DSS that mention a ‘messiah’ or ‘messiahs’, he points out that, ‘These passages say little about the messiahs except that they are expected to come’ (1995:147).

<sup>35</sup> E.g., ‘my messenger’ (מַלְאָכִי / ὁ ἄγγελός μου), mentioned in Mal. 3.1.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Meier 1994:199, fn 90

<sup>37</sup> Cf. also J. Taylor 1997:289.

<sup>38</sup> Our interpretative options are not restricted to (a) either John’s preaching originally referred to Jesus, or (b) it did not. We are considering here the possibility that John’s preaching was originally non-specific, or if not, that the fragments of John’s preaching preserved in the gospels allow for a non-specific interpretation of his preaching. Within the gospel narrative’s discourse (and perhaps its story, too; cf. Chatman 1978 for the difference between the two), then, the movement from John’s preaching (Mark 1; Matt. 3; Luke 3) to John’s question (Matt. 11; Luke 7) is the movement from general expectation to specific fulfilment. Crossan’s programme of ‘bracketing singularity’ prevents him from recognising this development of John’s expectation of ὁ ἐρχόμενος (cf. 1991:234–235). Eve (2005) provides a helpful discussion of the limitations of the criterion of multiple attestation, particularly with respect to its use in Meier (1994).

<sup>39</sup> Cf. also Webb 1994:179.



performative event,<sup>40</sup> then even Matt. 3.13–15 may not prevent an interpretation of John coming to a realisation regarding Jesus in Matthean performance. Inasmuch as John's preaching anticipated someone coming after him, John never clearly identified *who* he anticipated.<sup>41</sup> If we can imagine John coming to realise that Jesus might fulfil his prophetic proclamation, then the link between John's preaching and Jesus' activities might not result simply from the evangelists' redactional impulses. Rather, the ways they shaped the tradition in performance responded to features already present within the tradition.

### 5.2.c. Jesus and his Reputational Narrative

E. P. Sanders discusses Jesus' reply primarily as part of his argument that Matt. 12.28 cannot sustain the interpretation that Jesus saw in his exorcisms (and, in reference to Matt. 11.2–6, his healings) the 'breaking-in' of God's kingdom.<sup>42</sup> The relevance of Sanders's discussion for our own purposes is complicated. Our attention focuses on the discursive processes surrounding Jesus' reputation as a healer and an exorcist rather than the historical 'authenticity' of particular words (e.g., ἔφθασεν) or sayings (e.g., Matt. 11.2; Luke 11.20). Sanders's concerns, then, are oblique to our own. Nevertheless, inasmuch as scholars up to (and since) the mid-1980s had stressed Jesus' conception of the 'presentness' of the kingdom as 'unique', we appreciatively affirm Sanders's caution that we cannot know for certain that others did not also perceive their activities as ushering in the reign of God.<sup>43</sup> But Sanders worries too much about whether we can glean some notion of 'Jesus' motive in healing', and therefore also 'what he considered his task to be', from Matt. 11.2–6 (1985:160).<sup>44</sup> Matt. 11.5 presents a summary of Jesus' activity; we can therefore safely suppose the evangelists understood Jesus' 'task' in terms of his reply to John. We should note, however, that Matt. 11.5 proposes the meaning of Jesus' ministry without reference to his death or resurrection (contrast, e.g., Mark 10.45); Jesus (and/or his

<sup>40</sup> Cf. the discussion of the reference to Καφαρναούμ in Luke 4.23; §6.2., below.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Meier 1994:200, fn 93; M. Casey 2002:109. The situation is clearly very different in John's gospel, where the Baptist comes ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός (1.7) and exclaims unequivocally, ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου. οὗτός ἐστιν ὑπὲρ οὗ ἐγὼ εἶπον ὀπίσω μου ἔρχεται ἄνθρωπος ὃς ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν, ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν. καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ᾔδειν αὐτόν, ἀλλ' ἵνα φανερωθῇ τῷ Ἰσραὴλ διὰ τοῦτο ἦλθον ἐγὼ ἐν ὕδατι βαπτίζων (1.29–31).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. E. P. Sanders 1985:135–141; see also the discussion of the Beelzebul controversy in Chapter 7, and of Matt. 12.28 par. in §7.3.b.ii., below.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. E. P. Sanders 1985:138. In reference to Jesus' cleansing lepers, E. P. Sanders refers to Elisha's healing of Naaman and raising the Shunammite's son (2 Kings 5.1–14; 4.32–37), noting that they 'reduce the uniqueness of the miracles attributed to Jesus' (1985:162). If, however, Jesus' tradents portray him in terms reminiscent of Elisha, does that not, apart from the question of his 'uniqueness', suggest something significant about Jesus, and his significance for the people of Israel? The allusions to Isaiah and to the stories of Elijah and Elisha, then, are precisely the sort of discursive dynamics by which Jesus' reputation achieves its significance and in which we are interested.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. the balanced critique of Sanders's overactive scepticism in Bryan 2002:24–26. Perhaps most helpfully, Bryan writes, 'It appears that a variety of factors could prompt the belief that the time of Israel's restoration had arrived. Miraculous phenomena, predictive schemes, apparent fulfilment of predictive prophecy and the perceived recurrence of biblical events could alike lead Second Temple Jews to harbour heightened expectations of restoration. Each of these factors betrays extended eschatological reflection on Scripture. None, however, could compel widespread belief that the restoration had begun or was about to begin' (2002:33–34). Cf. also Blackburn 1994:386–388.

tradents) assess his significance in reference to events from his Galilean ministry.<sup>45</sup> Certainly this passage ‘makes sense’ even in a post-Easter context, but the evangelists have not reconfigured the tradition in terms of Jesus’ resurrection (despite the tempting reference to νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται). Jesus may not have been the only prophet, sage, or itinerant charismatic in late-Second Temple Judaism to see in his actions the coming of God’s reign, but Sanders’s doubt that Jesus so interpreted his actions is unfounded.

### 5.2.c.i. Jesus and the *Messianic Apocalypse* (4Q521)

James Dunn points to the similarity between Jesus’ response and column 2 of 4Q521 (2003:448–449).<sup>46</sup> The latter text, which makes reference to a ‘messiah’ to whom ‘[the hea]vens and the earth will listen’, resonates with the Isaianic traditions alluded to in Matt 11.5<sup>47</sup> and looks forward to a time when *’adōnāy*, ‘who liberates the captives, restores sight to the blind, straightens the b[ent]’, ‘will glorify the pious upon the throne of an eternal kingdom’ and ‘will heal the wounded, and revive the dead and preach good news to the poor’ (4Q521 2.1, 8, 7, 12). This is not a hope for cataclysmic endtime judgement, in which the unrighteous will be destroyed, though the Qumran community, who preserved this text, also nurtured and expressed such a hope.<sup>48</sup> 4Q521, rather, invokes the memory of the original creative presence of God, hovering over the primordial waters, and a longing for a return to Edenic completeness.<sup>49</sup> Now, the spirit of YHWH hovers not over the chaotic waters but ‘over the poor’, and those who are faithful will be ‘renewed’ (2.6). 4Q521 also evokes Psa. 146, which contains many themes that resonate also with Matt. 11.5 and parallel.

Hans Kvalbein has examined 4Q521 with an eye out for whether the text (and the traditional chambers within which it reverberates) intends the descriptions of physical healings and restoration literally, or whether these descriptions function as ciphers for some other reality. Kvalbein asks, ‘What sort of wonders are described here? Who are those really, who receive salvation and experience the wonderful deeds of the Lord in this text?’ (1998:88). Formally, 4Q521 (like Matt. 11.5 and parallel) is a

---

<sup>45</sup> Incidentally, Beaton finds in favour of Luke 7.21 representing Q (2005a:125, ftn 49), whereas most critics read 7.21 as a Lukan addition (Craghan 1967; Fitzmyer 1981:667). Davies and Allison (1991:241–242) citing Jeremias, Manson, and Hoffmann, leave open the possibility that Luke 7.21 represents Q (cf. 1991:242, esp. ftn 27). Meier (1994:131–132) opts to leave the issue undecided (though cf. 1994:198, ftn 87).

<sup>46</sup> For a reconstruction of the original text of 4Q521 (4Q*MessApoc*) with English translation, see García Martínez and Tigchelaar 1998:1044–1047; cf. also Wise, Abegg, and Cook 1996:420–422; Tabor and Wise 1992; Kvalbein 1998; Collins 1994; 1997:87–89. I am also grateful to Danny Zacharias for pointing out a number of sources relevant to 4Q521.

<sup>47</sup> Collins (1994:107) suggests that the author of Q (‘the Sayings source’) may have known 4Q521.

<sup>48</sup> E.g., 1QM; 4Q177; 1QS 4.11–14, among others. 4Q521 might have been received, then, in Qumran in terms of the hope for cataclysmic endtime judgement.

<sup>49</sup> It is interesting, in this regard, to note that it would be difficult to argue persuasively that 4Q521 is a sapiential document despite the allusion to traditions about creation. But where, then, does that leave Crossan (1991:227–228): ‘One can, in a sapiential mode, go backward into a past and lost Eden, or one can, in an apocalyptic mode, go forward into a future and imminent Heaven?’ 4Q521 appears, despite Crossan’s axiom, to do both at once (similarly, cf. M. Casey 2002:29).

list; ‘more precisely, we could describe it as *two* lists (II.5–8 and II.12–13) interrupted by a reflection by the author as a short interlude (II.9–11)’ (1998:89; original italics). Kvalbein’s understands the two lists of 4Q521, at least initially, in service of differing programmes. ‘In the first list the receivers of the saving deeds of the Lord are not only people in need, but also and above all people who are described in positive terms. . . . Only in the last line [of this first list] are they presented as needy and suffering’ (1998:89). ‘The second list (II.12–13) is different from the first one in that only suffering and needy people are mentioned’ (1998:90). Only this second list, especially its introduction,<sup>50</sup> requires a literal understanding of physical restoration.<sup>51</sup>

Kvalbein’s careful analysis challenges us to get under the text’s material stratum to uncover its traditional significance. We will, however, need to take care with respect to his too-rigid distinction between literal and metaphoric interpretations of restorative language. For one thing, Kvalbein inexplicably equates the text’s literal intention with its reference to different (and separable) groups, so that if the text, via its various labels, appears to refer to one group of people, then the descriptions of restoration must be metaphoric. For example,

Is this first list [II.5–8] referring to many different groups of people, or to one and the same group described in different ways? It is quite improbable that the many positive descriptions of the receivers of salvation should point to many different groups. They are different attributions given to the one, ideal people of God. . . . This raises a basic question for the understanding of I.8: Are the three clauses here metaphorical descriptions of the salvation of Israel, or do they refer to three special groups of suffering people who will experience the saving power of God in a special way? *Only in the latter case the text would literally describe ‘miracles’ in our sense of the word. . . .* When the receivers of salvation are called prisoners, the blind and those who are twisted or bowed down, these expressions probably do not refer to different new groups, but to the same people of God that first was called the devout, the just and so on. *The context and the structure of the text favours a metaphorical or paradigmatic understanding of the expressions.* (Kvalbein 1998:90; my emphases; italics in the original have been removed)

Kvalbein’s instincts are right —there is a point to be made here — but his imprecise language cannot accurately express that point. In the first place, Kvalbein notes the reference to the poor (*anawim*) in both lists and rightly claims that ‘In the first list the *anawim* refer to Israel’. In this light, ‘If the reference is the same in the second list, we may ask if the other expressions in the second list also may point to the people of Israel as a whole. This would imply a metaphorical meaning of the descriptions of the receivers in the second list, too’ (1998:91).<sup>52</sup> This, in fact, is

---

<sup>50</sup> ‘The introduction of this list in I.11 (“the Lord will perform marvellous acts such as have not existed”) seems to favour a literal understanding of these expressions as referring to different miracles to help different groups in distress’ (Kvalbein 1998:90). Though the problem may simply result from my own misunderstanding of how Kvalbein cites 4Q521, it seems to me that, whenever he refers to ‘I.8’, or ‘I.11’, etc., the text he cites is actually *II.8*, or *II.11*, etc.; cf. García Martínez and Tigchelaar 1998:1044–1045.

<sup>51</sup> Eric Eve (2002:191, fn 49) agrees with Kvalbein’s reading of 4Q521 and prefers, for example, ‘a more “sociological” understanding of the “bent”’ (cf. 2002:189–196).

<sup>52</sup> We should recognise that Stanton has reversed Kvalbein’s procedure: not that the reference to the *anawim* reinterprets ‘the blind’, ‘the twisted’, and so on, but that “‘the poor’ . . . are the people who are experiencing oppression and helplessness, including those living in dire poverty. They are the blind, the lame, the lepers and the deaf whom Jesus heals as a sign of the coming of God’s kingly rule. They are the tax collectors and sinners . . .’ (2001:71).

precisely how Kvalbein reads 4Q521. But when he turns his attention to Matt. 11.5//Luke 7.22, he (again, rightly) cannot but accept that Jesus' reply to the Baptist intends the descriptions of restoration literally (1998:108–109). But if Jesus, 150 years after 4Q521 was written,<sup>53</sup> can incorporate a reference to the poor (πτωχοί) at the end of a list of literal physical healings, then it would seem that Kvalbein needs to explain why references to the *anawim* in 4Q521 bar a hope for literal healings and restoration.

In the second place — and this is the more critical point — Kvalbein's distinction between literal and metaphoric intentions of the language in question is unwarranted and cries out for deconstruction. It would not do to disagree with Kvalbein and argue that 4Q521, like Matt. 11.5//Luke 7.22, expects literal healings. We are arguing here not that Kvalbein arrives at the wrong answer but that his question is misguided. Kvalbein correctly notes that the problem this Qumran text addresses is not the presence of the blind, the wounded, the bent over, and so on among the chosen of Israel;<sup>54</sup> the problem is the present state of Israel, oppressed under Roman and Herodian rule and the corrupt leadership of a politically appointed high-priesthood.<sup>55</sup> The Qumran community, therefore, looked forward to the restoration of the 'Sons of Light' and the concomitant destruction of the 'Sons of Darkness' that restoration would herald.<sup>56</sup> In this context, the inhabitants of Qumran found the Isaianic and Psalmic traditions useful for 'thinking about' their present circumstances and their hopes/expectations for the future.<sup>57</sup>

If, however, the Qumranites perceived the usefulness of the Isaianic and Psalmic traditions of restoration and healing for thinking about their own situation, then we need to reformulate the question of 4Q521's literal or metaphoric intentions. Rather than pursuing Kvalbein's inquiry — 'What sort of wonders are described here? Who are those really, who receive salvation and experience the wonderful deeds of the Lord in this text?' (1998:88) — we raise the question, What was it about Psalm 146's and Isaiah's descriptions of physical restoration that enabled the Qumranites to voice their hopes and expectations for the future? Though our answer here is, admittedly, speculative, one possibility may be

---

<sup>53</sup> 'Paleographic evaluation of this manuscript places it in the first quarter of the first century B.C.E. Puech, however, asserts that this scroll, produced in the Qumranic scriptorium, is a copy of an earlier work, possibly from the second half of the second century. His main argument, here as on other occasions, is the author's attitude towards the divine names: he consistently avoids the use of יהוה, even when quoting Ps 146' (Talshir and Talshir 2000:651).

<sup>54</sup> Kvalbein notes that the descriptors in I.8 'are different attributions given to the one, ideal people of God. They may refer to Israel as a whole or only to the sect of Qumran, but this will not make much difference to the interpretation of the text if Qumran looked upon itself as the holy remnant of Israel' (1998:90).

<sup>55</sup> The dynamic of 'the current state of Israel' will arise again in the discussion of Jesus' response to the charge, ἐν τῷ Βεελζεβούλ . . . ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια (Luke 11.15 parr.); cf. §§7.3.a.ii. and 7.3.b.ii, below.

<sup>56</sup> E.g., 1QS 4.15–26; 10.17–21; 1QM; *et al.*

<sup>57</sup> The past as a resource that facilitates 'thinking about' the present is a theme that runs throughout much of Schwartz's work; e.g., 'The true function of veneration (even in its attenuated form of mere respect) is not to reward extraordinary individuals but to give to their admirers, humble as well as privileged, a way of thinking about and judging themselves' (2000:311; cf. also the discussions of the past as a model for the present in 1996; 1998a; 2000).

found in the levitical prohibition of Temple worship by those who are ‘blemished’.<sup>58</sup> The Isaianic tradition appears particularly relevant, in light of Leviticus, because Isaiah takes up especially the question of Temple worship by those who are excluded by a more traditional (or, perhaps, priestly) perspective. In an especially striking image, the prophetic author envisages the restoration of eunuchs precisely in the Temple establishment:

For thus says the Lord:  
 ‘To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths,  
     who choose the things that please me  
     and hold fast my covenant,  
 I will give, in my house [בְּבֵיתִי; ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ μου] and within my walls,  
     a monument and a name  
     better than sons and daughters;  
 I will give them an everlasting name  
     that shall not be cut off. (Isa. 56.4–5, NRSV)<sup>59</sup>

In my understanding, the link between Leviticus, Isaiah (and Psalm 146), and Qumran is not direct; the Qumranites did not anticipate the Lord granting eunuchs (and especially not foreigners; cf. Isa. 56.6) a place among his people and ‘in his house’. Rather, the link is thematic; it provides an analogy (or framework) by which the Qumranites, who perceived themselves as dispossessed of their place in the Temple and its ministrations, could think about their situation and the resolution they hoped for.<sup>60</sup> Isaiah 35 conceptualises the restoration of Israel in terms of the blind, the deaf, the lame, and the mute having their disabilities (‘blemishes’?) undone. When ‘the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped’ (Isa. 35.5), then the Israel that has been dispossessed of its land and ancestral worship will worship YHWH where and how the fathers worshipped. Here is where Kvalbein’s analysis has helpfully pointed us in a useful direction.

But none of this necessitates a metaphoric *rather than* a literal understanding of the tradition. Instead, literal physical restorations could assume a surplus of meaning beyond simply the undoing of physical malformations for those unfortunate enough to have to endure them.<sup>61</sup> Not

---

<sup>58</sup> Cf. esp. Lev. 21.16–24, which mentions the blind, the lame, those with a hunched back (גִּבִּי; κυρτός [LXX]), among others. We should remember that the stigma that attached to these ‘blemishes’, at least according to the text, is restricted to approaching ‘to offer the food of his God’ (Lev. 21.17). With respect to the deaf and the blind, for example, Lev. 19.14 prohibits taking advantage of people with these specific disabilities in the midst of proscribing anti-communal behaviour more generally (and re-affirming the Decalogue of Exod. 20). Cf. also Deut. 27.18.

<sup>59</sup> This could, of course, create problems for the Qumranites, given that Isa. 56 proceeds to create a space for ‘the foreigners’ (וְרַבְנֵי הַנְּכַרִּים; τοῖς ἀλλογενέσι [LXX]) in the Temple (lit. ‘house’) of the Lord, something the Qumranites were not interested to do.

<sup>60</sup> It is interesting, when thinking about Leviticus, Isaiah, and Qumran, that those who are “crippled in both legs or hands, lame, blind, deaf, dumb, or possessed of a visible blemish in his flesh” (1QSa 2.5–6) are restricted from participation in the community, especially when we consider those who are restored in 4Q521. Notice, however, that 1QSa 2.9–10 do make provision for how such a ‘blemished’ person may address the community — and seems also to assume that such a person might have some relevant word (from the Lord?) for the community — despite their exclusion from it.

<sup>61</sup> Koet, on the basis of Luke 7:22 par. and other Lukan texts, notes, “The metaphor of “seeing” in the Isaianic material is important for Luke’s vision of the relation between Jews and gentiles. In much

that healings *in themselves* assumed this surplus of meaning.<sup>62</sup> Rather, within the resonating chamber of tradition,<sup>63</sup> the movement could be bi-directional: Jews could express their hope in the restoration of YHWH's faithful in terms of miraculous healings, and/or the presence of miraculous healings could herald the restoration of YHWH's faithful.<sup>64</sup> But to insist on either possibility to the exclusion of the other (as does Kvalbein) misses the actual significance of the tradition (and the longings expressed through it).<sup>65</sup>

Jesus' reply to John similarly resonates with Israelite tradition, though there is an important difference between Matt. 11.5 and parallel and 4Q521. In 4Q521 'the Lord' (יְהוָה; 2.5, 11) does these 'glorious things', whether the reference is descriptive of who he is (so 2.8: 'He who liberates the captives . . .') or anticipatory of what he will do (so 2.12: '[For] he will heal the wounded . . .'). Matt. 11.5 and Luke 7.22 leave this possibility open by making the beneficiaries of Jesus' ministry the subject of the verbs rather than identifying who bestows these blessings. Thus we can interpret τυφλοὶ ἀναβλέπουσιν (lit. 'the blind see [again]'), for example, as 'the Lord enables the blind to see', and so on.<sup>66</sup> But our passage stresses the point that *Jesus'* ministry

---

of the Isaian material in Luke-Acts the motif of "seeing" is involved, often in connection with the relation between Jews and gentiles . . . Jesus' (and therefore also Paul's and the other disciples) mission is a "prophetic ministry of eye-opening" (2005:99; cf. also Prior 1995:154). James Sanders, too, points to the use of *διανοίγω* at Luke 24.32, a verb used 'for the opening of eyes', to link the opening of the scriptures (scrolls) with the restoration of sight (J. Sanders 1982:148–149). Here, then, literal and metaphoric are wrapped up in each other. Cf. also 2 Kgs. 6.15–23.

<sup>62</sup> E. P. Sanders (1985:157–173) has presented a compelling case that miraculous healings did not automatically mean the restoration of the people (or, in Jesus' terms, the arrival of the kingdom of God). 'There is nothing about miracles which would trigger, in the first-century Jewish world, the expectation that the end was at hand' (1985:170). Nevertheless, the Isaianic and Psalmic traditions taken up in 4Q521 (and the Isaianic and Elijah/Elisha traditions alluded to in Matt. 11.5 par.) provide a context in which precisely this significance could attach to God's healing and restorative presence. Sanders makes a similar point with respect to the miraculous feats worked by Josephus's so-called 'signs prophets': 'The deeds promised [by Theudas and the Egyptian] were proffered as signs of the kingdom, not because miracles themselves point to the eschaton, but because of the events which they recalled' (1985:171). Notice, however, that there are differences between Sanders's conceptualisation of 'the end' and that operative in this project, which emphasises the restoration of the people of YHWH.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. the discussion of how 'texts-in-performance' relate to the larger traditional corpus they actualise; §4.3.c., above.

<sup>64</sup> The contextualisation of our texts within tradition obviates an entire family of observations, common throughout biblical and related studies, such as: 'Jesus does not stress the positive attributes or the virtues of those who receive his message, but that they are helpless and dependent. By healing the blind, the lame and the lepers he could include people in his group who, according to the law and especially in Qumran, were excluded from the cult and community' (Kvalbein 1998:110). In the tradition, 'the people of God' find restoration. There may be discussion about who, precisely, are the people of God — in Isa. 56 eunuchs and foreigners are included; in 4Q521 it is those who seek the Lord, etc. (and not, presumably, simply Abraham's descendents, especially those who currently control the Temple system), in the gospels sinners and tax collectors are included — but we ought not be too surprised that 'Jesus does not stress the positive attributes . . . of those who receive his message'. The act of 'receiv[ing] his message', in the gospels, is the positive attribute *par excellence*.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Crossan 2001c:56–60 for a discussion of the relationship between the literal and metaphoric intentions of apocalyptic language; Crossan's discussion is helpful for understanding the literal and metaphoric intentions of the language of healing, as well.

<sup>66</sup> This interpretation is made more plausible by the grammatically passive verbs καθαρίζονται, ἐγείρονται, and εὐαγγελίζονται, though the argument here is that even the grammatically active verbs ἀναβλέπουσιν, περιπατοῦσιν, and ἀκούουσιν convey a passive sense: they are the beneficiaries of someone else's actions.

bestows these restorative blessings on the poor and down-trodden. Not that we have to deal here with a christological development, for example that Matt. 11.5 equates Jesus with the *'adōnāy* of tradition (e.g., in 4Q521). The point of John's question, and of Jesus' answer, concerns whether Jesus functions as YHWH's agent, the one through whom YHWH fulfils his promises and the restores his people Israel.

### 5.2.c.ii. John and the Agent of God

John poses a 'messianic' question only insofar as we understand 'messiah' in very general terms ('the messiah' = God's agent);<sup>67</sup> this recognition makes sense of the relationship between the reference to ὁ ἐρχόμενος in John's question and ὁ ἰσχυρότερος μου who ἔρχεται . . . ὀπίσω μου in John's preaching (Mark 1.7).<sup>68</sup> The relation between John's expected figure in the fragments of John's preaching preserved in our gospels and the image of Jesus is very complex; Robert Webb, however, has provided a helpful way into this material: 'The most distinctive element of John's prophetic proclamation was his announcement of an expected figure. The New Testament interprets this figure to be messianic (Luke 3:15) and to have been fulfilled in Jesus' (1994:198). Scholars have had difficulty identifying John's 'expected figure'; most argue that the subject of Mark 1.7 is probably not YHWH himself, on the basis, among other things, of the banality of the comparison between John and YHWH.<sup>69</sup> But the subject of much of John's proclamation, as it is preserved in the gospels, must be God. Who else, but God, holds the axe 'lying at the root of the trees', cuts down the unproductive trees and tosses them into the fire, and clears his threshing floor (Matt 3.10, 12)? John must have allowed for the possibility of a human intermediary figure to 'come after him'; how else could he have asked the question of Jesus? But we do violence to the integrity of Matthew and Luke as coherent performances of the Jesus tradition by positing a different subject for Matt. 3.11 when the subject of vv. 10 and 12 is

---

<sup>67</sup> The problem of identifying and understanding precisely what it means for a particular figure to be 'messianic' in various Second-Temple Jewish perspectives is well known (cf., e.g., Abegg 1995; Collins 1995; Poirier 2003; Tabor and Wise 1992). Given our current passage's affinities with 4Q521 (and, perhaps, larger traditional perspectives among at least some of the Qumranites?), the following is particularly interesting: 'I suggest, then, that the messiah whom heaven and earth will obey is an anointed eschatological prophet, either Elijah or a prophet like Elijah. . . . We should also note that there is a plural reference to "all her anointed ones" (וּבְלִ מְשִׁיחֵיהֶּה) in 4Q521 frag. 8. Where plural "anointed ones" occur elsewhere in the scrolls (CD 2:12; 6:1; 1QM 11:7) the reference is to prophets' (Collins 1994:102; cf. p. 105, where Collins more firmly identifies the 'anointed prophet' of 4Q521 with Elijah). Tabor and Wise, on the other hand, emphasise 4Q521's (and Q 7.22's) messianic, rather than prophetic, dimensions (cf. 1992:158, 160–162). In light of the traditional allusion Isa. 61.1 in 4Q521, the intersection of messianic and prophetic themes in 4Q521 explains and can be explained by the similar intersection in Matt. 11.5 par. Cf. also the discussion of traditional allusions to Isa. 61.1 in Luke 4.16–30; Chapter 6, below.

<sup>68</sup> Matthew's ὁ δὲ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἰσχυρότερος μου ἐστίν (3.11) may reveal the evangelist's performative tendency (not to say redaction) to coordinate the Baptist's preaching and his question, but this is not the same as saying that ὁ ἐρχόμενος, for the evangelist, for the Baptist, or for Jesus, functioned as a christological title.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. the discussions in Webb 1994:200–201; Meier 1994:33–35, though some of the latter's argument is unconvincing (e.g., 'to place in parallelism two acts of baptizing, John's and the stronger one's, is extremely strange if the stronger one is God' [1994:34]). Conversely, Crossan (1991:234–235), referring to 'John's message about the advent of God', appears to reject any possibility that John may have made allowances for the 'advent' of God's agent.

so clearly God.<sup>70</sup> In addition, all four gospels understand John in light of the tradition of Isa. 40.3 (Mark 1.3 and parallels; John 1.23), in which clearly the road prepared is for YHWH/the Lord (יהוה/κυρίου), the highway made straight is for God (אלהינו/τοῦ θεοῦ).<sup>71</sup>

Webb has suggested that a clear distinction between God, on the one hand, and a divine and/or human agent, on the other, is unnecessary.<sup>72</sup> In Jewish tradition ‘expected [eschatological?] figures’ were ‘understood to bring judgment and restoration as God’s agent — it was God’s judgment and restoration being carried out by the expected figure’ (1994:201).<sup>73</sup> The current scholarly fixation upon the *person* of John’s prophetic proclamation has missed his emphasis: the *events* of God’s imminent judgement/restoration of Israel. ‘John’s expected figure primarily manifests the characteristics of God himself because that was evidently his focus, that is, on what God was going to do, rather than who was going to accomplish it or how it would happen in historical/earthly terms’ (Webb 1994:202). This also helps to explain the lack of specificity *vis-à-vis* John’s ὁ ἰσχυρότερος coming after him: John himself may not have had specific ideas about this ‘stronger one’. But John does not seem distraught for having rather open-ended eschatological ideas, and his message is no less urgent for being unspecific. Instead, if the evangelists have recorded an actual question from John to Jesus, and if we have rightly interpreted that question, then it appears that something about Jesus’ proclamation and ministry resonated with John’s conception of Israelite tradition and his expectation of God’s imminent action.<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>70</sup> This problem cannot be resolved simply by citing the evangelists’ (or their source’s) redactional or collating activities as being responsible for putting together the traditions in Matt. 3.10–12, nor is the problem mitigated by the presence of Luke’s special ethical instructions between 3.9, 15. No matter how difficult it might be for modern exegetes to understand how John could possibly express the comparison between him and God in such banal terms, the synoptic tradition is evidence that the performers of the Jesus tradition could understand such a comparison. But once we come to this realisation, on what basis can we say that the collator of Q, for example, could compare John and YHWH on the basis of untying sandals, but John the Baptist, thirty years earlier, could not? Recall also that 4Q521 could also retain the Lord as the subject of a series of verbs, even though one of those actions (עננים יבשר) is clearly a job for a prophet of YHWH!

<sup>71</sup> While the use of Isa. 40.3 serves the tradition’s efforts to portray John as Jesus’ forerunner (cf. esp. John 1.23–27), there is no reason to suppose that John himself did not make reference to Isa. 40.3. Scholars are, after all, willing to grant that John spoke of one ‘coming after him’, and Isa. 40.3 need not be interpreted, as it is in the gospels, to mean ‘prepare the way for Jesus’ (or even ‘. . . for the messiah’). Cf. also the use of Isa. 40.3 at Qumran (e.g., 1QS 8.13–14; 9.19–20). Again, we see the gospels formulating Jesus’ memory in terms clearly relevant in the evangelists’ present, but they do so under the constraint of pre-existing images of the past.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. also J. Taylor 1997:292.

<sup>73</sup> The inappropriateness of the rigid scholarly distinction between what God does directly and what he does indirectly through an agent is evident, by analogy, in Matt. 11.2–3. Though John is explicitly imprisoned (ἐν τῷ δεσμωτηρίῳ) and has to communicate with Jesus through his disciples (πέμψας διὰ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ) in v. 2, in v. 3 he is the subject of εἶπεν. But scholars have not scratched their collective heads in wonder at whether Matthew portrays John or his disciples verbalising the question in Jesus’ presence! The point, though, is obviously not *who* asked Jesus the question but the question itself, and that it was, for all intents and purposes, John’s question.

<sup>74</sup> We should not be surprised; scholars readily accept that Jesus’ message and ministry took place (and must be understood) within Israelite tradition, and clearly the evangelists continued to explore the ways his life and teachings resonated with that tradition. Why should John be unaware of such resonances, even once we allow for the distinctive, but related, proclamations of John and Jesus?



Thus the depth of Jesus' answer: Luke 7.22 does not simply 'sum up' events in Galilee but rather provides a lens that brings those events in relief against the originating and sustaining narratives of Israel's traditions.<sup>75</sup> In other words, the evangelists portray Jesus as keying the events of his ministry with the restorative hopes expressed in Israel's prophetic traditions, hopes which then frame Jesus' ministry and enable onlookers to emplot the events of Jesus' life within a meaning-generating narrative structure.<sup>76</sup> 'The blind see and the crippled walk about; lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; and the dead are raised and the poor receive good news' (Matt. 11.5). Up to this point Matthew has narrated Jesus' healing of two blind men (9.27–31), paralytics<sup>77</sup> (8.5–13; 9.2–7; cf. the reference in the summary at 4.24), a leper (8.2–4), a mute (κωφόν) demoniac (9.32–34), and the raising of a dead girl (9.18–19, 23–25). Matthew also refers to Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom throughout Galilee (4.17, 23; 9.35), a message with special relevance for οἱ πτωχοὶ (5.3) and other marginalised folk.<sup>78</sup> While Luke's narrative does not cohere as nicely with Jesus' response to John as does Matthew's, his narrative does closely connect Jesus' answer with his healing activities by way of Luke 7.21. This verse does not correspond to the specific healings given in 7.22 (with the exception of τυφλοῖς πολλοῖς ἐχαρίσατο

---

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Tannehill 1996:130–131. Certainly this is not the only possible interpretation of such wondrous ἔργα, as E. P. Sanders (1985:157–173) has gone to great lengths to emphasise. Cf. Betz 1987; Duling 1985 for Josephus's rather different perspective, who is at once both accepting and sceptical of the possibility of miraculous feats. Nevertheless, a comparison of Matt. 11.2–6 par. with Josephus militates against E. P. Sanders's agnosticism *vis-à-vis* the significance of Matt. 11.2–6 par.; 12.28 par. for understanding Jesus' sense of himself. That is, it becomes clear that Josephus, like Jesus (and Matthew and Luke, for that matter), was free to understand displays of divine power in any of a finite number of available contexts, and certainly at least some of those contexts arose from various passages and traditions found in the Hebrew Bible.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. the discussion of 'keying' and 'framing' (§3.3.a., above).

<sup>77</sup> The relation between a paralytic (παραλυτικός/παράλυτος) and a crippled person (χωλός) is unclear (cf. BDAG §§5605–6, 8004); these appear to be overlapping but distinct phenomena. The two are closely associated in Acts 8.7 (πολλοὶ δὲ παραλελυμένοι καὶ χωλοὶ), though again a distinction persists. L&N describe παραλυτικός as 'pertaining to being lame and/or paralyzed' (23.171) and χωλός as 'pertaining to a disability that involves the imperfect function of the lower limbs' (23.175). They provide 'lame' as a gloss for both terms. Cf. also the discussion in Crossley 2004:95–96. In modern English usage, of course, 'paralyzed' is a more totalising disability than is 'crippled', which allows for some limited, imperfect feeling and/or use of the legs.

<sup>78</sup> Matthew has mentioned other healings, and exorcisms, too (which suggests against E. P. Sanders's thesis [1993:151–152] that 'Matthew was probably concerned to illustrate all the points of the scriptural proof text'); our discussion, however, focuses on the explicit links between Matt. 11.5 and the preceding narrative. This is not meant to exclude those other healings, and the exorcisms, as if Jesus' summarising statement in Matt 11.5 par. intended to draw attention to some healings (and the message of the kingdom; cf. M. Casey 2002:113–114) but not to others. Luke's healing narratives do not correspond so tightly with 7.22: Jesus heals a blind man (18.35–43), a paralytic (5.17–25), lepers (5.12–14; 17.11–19), a mute (κωφόν) demoniac (11.14), raises the dead (7.11–15; 8.41–42, 49–56), and brings proclamation to villagers throughout Galilee (4.15 [cf. also 18–19], 31–32, 43–44; 6.18, 20–26 [note οἱ πτωχοί; 6.20]; 8.1; 13.10, 22), but note that most of these texts are found after 7.22. Funnily enough, the account, only in Luke, of the healing of the 'bent' woman (συγκύπτουσα; 13.11–13) corresponds with the expectation of 4Q521 2.8 ('straightening out the twis[ted]' ([ם]פ'פ' כַּ הַקִּי); cf. Psa. 146.8), though Psa. 145.8 (LXX) translates ם'פ'פ' כַּ הַקִּי as ἀνορθοῖ κατερραγμένους (the Lord 'restores the broken'). Luke, to a greater extent than the other evangelists, describes exorcistic elements as aspects of Jesus' healing activities (e.g., the woman of 13.11–13 is 'bent' because she πνεῦμα ἔχουσα ἀσθενείας); *pace* Craghan (1967:356–357).

βλέπειν),<sup>79</sup> it does make explicit that *Jesus*' healing ministry provides the answer to the Baptist's question.<sup>80</sup> The coming of John's ὁ ἰσχυρότερος, and the age of fulfillment indicated by his arrival, is signalled not by the restoration of sight to the blind, etc., but by such restoration *at the hands of Jesus*. In other words, when John asks, σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος; *Jesus* answers, Yes.<sup>81</sup>

### 5.2.c.iii. *Jesus* and the 'Blessed' of God

*Jesus*' response does not end there; he finishes with a makarism similar to those for which his teaching is famous: 'And blessed is the one who takes no offence because of [ἐν] me.'<sup>82</sup> Scholars typically read Matt. 11.6 in support of the interpretation that John, expecting a fiery, imminent judgement of the nation, is surprised (let down?) by the beneficent and gracious events of *Jesus*' ministry. But presupposing John's 'surprise' or 'disappointment' with the events of *Jesus*' ministry assumes a specificity in John's prophetic message that is lacking. Undoubtedly John spoke of fiery judgement (Matt. 3.7–12//Luke 3.7–9, 15–17, but not Mark 1.7–8), and his message, as preserved in the synoptic gospels, emphasises the coming destruction to an extent that differs from *Jesus*' proclamation in the same sources. But to suggest that 'restoration' or expectation of 'eschatological blessings' comprised secondary components of John's preaching, or that judgement and condemnation comprised secondary emphases of *Jesus*' message, misrepresents the evidence.<sup>83</sup> Not that John expected the events of *Jesus*' ministry; he certainly did not. But this is not because he expected one thing but perceived another. John's 'expectation' was unspecific, so that we cannot compare John's prophetic message with *Jesus*' prophetic activities in order to calculate the extent of 'John's surprise'.

<sup>79</sup> Even here the verbal correspondence between Luke's insertion (τυφλοῖς πολλοῖς ἐχαρίσατο βλέπειν) and *Jesus*' response (τυφλοὶ ἀναβλέπουσιν) is weak.

<sup>80</sup> We should also point out that Luke's tight linking of healing ('he healed many from diseases and illnesses . . .') and exorcism ('. . . and evil spirits') in 7.21 suggests that the distinction between the two is appropriate for modern analyses but not for ancient phenomena (cf. Fitzmyer 1981:667). In this light, the significance of *Jesus*' failure to mention his exorcisms in Luke 7.22 par. comes to naught, and the connection between 7.22 and 11.20 par. (as, for example, in E. P. Sanders's analysis [1985:135ff.]) is appropriate.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. E. P. Sanders: 'Perhaps he hoped that John would see his healings in the way that he himself and some of his followers saw them: evidence that he was the agent of the Spirit of God. . . . More fully, he probably saw his miracles as indications that the new age was at hand. *He shared the evangelists' view that he fulfilled the hopes of the prophets* — or at least that these hopes were about to be fulfilled' (1993:168; original italics). This is an important development from his earlier (1985) treatment of Matt. 11.2–6 par.

<sup>82</sup> Commentators note that Matt. 11.6 par. is the only makarism, other than Luke 14.14, that begins with the conjunctive particle καί, but, rather than discounting this logion as an utterance of the historical *Jesus*, most exegetes read καί here as linking the makarism more closely with *Jesus*' answer (so Fitzmyer 1981:668; Meier 1994:201–202, fn 101) and, in conjunction with ὅς ἕάν, particularising this logion as part of that answer (so Meier 1994:202, fn 104; *pace* Fitzmyer 1981:668).

<sup>83</sup> Cf. M. Casey 2002:109–110; Horsley and Draper 1999:263. For John's preaching of blessing, at least for those who accept his message and baptism, cf. Mark 1.8 parr.; also, the balance in Matt. 3.12 par. between YHWH gathering wheat into his barn and burning up chaff. Critics also note John's baptism implies that judgement of the wicked means vindication of the righteous, who presumably are not 'burnt up' (cf., *inter alios*, Webb 1994:191, 203–204). For *Jesus*' message of judgement, cf. Matt. 11.20–24 par.; 23.13–39 par.; *et al.*, as well as the balanced statements in, e.g., Matt. 7.13–20 par.; 25.31–46; Luke 6.20–26; *et al.* Cf. Wright: *Jesus*' 'extensive teaching . . . carried a note of even greater urgency than that of that of John' (1996:169; cf. also 182–184); surely this 'greater urgency', to the extent that this is an accurate portrayal of the comparison between *Jesus*' and John's proclamation, is motivated by *Jesus*' sense of the imminence of the kingdom, including the concomitant judgement of YHWH. Bryan interprets the 'sign of Jonah' as a 'sign of unavoidable judgement' (2002:43).

Instead, another interpretation of Jesus' makarism arises. Jesus' veiled warning in Matt. 11.6 is not, 'Do not be put off by what I am doing, even though it does not connect with what you expected'. Rather, this beatitude bears overt connections to John's concrete situation in one of Herod's prisons: 'Do not be put off by what I am doing, even though you find yourself in such dire circumstances'.<sup>84</sup> Both Matthew and Luke agree that John was in prison when he sent his disciples to Jesus.<sup>85</sup> Jesus' reply to John's question asserts in rather clear terms that the poor and the suffering now experience restoration in Jesus' ministry, a fact that signals the kingdom of God (cf. Matt. 11.11). As John finds himself numbered among the people of God who suffer at the hands of the unrighteous (which is not to say unrighteous *gentiles*, necessarily), he paradoxically finds himself 'blessed' (μακάριος). Remember that Isa. 61.1 LXX, alluded to in Luke 7.22, prophesies that 'the Spirit of the Lord' comes upon the 'anointed' in order κηρύξαι αἰχμαλώτοις ἄφεσιν.<sup>86</sup> If, as we have been arguing, Jesus' response invokes the entire tradition of God's blessings in the 'new age' (rather than constructs a [textual] list of those blessings), then it is of little significance that neither Matt. 11.5 nor Luke 7.22 mentions the release of captives. The blessings of the kingdom belong to John, just as they belong to the poor, the hungry, those who weep, and the ostracised (Luke 6.20–22), among others, insofar as he recognises in his own oppressed and imprisoned condition the vindication which is his now (however proleptically).<sup>87</sup>

### 5.3. Jesus' Reputation in Isaian Context

If we can return for a moment to our earlier discussion of reputation,<sup>88</sup> remembering above all that reputation is a discursive perception constructed within the context of social interaction, perhaps we can begin to draw together some loose ends. Fine identified three aspects of reputational discourse; we consider them in reverse order.

#### 5.3.a. Placing Jesus' Tradents

We can make two points regarding the evangelists' structural location (i.e., their authority to construct Jesus' reputational narrative in the first place). First, within the larger social con-

---

<sup>84</sup> Beasley-Murray says, regarding this beatitude: 'Its appropriateness in a message to John is apparent: when one is looking for and proclaiming the coming of a representative of God to judge the world, accompanied by all the accoutrements of theophany . . . to be directed to Jesus in his ministry as the manifestation of God in his kingdom is shattering' (1986:83). Despite Beasley-Murray's overly sharp distinction between John's message (of judgement) and Jesus' message (of grace and mercy; cf. 1986:81), it seems to me he has accurately captured something of John's imprisoned situation.

<sup>85</sup> As we have already seen (cf. §5.2, above), both gospels agree that John was a passive recipient of Jesus' activities, suggesting John's movements (and his access to the outside world) are restricted. Despite the lack of a reference to a δεσμωτήριον in Luke's account of how the word about Jesus reached John (cf. Matt. 11.2), Luke has already stressed John's arrest in a way that, by comparison with Matthew, makes it clear that John is imprisoned after he baptizes Jesus (cf. Luke 3.19–20 [paralleled in Matt. 14.3–4]; Matt. 4.12). But even apart from these textual considerations, the synoptic tradition as a whole, as it was performed before audiences and is now preserved in our written texts, portrays John as imprisoned after he baptizes Jesus.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Luke 4.18; 4Q521 2.8 (מתיר אסורים) [also Psa. 146.7 (but not LXX)]; compare Isa. 61.1's (ולאסורים פקח־קוח).

<sup>87</sup> '[Q] 7:18–35 expresses resentment against the wealthy and powerful while proclaiming the satisfaction of age-old longings for restoration of the people' (Horsley and Draper 1999:260–261).

<sup>88</sup> Cf. §3.4, above.

text of the Greco-Roman and Jewish worlds, Jesus' tradents were nobodies propagating the story of another nobody. Not that Jesus (and his tradents) did not attract a following. Rather, they were especially popular amongst the peasant and artisan classes.<sup>89</sup> In other words, we can hardly overestimate the gulf that separates the evangelists and other tradents of the gospel traditions from the likes of, say, Philo or Josephus. The very different styles of these latter writers from the evangelists testify to the different social worlds they inhabited. Similarly, Celsus criticised the gospels for being 'vulgar' literature (*C. Cels.* 3.68), a point Origen explains but does not refute.<sup>90</sup> Though powerful men would, in time, lay hands upon the gospel texts and use them to silence other traditions about Jesus, we cannot anachronistically presume the evangelists wielded such power. Whatever else the synoptic gospels are, they are (or originally were) 'little tradition'.<sup>91</sup>

Second, within the Jewish messianic movements that would give rise to (or become) early Christianity, the evangelists represented authoritative tradents of the stories about Jesus. The synoptic gospels (and John, too) enjoyed widespread and early acceptance amongst Jesus' followers and were therefore authoritative witnesses to Jesus' contemporaries' response to his life and message.<sup>92</sup> Theses such as Kelber's (1983) — that the extant gospel texts are radical departures from the traditional accounts that preceded them — falter on the question of why movements that cherished other traditions so readily left them behind in favour of our gospels.<sup>93</sup> While Kelber correctly argues that we cannot assume the pre-synoptic tradition 'evolved' inevitably and resolutely toward the synoptic texts as we have them today, this does not support his thesis that the written traditions were 'related *more by contradiction . . . to what has gone before*' (1983:xvi–xvii; emphasis added). The relationship between written gospel and oral performance

---

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Crossan 1991:43–46, 266–282.

<sup>90</sup> Other differences between the evangelists and other Jewish authors may suggest different social locations between them. For example, Klutz notes that 'Luke and Josephus differ from one another on a great range of religious and ideological matters' (2004:64) and that Josephus and Pseudo-Philo are closer to each other than to the evangelists (2004:64, fn 190). For Klutz's purposes, which are similar to ours, this makes all the more significant the similar demonologies of all these authors, which Klutz refers to as a 'demonological koine, a schema of assumptions and concepts which, in addition to differing considerably from that of their biblical heritage, was probably common both to them and to many of their Jewish contemporaries' (2004:64). Similarly, Feldman notes various processes by which Josephus subtly differentiates between and prefers Elisha over Elijah, perhaps because Elijah 'becomes a prototype of all later zealots, including, we may presume, the revolutionaries of Josephus' own day'. The evangelists, who did not share 'Josephus' indebtedness to the Roman imperial family' (Feldman 1994:2), exhibit no concern regarding Elijah's potentially revolutionary reputation.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. the efforts of Horsley and Draper (1999) to locate the Q traditions within the popular/little Galilean traditional milieu; cf. also the essays in Horsley 2006c.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Dunn 2003:125–134, 327–328. We are not here arguing for the 'uniqueness' of the canonical gospels; to the extent that other gospel texts or traditions were accepted and propagated, their tradents, too, would have been authoritative in the earliest Christian communities. But this does not detract from the observation that the synoptic gospels (and, again, John) were widely accepted and accorded authoritative status, and this early on. Cf. also Bauckham 2006, who presents excellent arguments for the authoritative status of Jesus' tradents within early Jesus communities (though he also isolates 'the eyewitnesses', as individuals, from any influence from their social contexts and insists too strongly on their role as 'unique' tradents within the first generations of Jesus' followers).

<sup>93</sup> Cf. §4.3.c.ii., above.

is neither contradiction nor evolution but development along a plurality of possible trajectories. In other words, the synoptic gospels were not inevitable, but neither were they revolutionary.<sup>94</sup>

But if the evangelists were authoritative tradents within their Jewish/Christian communities,<sup>95</sup> on what basis can we approach the synoptics as written texts primarily related to other written texts? The evangelists' authoritative status makes plausible the presupposition that their written gospels were not their 'first try' at telling the story of Jesus.<sup>96</sup> They were experienced performers of the tradition, familiar with the stories and capable of ordering and structuring their narrative accounts according to each performance's needs.<sup>97</sup> Not that those performances always or necessarily resembled the texts of the gospels (either verbally or structurally), nor are most of the important dynamics of those performances recoverable. But the gospel texts to which we have access were originally received within the context (and as an example) of those performances, and so analyses that read them primarily in relation to written sources — actual or hypothetical — misconstrue their original significant contexts.<sup>98</sup>

### 5.3.b. Proposing Jesus' Reputation

This leads us to the second element of reputational discourse: the possibility of a credible, compelling reputational narrative. Our discussion thus far has suggested two levels at which the construction of Jesus' reputational narrative becomes interesting. On the first level, and on the basis of the general 'authenticity' of Matt. 11.2–6//Luke 7.18–23, we can see how Jesus participated in the construction of his own reputational narrative.<sup>99</sup> In a sense, this is precisely what Matt. 11.2–6 is about. John receives a report about Jesus' accomplishments and asks about their

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Gerhardsson 1986:49.

<sup>95</sup> Bauckham goes further and argues not only that the evangelists were authoritative tradents within the Christian communities, but also that 'as soon as the Gospels circulated around the churches they had author's names attached to them' (2006:300–305; p. 304 quoted). The gospels, then, would have circulated under the authority of their authors. Bauckham, however, overstates the significance of named individuals as guarantors of the Jesus tradition.

<sup>96</sup> That is, the evangelists' authoritative status preceded and enabled the reception of their written texts. But whence comes this status, if not their communities' prior experiences with and reception of their performances?

<sup>97</sup> Here our programme differs markedly from Lord's (esp. 1960; 1978), who distinguishes strongly between oral and written composition of the tradition. L. Alexander builds appreciatively on Lord's work (esp. 1978): 'Written versions of these stories could be produced "by people who were linked to the oral tradition either by actually being a part of it, or, perhaps more probably, by being close to it" — that is, "*by people who heard the traditional stories but did not themselves tell them: for example, a learned or semi-learned person who had heard the tales all his life but never had written the traditional stories or the traditional style*" (L. Alexander 2006:20; citing Lord 1978:80; emphases mine). The italicised text represents the differences between Lord's perspective and the one developed here; nevertheless, we, like Lord, find it more plausible that the evangelists, as *authors* of the Jesus tradition, were 'actually . . . a part of the tradition or certainly at least were 'close to it'.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. §2.3., above.

<sup>99</sup> I am grateful to James Dunn for reminding me, in the midst of my analyses of how Jesus' tradents proposed, developed, and defended Jesus' reputation (esp. with regard to Mark 7.19b), that Jesus himself was involved in the struggle to determine and define the appropriate lessons to be drawn from his life and teachings (similarly, cf. Malina and Neyrey 1988:41). C. A. Evans, too, suggests that Jesus is responsible for the perspective that his ministry ought to be understood in terms of Isa. 35, 61: 'Jesus is remembered to have defined his ministry in terms of Isa 61:1–2. In his reply to the imprisoned John, Jesus alluded to Isa 61:1–2 and 35:5–6 . . . We seem to have here a work of power that was meant to exemplify the "good tidings" of Isaiah. The promise of healing and salvation is now being fulfilled' (1997:680). It will prove especially important to keep this in mind in the next chapter (cf. §6.4, below).

meaning.<sup>100</sup> Jesus selects certain elements of his activities in Galilee, but his selection was intended to resonate with Israelite tradition.<sup>101</sup> Indeed, resonance was the key to Jesus' answer. While we cannot have access to the report given to John,<sup>102</sup> we can readily see how Jesus constructed his own report for the Baptist. Matt. 11.5 does not necessarily make a christological argument (e.g., Jesus is the [coming] Son of Man, or the Messiah), but neither does it simply point to some events happening in first-century CE Galilee. Jesus' response specifically summons forth particular events that are happening *around him*; Jesus' location at the centre of these events is just as crucial as the events themselves. As Christopher Tuckett has observed,

Jesus' words here imply a claim not only to be inaugurating the new age predicted by Isaiah; they also imply a claim that he himself has the role of being the agent who brings about the hoped-for events (the references to the blind seeing, the deaf hearing, etc., are echoing Isaianic texts and also referring to the activities of Jesus himself), but in addition interpret that role as that of the eschatological prophet of Isaiah 61. Thus implicit here is a powerful claim to an (implicit) *prophetic* Christology. (Tuckett 2005:54–55; original italics)

Not that Jesus' position in the midst of God's eschatological activity (however we understand 'eschatological') was unique;<sup>103</sup> other popular Jewish prophets (e.g., Theudas or, later, Simon bar Kokhba) placed themselves at the epicentre of God's activity.<sup>104</sup> But Matt. 11.2–6 becomes particularly important for an analysis of Jesus' reception precisely because it is one of the few accounts in which Jesus himself fields questions about and provides an account of his own reputation.<sup>105</sup>

On the second level, we can see how the evangelists (and the performers and/or authors of the tradition before them) developed their narratives in service of a particular reputation.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Per the discussion above (cf. §5.2.a.), Matthew and his audience already had access to the significance of Jesus' accomplishments, as suggested by the nominal use of ὁ Χριστός.

<sup>101</sup> He did not choose all of the elements from his life (e.g., the healing of the haemorrhaging woman [Matt. 9.20–22 parr.], or any of the exorcisms). Neither did he (or his tradents; cf. the next paragraph) choose all of the events that would resonate with Israelite tradition; cf. the healing of the 'bent' woman (Luke 13.11–13).

<sup>102</sup> The evangelists clearly link that report to specific accounts of Jesus' healing activity (cf. Matt. 11.2; Luke 7.17–18).

<sup>103</sup> E. P. Sanders (1985:160–163) is right, I think, to demur at historical conclusions of Jesus' uniqueness in God's restorative plans (a theological rather than historical conclusion), though the possibility that Jesus *perceived himself* to be a unique figure in God's restoration of Israel neither makes him unique nor is historically incomprehensible.

<sup>104</sup> Theissen and Merz similarly suggest against Jesus' 'uniqueness' by placing John and Jesus at 'the beginning of a series of prophets who reactivate the eschatological hope' (1996:144); cf. E. P. Sanders 1993:239.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Malina and Neyrey 1988 (esp. the discussion of 'Jesus the Witch' [1988:1–32]), who spend considerable time on Matt. 12.28, another significant passage for understanding Jesus' (on his own behalf) and others' (on Jesus' behalf) reputational efforts within discursive (conflictual) social interaction (cf. Chapter 7, below). Dunn, taking aim at E. P. Sanders's scepticism about the significance of this passage and Luke 11.20 par., is helpful: 'If we are looking for the most distinctive feature of Jesus' exorcisms and healings, it is most obviously to be found in the eschatological significance which he is recollected as attributing to them' (2003:694).

<sup>106</sup> We are intentionally minimising the distinction often made between the evangelists' reputational efforts (i.e., their 'theology' or 'christology') and that of their sources. Though traditional redaction criticism generally constructs the authors' theology on the basis of differences between the texts, with the theology suggested by the common material attributed to the earliest source (e.g., see the massive corpus of work developing around Q's theology and community), surely it must suggest something about, say,

Matthew, especially, has structured his narrative with 11.5 in mind, such that each of the six terms of Jesus' response has already been narrated by the time John's disciples broach the Baptist's question to Jesus. But even Luke structures his narrative, which is not as tightly shaped around Jesus' answer in 7.22, so that Jesus' response resonates not just with Israelite tradition but also with the Jesus tradition as an organic whole. Luke's gospel narrates healings and proclamation to the poor, and these flesh out Jesus' answer in 7.22 despite being much more scattered throughout Luke's narrative than their Matthean counterparts.<sup>107</sup> In addition, both gospels narrate other healings (and, of course, numerous exorcisms) that are not mentioned in Matt. 11.5. Luke 13.11–13 even narrates a healing/exorcism that reverberates with Israelite tradition similar to that alluded to in Jesus' reply, but 'straightening the bent', whether in reference to Luke 11.11–13 or Psa. 146.8, was not mentioned in 7.22. We have argued that Jesus' reputational narratives were received as *performances* of the tradition rather than as authoritative *textualisations*, or *text-fixations*, of that tradition.<sup>108</sup> How are we to make sense of all of this?

If we focus our attention on the specifically textual activity going on here we run the danger of missing the much larger, more significant traditional realities involved. Matt. 11.5 does not mark out some Isaianic texts for fulfilment (sight for the blind, etc.) at the expense of other texts taken up with Israel's restoration (e.g., the Elijah/Elisha cycles; Psa. 146.8).<sup>109</sup> Only when we approach the text post-traditionally does the reference to the cleansing of lepers become odd.<sup>110</sup> For example, we notice Davies's and Allison's striking suggestion that, with the mention of lepers in Matt. 11.5, 'perhaps one is to infer that Jesus' works go even beyond what

---

Luke's theology that he included 7.18–23, even if the wording of that account is substantially the same as in other accounts (Matthew, or Q).

<sup>107</sup> In our analysis above we only mentioned Matthew's healings prior to Matt. 11.2–6; like Luke, Matthew also has accounts of healing and restoration scattered throughout his gospel (e.g., 12.9–13; 15.21–28; 20.29–34; which is to make no mention at all of Jesus' exorcisms).

<sup>108</sup> Cf. Nagy 1996:40 for a discussion of 'textualisation/text-fixation'. The difference for which we are arguing is important. As Foley (1991; 1995a) emphasises, texts rooted in a vibrant, dynamic oral tradition maintain a *continuity of reception* with that tradition inasmuch as there is an audience properly positioned to receive the text as performance (cf. 1995a:81). If the gospels, then, are received by their original audiences as performances of the Jesus tradition, we 'denature' the text by apprehending it as a bounded, fixed, textual entity (as written scripture, as γραφή; cf. Foley 1995a:84). When we attempt to apprehend the gospels within their originative, traditional context, statements such as the following appear to miss the point: 'In three of these texts [Isa. 26.19; 29.17–19; 35.5–6; 61.1] judgment is also present, but that theme is conspicuously absent in Jesus' reference to them' (Snodgrass 2005:37, fn 28; Dunn 2003:449–450 makes a similar move). Jesus' allusions to the Isaianic traditions would have resonated with (and called to mind) the whole of that tradition, including the theme of judgement. As discussed above, we misrepresent the evidence when we suggest that judgement (and its accompanying images) were not prominent aspects of Jesus' teaching and symbolic praxis.

<sup>109</sup> Equally, Matt 11.2–6 does not mark out traditions of blessing for fulfilment whilst excluding traditions of God's judgement; cf. the preceding footnote.

<sup>110</sup> Cf., for example, Fitzmyer 1981:668: 'Two other classes of persons are also mentioned as cured, the cripples and the lepers, but their cures are not related to any promises of the OT [though cf. Isa. 35.6 LXX!] . . . . The sum total of six classes of unfortunate persons thus described, whether in allusions to Isaiah or not, stresses the kind of persons to whom the message of the Lucan Jesus is being brought.' Surely more can be said about the restoration of lepers (as in, e.g., Luz 2001:134). It may be particularly interesting that, in at least some strands of Israelite tradition, leprosy could be a punishment for some moral failing, particularly in regard to YHWH's prophet (cf. Num. 12) or YHWH's Temple (cf. 2 Chr. 26.16–23).

the OT anticipates' (1991:243).<sup>111</sup> Instead, Jesus' reputational narrative, as performed by Jesus' tradents in various communal contexts comprising performer, audience, and the interaction between the two, was apprehended within and resonant with the larger Israelite tradition. Whilst the precise 'frequencies' of that resonance are irretrievable, it is entirely possible that allusions to the Elijah-Elisha traditions would have brought to mind YHWH's activity through a prophetic agent during the reign of an ungodly monarch, in which God identifies and makes promises pertaining to a remnant.<sup>112</sup> Even in the midst of Exile (or, later, Diaspora), the Lord promises that he will restore his people, and, if an audience was predisposed to hear it, YHWH's messenger/Elijah would precede his return to Zion and to his Temple.<sup>113</sup> But this is speculative. Nevertheless, Jesus' reputation, developed and defended in traditional performance, would have echoed amongst this traditional milieu, or one similar to it.

### 5.3.c. Making it Interested

With that we come to the third element of reputational discourse: the perception of self-interest and the potential to advance such interest via a reputational narrative. This element is particularly important in reference to Matt. 11.2–6 because of the evangelists' particularly robust interest in portraying John the Baptist as Jesus' forerunner. This interest is evident across the synoptic tradition, even apart from the problematic charting of 'trajectories' by which much 'historical Jesus' research progresses.<sup>114</sup> Thus we can affirm the evangelists' interest in portraying John as Jesus' forerunner. Even at this point, however, where we can find considerable consensus in a field where such things are both rare and precious, the evidence demands we say more than simply, 'Jesus' earliest followers were interested to subsume John to Jesus'. Bryan has seen this clearly:

For the Gospels a crucial issue is not that John and Jesus fulfil established expectations of a returning Elijah who is a forerunner of a coming *Messiah*. Rather, together they fulfil traditions which anticipate a returning Elijah who is a forerunner for the coming of *Yahweh*. . . . This does not necessarily mean that the Evangelists are setting forth a straightforward equation of Jesus to Yahweh. Rather, they are suggesting that the com-

---

<sup>111</sup> Cf. also Neiryck (1997:49–50), who surveys this perspective amongst other scholars. This suggestion, put forward by two otherwise careful and insightful scholars, draws attention to the problems that arise when we approach the gospels with an interest in their composition but fail to consider aspects and processes of their reception. Are we really to entertain the possibility that an audience, participating in the performance of the Jesus tradition, upon hearing the reference to the cleansing of lepers and being familiar with traditional accounts of such cleansings, would have been struck by the absence of references to lepers in Isaiah (but not in Israelite tradition) and drew such an inference? We need only voice the question to realise at once how unlikely such a scenario really is.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. 1 Kgs. 19.8–18; note also the discussion of Elijah and Elisha in §6.4.b., below.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Mal 3.1, 22; Matt. 11.10 parr.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. Crossan (1991:232–235). Meier (1994:101–103) also reads the texts according to a trajectory 'identified' within the texts, though he, unlike Crossan, focuses his analysis on the canonical accounts of Jesus' baptism. The point here is not that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John do not handle the 'embarrassment' of Jesus' baptism in their own way, but rather that one evangelist's method of pursuing 'damage control' (Crossan 1991:232; Meier 1994:101) should not be understood as a development of another's (cf. J. Taylor 1997:289). Even granting that Matthew, for example, utilised Mark as a source, there is nothing in his account of John's demurring at the prospect of baptising Jesus (Matt. 3.14–15) to suggest that his account is motivated by a perceived insufficiency in Mark's 'balance' between 'a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins with a heavenly proclamation of Jesus as the Son of God' (Meier 1994:102).



ing of the Lord anticipated by the prophets has been fulfilled by Jesus. It is not for that, however, any less the awaited coming of the Lord. (Bryan 2002:99; original italics)<sup>115</sup>

Bryan offers a perspective in which the gospels' evidence can be made comprehensible: *both* John the Baptist *and* Jesus are portrayed in ways that evoke resonances with the returning Elijah.

But many critics suppose that the evangelists pursued their ideologically driven concern to subsume John the Baptist into the Jesus tradition precisely *because they knew it was wrong*: not only did John not prepare the way for Jesus, but actually John's prophetic ministry, within the first half of the first century CE, was more influential and popular than Jesus'. Fredriksen, for example, writes: 'Jesus heard John's apocalyptic message and responded to it by receiving baptism. Later Christians clearly had difficulty with this fact. . . . Historians tend in the face of these evangelical efforts [to mitigate this difficulty] to suspect that the opposite was true: that in their lifetimes John was the more popular leader' (1988:98).<sup>116</sup> But, as we have seen, the historical situation is more complicated than such analyses suggest. First, neither Fredriksen nor Crossan<sup>117</sup> offer any explanation for why *Jesus* was idealised and propagated as 'one greater than' John. This objection, of course, does not definitively establish that Jesus, in his lifetime, was more widely acclaimed or popularly received than was John. But it does remind us, as questers after the historical Jesus, that the evangelists (and Jesus' tradents more generally) may have perceived their task more in terms of *broadcasting* Jesus' greatness *vis-à-vis* John rather than *making* Jesus greater than John.<sup>118</sup> Second, John himself had predicted the coming of ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου. The likelihood that John did in fact send his disciples to Jesus to ask if he was ὁ ἐρχόμενος

---

<sup>115</sup> Cf. also Bryan 2002:100–101. Also, 'Despite the *Tendenz* of the Evangelists to portray Jesus as the central figure in Israel's eschatological drama, they nevertheless preserve traditions which seem to impute decisive significance to John's ministry, the ministry whose central features — the call to repentance and the offer of forgiveness — are closely associated with covenantal renewal' (2002:108; original italics). Bryan's entire discussion provides an important corrective to often hostile analyses of the gospels' portrayal of Jesus and John.

<sup>116</sup> Fredriksen also points out that 'Josephus . . . apparently spoke more of John than of Jesus' (1988:98, fn 2), which is, at best, only tangentially relevant. Josephus's discussion of John is in reference not to John's own inherent importance (or even his widespread popularity during his period of activity) but in reference to some Jews' belief that the defeat of Herod's army by Aretas, king of Petrea and Herod's (former) father-in-law, was 'a punishment' (τινωμένου) of his execution of the Baptist (cf. *Ant.* 18.116, 119). Cf. E. P. Sanders 1985:91–93 for a more nuanced discussion of Jesus' and John's relation.

<sup>117</sup> Crossan's point is not that Jesus was inferior, as far as first-century CE Jewish prophetic figures go, to John, but that it is only the evangelists' redactional creativity that links John's 'Coming One' (Crossan capitalises this term) with Jesus. 'I have argued that John the Baptist was an apocalyptic prophet preparing his followers for the imminent advent of God as the Coming One but that Jesus, after having originally accepted that vision, eventually changed his response some time after the execution of John. He then emphatically contrasted a follower of John and a member of the Kingdom. He never spoke of himself or anyone else as the apocalyptic Son of Man, and a tentative hypothesis for the break between John and Jesus is that the latter no longer accepted the former's apocalyptic message' (1991:259). The difficulty with Crossan's hypothesis, of course, is the next point in his logical progression: not only did Jesus quit John and reject his apocalyptic vision, but then others decided to follow Jesus (and not John) and then recast him as an apocalyptic prophet in the vein of John the Baptist. The problems with this as a historical hypothesis have been well-documented (cf. Allison 1998; 2001a; 2001b; 2001c), but our criticism here is that Crossan never offers a reason why *Jesus*, the non-apocalyptic prophet, was chosen as a vehicle for apocalyptic memory, especially when a genuinely apocalyptic vehicle was so near at hand and, according to Fredriksen, more readily to be accepted by others.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. Schwartz (2000:67): 'The reputational entrepreneur's job is to make an ordinary person great, or, more commonly, to bring the person's greatness to public attention'.

suggests that John himself came to suspect Jesus may be the one of whom he spoke. Jesus' followers, too, as they announced the climactic importance, covenantally speaking, of Jesus' life and teachings, developed and refined their conviction that Jesus followed after and, in some sense, 'fulfilled' the prophetic expectation characteristic of the Baptist's proclamation.

Jesus' followers, vying for his reputation as ὁ ἐρχόμενος prophesied by John, had come to believe that the message of (and about) Jesus needed to be spread and saw it as their responsibility to do so. They were not merely fighting for status; they were expressing convictions regarding what they considered right and true. The traditions of Matt. 11.2–6, then, were forged in the dialectic interplay between their memory of Jesus and their present concerns (including any concern they felt to subordinate John's influential ministry to Jesus').<sup>119</sup> But, to date, 'historical Jesus' scholarship has tended to gloss over the complex interplay between Jesus' reputation as an orientating symbol and as an ideological tool, emphasising the latter and failing to admit the former. This, however, distorts our perception of the relation between Jesus and the sources about him:

Because ideology is powerful, the needs and desires of the present urgent, and the pull of the self and its attachments strong, the past is forever subject to reconstruction and re-writing to accord with present views. . . . All this acknowledged, it is still unsatisfactory to see dominant versions of history as nothing more than texts freely constructed by today's powerful groups operating self-consciously and self-interestedly on the past. (Schudson 1992:205, 206)

The view that John was Jesus' forerunner and witness, and that Jesus was the fulfilment of John's proclamation, was certainly discursive; Jesus' tradents are in many ways responsible for such a view. But this view is also rooted in something prior to the evangelists' ideological interests. Insofar as Matt. 11.2–6 is 'authentic', the view of John as Jesus' forerunner developed before arguments in its favour were constructed.

---

<sup>119</sup> In this context it may be interesting to ask questions about the development of a link between the expected appearance of Elijah and the coming of messiah. It has long been a stereotype within Christian theological and historical scholarship that Second-Temple Judaism anticipated the appearance of Elijah prior to the advent of messiah, though the appropriate biblical text (Mal. 3.1, 22 LXX) makes no mention of a messiah (Collins 1994:103–104), and other Jewish literature takes up Elijah's eschatological function more generally. Thus, 'The notion that Elijah should return *as precursor of the messiah* may well have been a Christian development' (1994:104; original italics). This development may well have been a pivotal aspect of the Christian discursive subordination of John to Jesus, by which Jesus' followers were able to express their convictions regarding Jesus' relationship to John.

## Chapter 6

### ‘Today this Scripture’: Reading and Referencing Israelite Tradition

There seems little doubt that Luke has constructed this scene [Luke 4.16–30] as a programmatic introduction to the public ministry of Jesus, but from the perspective of this study, the choice of Isaiah as the most appropriate text to introduce Jesus’ ministry poses the more intriguing question: How did Jesus read Isaiah?

Sean Freyne  
*Jesus, A Jewish Galilean*, 92

#### 6.1. Introduction: Reconfiguring Jesus’ Appearance in Nazareth

Sean Freyne, in the epigraph above as well as in his larger discussion,<sup>1</sup> recognizes Luke’s status as ‘not just a historian [but] also a literary artist’ (2004:92), by which, if I understand him rightly, Freyne identifies not two Lukan activities (historiography and theology) but rather the literary character of Luke’s history *and* the historical character of Luke’s creative storytelling.<sup>2</sup> Despite this, the question Freyne raises on the basis of Luke’s account of Jesus in Nazareth regards how *Jesus* reads Isaiah; in my view, not just Freyne’s question but also his path into it is ‘intriguing’.<sup>3</sup> For our current purposes, the ‘more intriguing question’ asks how (and why) Luke turns to the Isaianic tradition to think about — and to help his readers/audience think about — Jesus. As we will see presently, though the label ‘redaction’ arises particularly in discussions of Luke 4.16–30, what that label means is more problematic. Specifically, we will see that precisely here, where Luke’s reconfiguration of the past appears most robust, the construction and development of images of Jesus takes place in the context of already-established images of Jesus. Pre-existing images of Jesus constrain the evangelist’s creativity even as those images are taken up into and (re)invigorated by Luke’s creative (re)performance.<sup>4</sup>

Famously, Luke 4.16–30 represents the Lukan programmatic vision, bears some relation to Mark 6.1–6, and raises a number of interesting and important questions with regard to Lukan theology, the structure and purpose of Luke-Acts, and so on. It lies well beyond the scope of this project to attempt anything like a comprehensive survey of or involvement in these issues,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the chapter, ‘Zion Beckons’ (Freyne 2004:92–121).

<sup>2</sup> Geertz has drawn attention to the ways in which “anthropological writings are themselves interpretations . . . They are, thus, fictions; fictions, in the sense that they are “something made,” “something fashioned” — the original meaning of *fictiō* — not that they are false, unfactual, or merely “as if” thought experiments’ (1973:15). This, like Freyne’s point (cf. also H. White and E. Zerubavel), is important to keep in mind when we attempt to distinguish material that bears the influence of Luke’s own hand and material that is ‘historical’. That is, if accounts of historical events cannot be separated from interpretations of those events, then the distinction between ‘authentic’ and ‘inauthentic’ traditions may be in need of nuance.

<sup>3</sup> Freyne’s discussion of this issue is both helpful and thorough, and my comments here are not meant to disparage his work in any way. Though I disagree somewhat with his conclusion (cf. 2004:117), my point here is not that Freyne’s work is lacking in any way, but rather that the confluence of issues precisely at Luke 4.16–30 raises, for me, a whole different set of questions than for Freyne.

<sup>4</sup> In his analysis of ‘how culture works’, Schudson says, ‘To understand the efficacy of culture, it is essential to recognize simultaneously that (1) human beings make their own history and (2) they do not make it according to circumstances of their own choosing’ (1989a:156).

especially inasmuch as this project focuses on the memory of Jesus as exhibited by his sayings regarding his therapeutic and exorcistic activities. Two factors, however, move us to look at Luke 4.16–30. First, the mention of τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν in 4.18, which accurately reflects Isa. 61.1 LXX (but not the MT), provides an explicit link to the healing traditions.<sup>5</sup> Second, Jesus reads from Isa. 61.1–2 (cf. Luke 4.18–19), the same passage that climaxed Jesus' answer to the Baptist in 7.22. Inasmuch as the tradition in Luke 7.18–23 originated from Jesus,<sup>6</sup> the thematic similarities between 7.18–23 and 4.16–30 offer to shed some light on processes that we typically label 'Lukan redaction.'<sup>7</sup>

## 6.2. Contextualising Lukan Redaction

Let us expand this second point. We are primarily concerned with the relationships between (a) Luke 4.14–30;<sup>8</sup> (b) Luke 7.18–23;<sup>9</sup> and (c) the memory of Jesus' actual past. Scholars have long been aware that problems plague attempts to develop a chronology for Jesus' life in any meaningful detail, primarily because the evangelists do not exhibit interest in a chronological 'life of Jesus'.<sup>10</sup> Loveday Alexander has rightly noted that 'the core gospel narrative seems to be able to subsist with a minimum of geographical and chronological information', though geographical and chronological markers could be inserted into the narrative as desired. Thus 'the narrative is episodic but continuous. Individual episodes are loosely linked, but precise time-notes are few and far between' (2006:15). In addition, since Wrede scholars have often suggested that the chronology of the gospels is itself a theological construct that does not communicate anything reliable about the historical Jesus. In terms of chronology, then, we cannot be sure whether Jesus fielded John's question before or after his return to Nazareth. In terms of tradition, however, we do seem able to make some judgements regarding historical sequence.

### 6.2.a. The Roots of Luke 4.16–30 in 7.18–23

If we suppose that both Luke 4.16–30 and 7.18–23 establish Jesus' programme — the former for Luke, the latter for Jesus — how ought we conceive of the relationship between these two traditions? To the extent that 4.16–30 establishes Jesus' programme in Lukan performance,

---

<sup>5</sup> This is made even more important in light of the programmatic force of this entire passage; τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν needs to be understood in relation to other programmatic episodes regarding Jesus' ministry, esp. Luke 7.18–23 par. and 11.14–23 parr. Interestingly, the restoration of sight to the blind receives special attention in another peculiarly Lukan passage (7.21). Additionally, the reference to the activities of Elijah and Elisha (4.25–27) and the implied comparison between them and Jesus recalls two of the activities referred to in Jesus' reply to the Baptist (νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται and λεπροὶ καθαρίζονται, respectively) as well as the narrated episodes in which Jesus heals a (foreign) centurion's servant (7.1–10) and raises a widow's son from death (7.11–17).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the previous chapter.

<sup>7</sup> In addition to Luke 4.16–30, we will focus some attention on the two verses that introduce this passage (4.14–15).

<sup>8</sup> Luke 4.14–30 is usually attributed to Lukan redaction, especially of Mark 6.1–6 (cf. Fitzmyer 1981:526–529), though some attribute this passage to a Lukan source (see the discussion at §6.3, below).

<sup>9</sup> Luke 7.18–23 is usually attributed to Q, with the exceptions of 7.18 and 7.20–21.

<sup>10</sup> *Pace* Conzelmann, who supposes that once Luke 'has discovered the redemptive significance of an event, he can go on to deduce from it the "correct" chronology, which means, among other things, that he can begin to modify Mark' (1953:33). As we will demonstrate presently, Luke's text itself suggests that he is not concerned with chronology, and we have been arguing since Chapter 2, above, that we cannot read any of our gospels in terms of (or 'against') the others.

Jesus' response to John at 7.18–23 functions as a part of the programme inaugurated in the Nazarene synagogue. But given 7.18–23's stronger claim to represent an actual encounter in the life of Jesus,<sup>11</sup> we will focus our attention in this chapter on the relation of the traditions underlying 4.14–30 and 7.18–23 outside of (or prior to) their emplotment within Lukan performance. We assume here, as throughout this project, that the traditions in Luke 4.14–30 and 7.18–23 were not created for the first time when Luke was written. This must be true for 7.18–23, which is paralleled in Matthew and ascribed to Q by everyone who accepts Q's existence. But, irrespective of the connection between 4.16–30 and Mark 6.1–6, we propose that even if Luke 'made up' 4.14–30 it bears some relation to Luke's performative experiences *vis-à-vis* the Jesus tradition. In other words, the tradition of Jesus' preaching in Nazareth (of which Mark 6.1–6 represents another expression) became programmatic for Lukan performance of the Jesus tradition as a whole. Thus we ask two questions. First, If Luke 4.14–30 is redaction, whence comes Luke's redactional impulse?<sup>12</sup> Second, What relation exists between this particular redaction and the tradition already familiar to Luke?<sup>13</sup>

Jesus' reply to the Baptist activates and resonates with the traditions of Israel's restoration, and this resonance characterised Jesus' activity itself. Though we can set Jesus' reply alongside specific Isaianic texts,<sup>14</sup> the resonance of Jesus' answer transcends those specific texts.<sup>15</sup> Also, the suggestion that Jesus' citation of these Isaianic passages conspicuously excises any reference to judgement impedes our attempt to understand Luke 7.18–23.<sup>16</sup> Like salt and pepper, which always 'travel' together, the tradition of Israel's restoration brings with it the judgement of Israel's unfaithful and 'the nations' who oppose and oppress her.<sup>17</sup> The strong connection between restoration and judgement suggested by the traditional reverberations of Jesus' reply to John

---

<sup>11</sup> Cf. §5.2, above; Beasley-Murray exaggerates only slightly when he says, 'The sayings in . . . Matthew 11:5–6 and Luke 7:22–23 . . . are so characteristic of what we know of Jesus that their authenticity is virtually unchallenged in contemporary scholarship' (1986:80).

<sup>12</sup> Commentators typically answer this question, 'Luke's present' (variously expressed), especially the needs of 'Luke's community'. We will focus on the ways in which pre-established images of Jesus and performative traditions surrounding the [synoptic] Jesus tradition also factor in Lukan 'redaction' (cf. §3.3.b., above).

<sup>13</sup> If we may anticipate the conclusion of this discussion: in the Lukan narrative 7.18–23 functions as part of the programme established at 4.14–30. But insofar as the *tradition* at 7.18–23 informs 4.16–30, the Lukan vision of Jesus' programme developed within the context 7.18–23.

<sup>14</sup> Viz., Isa. 26.19; 29.17–19; 35.5–6; 61.1. Neiryck, representative of careful gospel scholarship, is too preoccupied with identifying the specific text the Q-author gazed upon as he wrote what we now call Q 7.22 (cf. 1997:47).

<sup>15</sup> For example, allusions to the Elijah/Elisha cycle and 4Q521, as well as Luke 13.11–13, suggest that other texts (e.g. Psa. 146) would have comprised the traditional surround contextualising Jesus' reply.

<sup>16</sup> *Pace* Snodgrass 2005:37, fn 28; Fitzmyer 1981:532, 533; Bock 1994:405. Indeed, Bock goes so far as to suggest a 'more likely' explanation for Jesus' neglect of the 'day of the Lord's recompense' from Isa. 61.2: 'The ultimate time of God's vengeance is not yet arrived in *this coming of Jesus*' (1994:411; my emphasis)! Even if Jesus could be imagined to structure his thought in terms of his 'first' and 'second' coming in this passage, how does Bock suppose Jesus would have expected his audience to follow his message? Or are we to suppose Jesus was content not simply to be misunderstood but to make himself incomprehensible?

<sup>17</sup> Cf. §5.2.c.iii., above; also, the Isaianic texts referred to above, the proclamation of John the Baptist, and even Jesus' message at other points (e.g., Matt. 7.13–20 par.; 25.31–46, among others).

pertain not only to Jesus' healing activities, even if these are extended to include his exorcisms;<sup>18</sup> Jesus' *kerygma* also evokes the tradition of Israel's restoration, both as the announcement that this restoration has been/is being effected and as part of that restoration itself.<sup>19</sup>

Given the coherence between Jesus as a first-century Jew and the adept activation of Israel's traditions in the gospels' portrayal of him, we can reasonably suppose that one of the interpretations of (or reputations for) Jesus on offer during his Galilean ministry framed his proclamation and ministry within the hopes of Israel's restoration found and nurtured within her sacred traditions.<sup>20</sup> As noted in the previous chapter, Jesus' reply to the Baptist, even as it appears in post-Easter traditional and commemorative texts (viz., Matthew and Luke), assesses his significance and purpose in light of Israelite tradition and without reference to his crucifixion and/or resurrection. This does not, however, mean that auditors of the Jesus tradition would have received Jesus' reply, performed in communal gatherings of Jesus' followers, outside the light of the Easter event. As Dunn notes in his summary of the work of Moule and Lemcio, 'The Synoptic Gospels particularly retain a clear sense of before and after Easter in the *content* of the Jesus tradition which they retell. The *context* of the retelling everywhere implies a post-Easter perspective' (2003b:195; original italics). While we can only postulate that we have access to a pre-Easter assessment of Jesus in Luke 7.18–23, we more confidently affirm that this tradition does not distort pre-Easter perceptions of Jesus' ministry in the direction of the crucifixion and resurrection.

### 6.2.b. Luke 4.16–30 in Light of the Jesus Tradition

This is not so readily the case with Luke 4.14–30. On the one hand, Luke's basic presentation of Jesus being received well by some of his contemporaries and rejected by others seems plausible, even if this presentation has been emplotted within a 'Jew first, then the gentiles' schema that developed upon later reflection.<sup>21</sup> Like the Nazareth tradition of Mark 6, the depiction in 4.16–30 emphasises Jesus' rejection by his contemporaries. Might this represent Jesus' actual reception in his hometown?<sup>22</sup> As we ponder this question, we note that Jesus' poor show-

---

<sup>18</sup> We will shortly turn our attention to the saying in Matt. 12.28//Luke 11.20 (cf. §7.3.b.ii., below). Luke 7.21; 13.11–13, as well as Luke's telling of the healing of Peter's mother-in-law (4.38–39; cp. Mark 1.29–31), suggest that we ought not strongly differentiate healings from exorcisms (as is the tendency in critical scholarship); *pace* Twelftree 1993:55–56, 121, 138. Penney and Wise agree: '[4Q560] poses the question whether "exorcism" and "healing" were truly distinguished in the minds of the evangelists' (1994:650).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. [καὶ] πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται; Luke 7.23 par.

<sup>20</sup> Thus this reputation began to develop before the Easter event and its concomitant pressures upon the Jesus tradition. While this supposition seems entirely plausible, we note presently that the expression of this reputation preserved in Luke 7.18–23 par., and in Lukan performance more generally, is firmly rooted in post-Easter contexts.

<sup>21</sup> Siker (1992) rejects this notion and claims instead that, in Luke 4.16–30, 'the maxim "to the Jews first and also to the Greek" is set on its head. Luke 4.25–27 points to the *priority* of the proclamation to and inclusion of the Gentiles as part and parcel of Israel, God's πατρίς' (1992:84; my emphasis). Cf. my comments on 4.25–27, §6.4.b., below.

<sup>22</sup> We should note that Jesus' reception is generally mixed in the Lukan narrative, and this is especially true of Jesus' representatives in Acts (cf. Jervell 1972, 1996; Esler 1987, both of whom stress the depiction of Jews responding positively, *en masse*, to the message of Jesus). As the depiction of Jesus' reception in Nazareth is primarily — if not completely — negative (cf. Prior 1995:98–99), it is unlikely that

istry in the different villages and regions of Galilee, we can assume that Jesus' appearance in Nazareth was one instance of Jesus' larger prophetic programme. But in Luke's gospel precisely this instance establishes Jesus' programme and evidences (or foreshadows) its scope and success. Luke realises his portrayal rings somewhat artificial in that he has taken an incident from later in Jesus' public career and retrojected it back to its beginning:<sup>29</sup> the summary of 4.14–15 suggests Luke knew Jesus did not make a bee-line for home, and the reference in 4.23 to Καφαρναούμ suggests he went to Nazareth only after an important and well-known stint further north. But the artifice of Luke's account pertains primarily to chronology, a narratological feature the evangelists appear unconcerned to communicate. Only when we read Luke post-traditionally, removing the text from its oral-performative originative context, do we ask (in reaction to 4.23), 'What has Jesus done in Capernaum, given that he has not yet been there?'<sup>30</sup>

### 6.2.c. The Quest of the 'Historical Jesus' and Luke 4.14–30

We cannot dismiss the Lukan account of Jesus' appearance in Nazareth as 'redactional' (or 'inauthentic') in a quest for understanding the historical Jesus, even though it quite clearly represents Luke's own creative reworking of existing tradition. Though the passage communicates the Lukan interpretation of Jesus and his significance, scholars have been too quick to raise the question of whether the depiction in 4.14–30 comes from Luke's own hand or from his 'special source(s)'. Such a concern is blatantly not what concerns us here; rather, we are inquiring

---

<sup>29</sup> This is not to say that Mark's placement of Jesus' appearance in Nazareth later in his Galilean ministry accurately reflects the chronology of Jesus' actual life; as stated above, the gospels do not appear overly concerned to present Jesus' life chronologically, except in broad strokes. In fact, on the face of it, Luke's portrayal appears more probable, historically speaking. If Jesus were returning to Galilee from his journeys down south (his baptism and experiences in the wilderness, along with his experiences within the circle of the Baptist's followers), why couldn't his first port of call be ἡ πατρίς αὐτοῦ? It is not Mark's narrative (or Matthew's, for the neo-Griesbachians) that reveals Luke's retrojection; rather, features in Luke's account itself reveal that Luke has 'fronted' Jesus' appearance in Nazareth to convey his larger significance.

<sup>30</sup> Pace Bovon (2002:152): 'In Luke 4:14, then, the widespread recognition of Jesus is attested, though Jesus, to this point, has not made a public appearance. Is Luke imagining that the temptation might not have remained unknown?' In Luke's summary, traditionally apprehended, Jesus' return to Galilee signals his public appearance there (cf. the comments, below, regarding ἐν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ πνεύματος; as well as Bovon's comments [2002:151]). Here is textual evidence in support of the historical argument, made in Chapter four, that the evangelists and their audiences were aware of and experienced with the oral performance of the multiform Jesus tradition prior to our gospels. As Luke and his audience(s) experience this particular performance of the Nazareth episode, they apprehend the account not in terms of what has come before in the written Lukan narrative. The text reverberates within a larger traditional network in which connections can also be made diachronically, across multiple performances. In other words, Luke apparently has no difficulty making forward-looking references, post-traditionally speaking (cf. Bovon 2002:149). Such references brought with them deeper resonances with earlier performances of Jesus' story. In this way, Luke's shuffling of events is not artificial at all but takes advantage of the traditional poetics of oral and oral-derived texts. Thus terms like 'displacement' (cf. Bock 1994:398) reflect our über-literate perspective of texts and do not take into account the reception of the Lukan text in a[n oral] traditional context. Prior also rejects the '*privatization* of the encounter between a reader and a text' and emphasises the 'communal context' of Luke's original (or, better, earliest) audiences (1995:161; original italics). The same problem surfaces in the interpretation of οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ (Mark 3.21), of which France says, 'It must only be by a *retrospective understanding in the light of v. 31 . . .* that the reader, recognising the sandwich structure of the whole section, may realise just who it was who "went out" in v. 21; *but this would be a lot to expect of a first-time reader*' (2002:166; emphases added). Rather than via 'retrospection', οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ may evoke (or invoke) its meaning via extratextual traditional poetics, as Luke 4.23 almost certainly does.

after the relation between the reputation constructed on Jesus' behalf in Luke 4.14–30 and Jesus' reputation as it was constructed and defended in the tradition prior to (or simply outside the sphere of) Luke's redaction. Significantly, given that Luke 7.18–23 presents a pre-Lukan (perhaps even a pre-Easter)<sup>31</sup> interpretation of Jesus, 4.14–30 does not significantly alter Jesus' reputation, even if it re-presents it more dramatically and with a different focus. As in Luke 7.18–23, 4.14–30 develops Jesus' reputation with reference to Isaianic traditions of Israel's restoration.<sup>32</sup> Both passages present Jesus as the epicentre of God's activity, with an emphasis on his person as the locus of Israel's restoration rather than merely a herald of that restoration accomplished elsewhere. Both present Jesus' sphere of activity as encompassing primarily the lower strata of society, and this precisely in line with God's traditional care for the helpless and the outcast. Luke 4.25–27 emphasises Jesus' significance for those beyond the border of national (or ethnic) Israel in a way that goes beyond the portrayal of 7.18–23, but even this, as we will see, develops (or extends) rather than distorts (or retrojects) the Jesus tradition and its larger Israelite traditional milieu.

These links between Luke 4.14–30 and 7.18–23 lead to the conclusion that Luke's re-configuration of the tradition reworks and restates themes already present in the Jesus tradition.<sup>33</sup> In Luke 4.14–30 we can see how the evangelist has taken hold of a particular Jesus tradition and shaped it to express the significance of the tradition as a whole. This larger significance, which we might identify as the theological impulse driving Lukan redaction, is not unfettered creation of Jesus tradition, as though Luke needed something like 4.14–30 and so created it to deal with some need in his local community. Luke 4.14–30, as a striking expression of Jesus' significance throughout the tradition itself, bears strong connections with another tradition that has a fair claim to represent Jesus' own self-assessment (7.18–23).<sup>34</sup> This fact makes the Lukan Nazareth account a particularly helpful place to begin thinking about the ways past and present interrelate in the collective memory of a particular segment of early Christianity.

### 6.3. Summarising Jesus in Lukan Memory

Fitzmyer (1981:521) considers the summary with which the evangelist begins the account of Jesus' Galilean ministry 'most likely inspired by Mark 1:14–15'; Bovon concurs (2002:150).<sup>35</sup> Both passages provide a summary of Jesus' ministry's beginning; beyond this, however, they have in common only their subject [ὁ Ἰησοῦς] and that he goes/returns (the verbs

---

<sup>31</sup> C. A. Evans, noting dictional, exegetical, and thematic links between Jesus' message recorded in the gospels and the Aramaic Isaianic tradition, goes so far as to say, 'We have here every indication that Jesus understood his call and ministry in terms of the message of (Second) Isaiah' (1997:671).

<sup>32</sup> Both passages present a conflation of Isaianic references, and of course both make explicit reference to Isa. 61.1.

<sup>33</sup> Darrell Bock asks, 'If Jesus can speak in terms like 7:22, can he not preach in terms of Isa. 61:1–2?' (1994:398).

<sup>34</sup> 'Luke derived the Isaiah quotation in Lk. 4:18–19 quite probably from Lk. 7:22/Matt. 11:5, and thus Lk. 7:22 is the "source" for the quotation in Luke 4' (Koet 2005:85, fn 24).

<sup>35</sup> Mark 1.14–15 reads, Μετὰ δὲ τὸ παραδοθῆναι τὸν Ἰωάννην ἦλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ λέγων ὅτι πεπλήρωται ὁ καιρὸς καὶ ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ· μετανοεῖτε καὶ πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ.



are different) εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν.<sup>36</sup> Thus serious problems plague Fitzmyer's statement *vis-à-vis* Luke 4.14–15, that 'these verses are to be regarded as an editorial statement, composed by Luke, who differs with his Marcan source, by which he is otherwise inspired' (1981:521–522). Certainly Luke 4.14–15 is an 'editorial statement, composed by Luke'. And clearly these verses are 'different' than Mark. But here Fitzmyer's literary, post-traditional presuppositions lead to difficulties. What about Luke 4.14–15 suggests to Fitzmyer 'inspiration' by Mark 1.14–15? Instead, we prefer 'to note that Luke's version is different from that of Mark/Matthew. This prevents me erecting large redactional edifices on the shaky sands of source "certainties"' (Prior 1995:72).<sup>37</sup>

Much of the discussion regarding Luke 4.14–15 centres on the question of an alternate source underlying the Lukan text.<sup>38</sup> Schürmann (1964) identified a source behind the Lukan summary parallel to Mark 1.14–15, 21–28, 32–39, as well as 6:1–6, though Delobel (1973) maintains that we can explain the features of Luke 4.14–15 as Lukan redaction without postulating a separate source. Nolland takes up this discussion in some detail; he sees 4.14–15 as a 'generalizing summary' developed on the basis of Mark 1.14, 28, and 39 and offers a detailed comparison of the Marcan and Lukan texts in order to explain the features of the Lukan summary (1989:185). In general, Nolland's comments all concern Lukan stylistic changes. That is, the divergences between Luke and Mark at these points are not theologically or ideologically driven.<sup>39</sup> If so, then for these two verses at least we can plausibly suggest that Luke presents his own summary of the beginnings of Jesus' activity rather than produces for the first time a summary on

---

<sup>36</sup> It is also true that both summary statements follow immediately after the account of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness (Mark 1.12–13//Luke 4.1–13). Nevertheless, Fitzmyer's comment that 'the phrase *eis tēn Galilaian* depends on Mark 1:14a' (1981:522) seems a bit unreasonable. Why should such an unremarkable way of referring to Jesus' return to Galilee, the region in which he was primarily active, be dependent upon another written source? Delobel's conjecture (1973:212) that φήμη appears at Luke 4.14 under the influence of διαφημίζειν at Mark 1:45 is weak, especially as Luke 4.14–15 is not connected with Mark 1.40–45 (par. Luke 5.12–16, from which φήμη κτλ. is completely absent).

<sup>37</sup> Prior is, admittedly, writing about Luke 4.16–30 (not 4.14–15), but given the lack of verbal similarities between Luke 4.14–15 and Mark 1, his point applies here, too.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Schürmann 1964; Delobel 1973; I. H. Marshall 1978:177; Nolland 1989:185–186; Bovon 2002:149–150, *inter alios*.

<sup>39</sup> E.g., Luke's ὑπέστρεψεν for Mark's ἦλθεν 'reflects Lukan preference . . . as well as linking v 14 with 4:1 and ultimately with the baptismal account', τῆς Γαλιλαίας in Mark 1.28 'is omitted as repetitious after v 14a', or 'καὶ αὐτός, "and he," is typically Lukan' (Nolland 1989:185). Some of Nolland's explanations are unconvincing; for example, 'The omission [from v. 14a] of κηρύσσω τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ . . . is adequately accounted for by the sample preaching to come in Nazareth'. It is doubtful that the 'sample preaching' has any explanatory power here, for if it had been included it would be just as understandable as preparatory for what was soon to follow. Likewise for v. 15: ἦλθεν κηρύσσω, "came preaching," which would not follow well on v 14b, is replaced by ἐδίδασκεν, "taught" — probably inspired by Mark 1:21' (1989:185). It is not immediately clear, however, why ἦλθεν κηρύσσω (or any form of κηρύσσειν) would not fit in place of ἐδίδασκεν, unless we are to imagine teaching a more appropriate activity for the synagogue than preaching/proclamation (though this is not the reason given by Nolland). Finally, Mark 1.39's καὶ τὰ δαιμόνια ἐκβάλλων 'may be' omitted from Luke 1.15 'in light of the mighty works implicit in the use of δύναμις in v 14'. But surely Luke exhibits a penchant for Jesus' exorcistic activities (e.g., 4.33–39; 11.11–13), so, while δύναμις may, for Luke, convey something of Jesus' exorcisms, it is unlikely to be the reason for Luke's 'omission'. Perhaps another model of Lukan composition is needed here?

the basis of three different verses from Mark's opening chapter.<sup>40</sup> The content of Mark 1.14, 28, and 39 may have been influential upon the Lukan summary, but only with considerable effort can we maintain a model whereby, here at least, we envisage Luke writing his gospel with one eye on Mark. The most we can say, out of respect for dominant literary approaches to the gospels, is that in 4.14–15 Luke has not *redacted* Mark so much as he has *retold* Mark. He has internalised the gospel tradition, made it his own, retold it and developed it in various ways, ways which he did not (apparently) perceive to be contradicting his sources but which he nevertheless preferred to them.<sup>41</sup>

Even if we grant Markan priority and Luke's familiarity with Mark's gospel, very little in either 4.1–13 or 4.16–30 suggests that Luke has a copy of Mark in front of him as he composes this section of his gospel, and even less that Luke 'copies from' Mark.<sup>42</sup> So it seems still less reasonable to insist on reading 4.14–15 in light of Mark 1.14–15.<sup>43</sup> Here scholarly consensus seems to have obscured, rather than clarified, the processes by which the evangelists composed their gospels. We have already recognised that Fitzmyer correctly identifies the summary as thoroughly Lukan, but only the close verbal similarities between Mark and Luke at other places<sup>44</sup> could possibly justify reading Luke 4.14–15 as a redaction of (or in relation to) Mark 1.14–15.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> The appropriateness of the term 'redaction', a literary activity, comes under suspicion, and the importance of the question of sources is diminished. Bock uses the term 'supplied' (1994:391), which is moving in the right direction, though he is still considering the question of Luke 4.14–15's origin in literary terms.

<sup>41</sup> This seems to be the best way to read the evidence of Luke's preface (1.1–4), where Luke does not criticise the attempts of the many (πολλοί) who have set out to compile accounts of the things fulfilled (*pace* Barton 2001:174). Indeed, he seems to suggest that those accounts were compiled 'just as' (καθώς) they were handed down by the eyewitnesses and ministers of the word/message (1.2), which is hardly an indictment of his predecessors' handling of the tradition. Also, throughout the gospel Luke evinces an adaptation and development of his sources rather than polemic against them. Conversely, compare the evidence of Josephus, who appreciatively utilises a number of sources — Αἰγυπτίων καὶ Χαλδαίων καὶ Φοινίκων ἀναγραφαί, as well as many [τοσοῦτοι] τῶν Ἑλλήνων συγγραφεῖς (*Apion* 1.215–216) — but is openly critical of others at, e.g., *Apion* 1.2–4; 2.2–3; of Manetho at 1.228ff., of Cheremon at 1.288ff., of Lysimachus at 1.304ff., and of Apion at 2.9ff., among others.

<sup>42</sup> Fitzmyer will conclude that 4.16–30 is Luke's reworking of Mark 6.1–6a (1981:527), though others are less convinced (cf. Bovon 2002:150: 'It is difficult to explain this as the result of Luke's use of Mark 6:1–6'). Even if Fitzmyer is right, it seems unlikely that the similarities between 4.16, 22, 24 and Luke's 'Markan source' are enough to support the hypothesis that the evangelist (here, at least) looks upon or rewrites the Markan account. In the case of 4.16, 22, the similarities with Mark 6.1–2a, 2b–3 are primarily thematic. Even in 4.24, which is proverbial and for which we would expect the highest degree of verbal similarity with a Markan parallel even apart from the hypothesis of literary dependence, the wording diverges strikingly from Mark 6.4. The differences between Luke and Mark are not limited to Luke's οὐδείς προφήτης δεκτός ἐστίν, which echoes the ἐνιαυτὸν κυρίου δεκτόν of 4.19, but extends to the absence of Mark's emphatic εἰ μὴ ἐν τῇ πατρίδι αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν τοῖς συγγενεῦσιν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ. This omission is especially poignant, especially as the latter two terms would have reinforced Luke's emphasis throughout 4.16–30 that Jesus' own people (whether the Nazarenes specifically or the Jews more generally) rejected him.

<sup>43</sup> Nolland also denies that we should regard Luke's summary 'as a free redaction of [Mark 1.14–15]' (1989:184), though, as we have seen, he goes on to see our passage as incorporating elements of Mark 1.14, 28, and 39 (see his detailed analysis, 1989:185).

<sup>44</sup> E.g., Mark 1.21ff.//Luke 4.31ff.

<sup>45</sup> Fitzmyer continues: 'In contrast to Mark 1:14–15, these verses omit a significant element. There is no mention at the outset of Jesus' kerygmatic proclamation of the kingdom and the gospel or of his call for repentance' (1981:522). Besides the criticism levelled immediately above, that Luke 4.14–15 is not 'in contrast' to the Markan summary (and so the sense in which the Lukan summary can be said to

Instead, we ought to read this Lukan summary in terms of Luke's prior experiences performing the Jesus tradition; it may even have been the type of summary Luke would have used at various places in the tradition, though ὑπέστρεψεν seems to be uniquely appropriate for the beginning of Jesus' Galilean activity.

Other features of Luke's summary suggest they functioned as important elements of Luke's performance of the Jesus tradition and figured in the construction of Jesus' reputation. Some of these features appear relatively straightforward and uncontroversial, such as the fact that Jesus' primary sphere of activity was Galilee (cf. Fitzmyer 1981:522–523). Even this, however, could interact with other aspects of Jesus' life to become more meaningful. As was his wont, Matthew apprehended Jesus' Galilean ministry in light of Israel's prophets, especially Isaiah.<sup>46</sup> Other elements of the summary were open to debate, such as Luke's comment that Jesus returned to Galilee ἐν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ πνεύματος. Here Jesus operates in the role of God's beloved Son (cf. Luke 3.22) whose movements are divinely directed (cf. 4.1);<sup>47</sup> Jesus' (and his followers') empowerment by the Holy Spirit is 'a Lucan theologoumenon' (Fitzmyer 1981:513).<sup>48</sup> But the source of Jesus' activity (of his movements and his message, but especially of his exorcisms) will become the point of contention in Luke 11.14–20. Other elements of Jesus' reputation in Luke 4.14–15 could be granted without necessarily assenting to the conclusions Luke draws from them. When Luke says, for example, that Jesus δοξαζόμενος ὑπὸ πάντων,<sup>49</sup> Jesus' opponents could admit that he was influential over the people but object at the positive connotations of δοξάζειν.<sup>50</sup>

#### 6.4. Jesus Preaches in Nazareth

Luke's presentation of Jesus in the Nazareth synagogue is both breath-taking in its vision and striking in its details. The passage as a whole is famous not simply for its programmatic force *vis-à-vis* Luke-Acts in general, but specifically for the ingenuity of its turn to the Hebrew

---

'omit' anything is somewhat contrived), it is only the separation of 4.14–15 from vv. 16–30, a separation which is helpful for writing a commentary but not necessarily for understanding Luke, that makes it possible to suggest that Luke omits 'Jesus' kerygmatic proclamation'. I. H. Marshall's handling seems better: 'Like Mt. and Mk., Luke stresses at the outset the fact and character of the message proclaimed by Jesus in word and deed' (1978:175; cf. also 177). Once 4.14–15 and 4.16–30 are linked back together, it becomes immediately obvious that Luke expands Jesus' kerygmatic proclamation (Nolland 1989:185).

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Matt. 4.12–16, citing Isa. 8.23–9.1 (LXX). Here the point is not that Matthew 'distorts' the historical Jesus to conform him to the messages of the prophets, but rather that his performance of the tradition emphasises traditional significances that the story of Jesus could invoke in its late-Second Temple Jewish milieu.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. the Spirit's activity in Acts 16.6–10.

<sup>48</sup> This point is well-made by Bovon (2002:151): others, besides Jesus himself, 'partake of it [the Holy Spirit], because the Spirit of prophecy and the Spirit of fulfillment are one in Luke'.

<sup>49</sup> Within the summary itself, Jesus' being praised by 'all' (πάντων) is not in service of 'Lucan universality' (*pace* Fitzmyer 1981:522), for Luke's point is that Jesus is well received in the synagogues of the Galilean towns and villages in which he is teaching. Nevertheless, understood within the continuity of Luke's performance of the Jesus tradition, it does evoke other, more powerful instances of πᾶς (e.g., Acts 2.21, 39) and balances the completely negative portrayal of Jesus' reception at Nazareth in 4.16–30.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. *b. Sanh.* 43a; Josephus' portrayal of the so-called 'sign-prophets' is similar in this regard; he is able to concede their popularity among the lower classes without using any words that connote positively. In fact, in Josephus it is precisely their popular appeal and 'deception' of the masses that makes the sign-prophets particularly loathsome.

Bible to justify the later Christian movements' turn to the gentiles.<sup>51</sup> For this reason, scholars have generally appraised the connection between the historical Jesus and the Jesus of Luke 4.16–30 as tenuous.<sup>52</sup> This project, however, has attempted to consistently resist the procedure by which scholars label traditions that serve the evangelists' present needs and interests 'redaction' and separate them from any 'database' from which they then reconstruct an image of the 'historical Jesus'. Instead, on the basis of recent social memory theory research, we have seen that the past and the present are mutually implicating, and efforts to remove one in order to understand the other — the primary *modus operandi* of much twentieth-century 'historical Jesus' research — do not actually get us any nearer the historical Jesus.<sup>53</sup>

Instead, we have already demonstrated that the past functions as an orientating backdrop that enables individuals and groups to think about and act within their present circumstances even as present circumstances recontextualise established images of the past, bringing new meanings to and forging new connections between events and people from the past.<sup>54</sup> From this vantage point, Luke 4.16–30 generates the question, What was it about the historical Jesus, and particularly about how he was remembered in (oral and written) performances of the Jesus tradition, that enabled Luke and his auditors to think about both the Jesus of their past and the needs of their present in the terms we find in 4.16–30? Questing after the 'historical Jesus', in this perspective, involves more than simply judging Luke 4.16–30 'authentic' or 'inauthentic'. Instead, we raise the question: What could Jesus have meant, in his own context, had he turned to Isa. 61 as he does in Luke 4.16–30, and how does this relate to Luke's intention in having Jesus read from the Isaiah scroll in his (Luke's) later context?<sup>55</sup>

#### 6.4.a. Jesus and Isaiah

Loveday Alexander has consistently highlighted the ways in which 'tradition' — a term frequently pressed into differing, even conflicting, programmes and rarely given adequate atten-

---

<sup>51</sup> For some critics, the turn to the nations is not necessarily a turn away from Israel (e.g., Esler and Jervell), whereas for others (esp. Siker), turning *to* gentiles necessarily entails turning *from* Israel. Esler and Jervell (*inter alios*) provide the better argument, not least because throughout Luke-Acts, despite opposition from various Jewish individuals and groups, both Jesus and his followers nevertheless are the objects of considerable popularity among Judeans and Galileans as well as Jews in the Diaspora (cf. Luke 4.31–37, 40–44; 5.15, 17–26; 7.16–17; *et al.*; Acts 2.5–12, 41; 4.15–17; 5.12–16; 6.7; 13.42–43; *et al.*).

<sup>52</sup> Tannehill provides a clear example: 'Luke iv 25–27 did not originate within the context of Jesus' ministry, but within the context of the early church's debate over the Gentile mission' (1972:60; cited in Siker 1992:84, fn 28).

<sup>53</sup> Cf. §3.3., esp. §3.3.c., above.

<sup>54</sup> Schwartz frequently analyses the relationship (and entanglement) between past and present in terms of the past as a model *for* and as a model *of* the present (cf. Schwartz 1996; 1998a; 2000): 'The distinction between memory as a model *of* and a model *for* social reality is an analytic, not an empirical, one: both aspects are realized in every act of remembrance. Memories must express current problems before they can program ways to deal with them, for we cannot be oriented by a past in which we fail to see ourselves. . . . On the other hand, the programming and framing functions of memory are what make its reflexive function significant, for we have no reason to look for ourselves in a past that does not already orient our lives (2000:18, 19; original italics).

<sup>55</sup> See also Freyne's comment: 'Jesus' journeys to outlying areas was [*sic*] not solely because they were part of the land remaining but because the lost sheep of the house of Israel needed to be gathered. From the perspective of the servant's mission there was nothing to preclude a ministry to both Israel and the nations when representatives of both were encountered in the same region' (cf. 2004:110).

tion itself<sup>56</sup> — connects past and present in ways that are both stable and dynamic, consistent and adaptable to new situations. She explores the relationship between past and present in her examination of patterns of appeal to authority in Jewish and Hellenistic schools; ‘It is no surprise, then,’ she writes,

to find that quotation and exegesis of both oral and written tradition becomes a vital task in the preservation of a school’s identity. . . . The canonical texts were not simply dead monuments of the founders’ thought: “the role of scriptural authority was to provide a philosophical movement with a *raison d’être* and a framework within which it could preserve its cohesion *while* continuing to inquire and debate.” In fact, the framework of exegesis allowed a wide diversity of interpretations of a matter, which often became the focus of inter-sect polemic. (L. Alexander 2001:113, 113–114; citing Sedley 1989:101; original italics)

The link between identity and tradition was vital in the ancient Mediterranean (and elsewhere, surely), though biblical scholars have been slow to recognise tradition as anchored to anything other than the whims and crises of the present. Instead, tradition (like our comments about the past in social memory theory) provided multiple ways to maintain strong and durable links with the past and to address new situations head on. What is more, every act of accessing tradition realised both of these functions, even when (perhaps especially when) those new situations appeared irreconcilable with the remembered past. The question that drives us presently, then, is the extent to which, irrespective of whether Jesus ever said anything like Luke 4.16–30 in any context like that of a rural Galilean synagogue, the programme and teachings of Jesus constrain Luke’s creative adaptation of the tradition to new situations.

Current research in a number of different areas suggests that ‘performance’, rather than ‘reading’, better describes the apprehension of both written and oral tradition in first-century Jewish and Christian circles. The ever-growing interest amongst biblical scholars in issues of ‘literacy’ and ‘orality’ (which this project shares) has obscured the extent to which people without access to the skill-sets typically subsumed under the label ‘literacy’ nevertheless have both access and reasons to utilise texts in their rhetorical manoeuvrings.<sup>57</sup> Texts, in other words, perform functions other than preserving words for later recall, reflection, vocalisation, and inscription. Thus Luke’s portrayal of Jesus standing up *to read from* the Isaiah scroll in the synagogue (Luke 4.16–21) appears especially problematic. On closer inspection, however, this passage becomes an important datum for a critique of the predominant textual (or literary) approach to the synoptic traditions, and especially the insistence upon reading this passage as a reproduction or redaction of another text, whether Mark 6.1–6 or one of Luke’s so-called special sources.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> Cf. our discussion of ‘tradition’ at §4.3., esp. §4.3.a., above. Similarly, Dunn (2003b:173, fn 1) explicitly sets out his use of ‘tradition’.

<sup>57</sup> ‘Literacy is not textuality. One can be literate without the overt use of texts, and one can use texts extensively without evidencing genuine literacy. In fact, the assumptions shared by those who can read and write often render the actual presence of a text superfluous’ (Stock 1983:7; cf. also Foley 2002; Thatcher 1998; 2005; 2006; Thomas 1989; 1992). Cf. also the discussion in §4.2.b., above.

<sup>58</sup> Irrespective of this passage’s ‘authenticity’, Luke 4.16–30 raises the following questions, Does Luke’s portrayal of Jesus accessing biblical (written) traditions in a particular manner illuminate Jesus’ use of written traditions? Does Luke’s portrayal reveal anything about his own use of written sources? As we

#### 6.4.a.i. Text and Tradition in Ancient Christianity

How texts function in modern Western (and especially academic) culture has become second-nature for us. As a result, we assume that everyone in every culture in every historical period uses texts in the same the culturally-specific ways we do.<sup>59</sup> We can then take certain things for granted when investigating texts, regardless of their cultural and historical points of origin. Texts are widespread and easy to get a hold of. Texts are relatively easy to use. The skills required to create and access written texts are relatively common. 'To access a written text' means to read its inscribed signs to tap into its written content. 'A text' is stable, and this stability is in marked contrast with the fluidity and malleability of oral tradition. Readers are aware of this distinction between written text and oral tradition. Differences between texts are intentional. And so on. Even though scholars have thoroughly debunked these assumptions about texts, they continue to inform contemporary source-, form-, and redaction-critical research.<sup>60</sup>

In order to rid ourselves of these cumbersome assumptions, we need to ask how written texts functioned in particular historical and cultural settings. The early Jesus movements did not perceive the 'text' of an oral performance of the Jesus tradition (its verbal and structural levels) as normative expressions of that tradition; instead, oral performances actualised a tradition that everywhere evinces the capability of multiform expression in diverse circumstances. However, we often overlook evidence that our gospels, as written versions of the Jesus tradition, were simi-

---

will see, in Luke 4.18–19, where we can be especially confident that Luke *should be* looking upon a written text (an Isaiah scroll), he appears unconcerned to replicate that text, either verbally or structurally. Perhaps more importantly, we cannot neglect to ask how strictly we can distinguish Luke's and Jesus' method of accessing scripture (as do Moyise and Menken: 'The quoted text [in Luke 4.18–19] omits a phrase from Isa. 61:1 and introduces a phrase from Isa. 58:6, *making it extremely unlikely that we have the exact words of Jesus*' [2005a:3; my emphasis]). Though they probably correctly assess the status of 'the exact words of Jesus', Moyise and Menken do not address the problem of why, if Luke can conflate and omit words and phrases in his use of scripture, Jesus cannot. Contrast J. Sanders, who asks, 'Why could Luke, or Jesus, mix scripture like that?' (1982:151).

<sup>59</sup> Even when scholars are aware that other reading strategies may have been in play in other cultures and in other historical periods, they still tend to assume that the materials involved in the activity 'reading' are the same: physical texts with written words that are fixed and isolatable from other texts and oral performances. Thus Tomson, recognising the conflation, interpolation, and amalgamation of multiple texts in numerous passages, suggests, 'We could envisage a tradition of associative reading and expounding in view of the messianic future' (1997:651; cf. a similar proposal for Qumran at 1997:653). Tomson is not unique in assuming that 'reading' happens at the level of words *rather than* at the level of tradition. In view of our evidence, perhaps we should envisage a completely different way of accessing, transmitting, and communicating tradition, whether written or oral, in which disparate texts are brought together not through key words but through traditional affinities.

<sup>60</sup> J. Sanders represents one particularly striking example of the importation of contemporary views of 'text' into historical explanations of first-century phenomena: 'One might ask how Luke came to know the Old Testament so well, or . . . how his congregation knew it well enough to appreciate all the subtle ways in which he used it. The answer is that new converts are usually enthusiasts. . . . Reports out of the new China of today give a picture of churches packed with young people seeking copies of the Bible which they then read avidly and with great hunger. One can just image in what great demand copies of the Greek Old Testament were in the Hellenistic churches springing up around the Mediterranean area' (1982:149). Now, of course, we are much more aware of the prohibitive costs of text-materials, the difficulty of reading, the lack (or rarity) of private reading, and the absence of literate people capable of reading the text in the first place, and so such scenarios as Sanders imagines stick out as completely anachronistic.

larly multiform and fluid.<sup>61</sup> In other words, *writing* a gospel did not fix a particular verbal expression as the normative instance of the tradition.<sup>62</sup> Sabrina Inowlocki has demonstrated, via the specific case of Josephus's claim to 'set forth' the biblical story, 'neither omitting nor adding anything' (*Ant.* 1.17),<sup>63</sup> that 'in antiquity, a text (and especially a sacred text) was seen not so much as a combination of words than as *the privileged conveyor of a specific meaning* (which could also be called essence or power) transcending words and letters' (2005:51; my emphasis).<sup>64</sup> If the advent of a written gospel did not result in the text-fixation of the Jesus tradition, then two questions immediately present themselves. First, what effects did a written gospel have upon the dynamics of the Jesus tradition? And second, how were written gospels received by their original audiences? This section takes up the latter question.<sup>65</sup>

We have repeatedly argued that Jesus' earliest followers received (and produced) written texts as traditional instances rather than as normative expressions of their traditions.<sup>66</sup> The assumption, mentioned above, that texts in the first and the twenty-first centuries functioned similarly has obscured this dynamic of our texts' reception. In addition, the fascination exhibited by historical Jesus questers with classifying units of the Jesus tradition as 'authentic' or 'inauthentic' further obscures the fluidity of the written Jesus tradition in favour of seeing the tradition's fluctuations as 'redactions' — as new textual or theological expressions. As written texts began to proliferate in early Christian communities, Jesus' tradents did not exhibit concern for a fixed verbal or sequential corpus but focused their energies on the story and proclamation of Jesus.<sup>67</sup> Jesus' tradents, who had previously forged the verbal and structural shape of the tradition in oral performance and undoubtedly continued to do so, intended written texts as yet other instances of traditional performance.<sup>68</sup>

We can therefore explain more adequately the Jesus tradition's stability and variability (the continuities and vicissitudes of oral performance, the stasis and dynamism of social memory, and so on) in terms of the stability and variability of early Christian social identity than on any

---

<sup>61</sup> P. S. Alexander has suggested that similar dynamics, by which a tradition could evince a measure of stability separate from its verbal or textual consistency, attended to the Targumim: 'Despite the present textual fluidity, the content of the Targum in any given locality was probably always largely predetermined and traditional' (1992:330). In a similar context, Alexander suggests what was 'predetermined and traditional' was not the verbal textual level of the tradition: 'The way in which the targum was transmitted would have made strict standardization difficult' (1988:241).

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Koester 1990:33. On the basis of the predominant Two-Source Hypothesis, it is patently obvious that neither Matthew nor Luke felt constrained to perform or write down the tradition as it was found in Mark. If the text of Mark's gospel was not normative for later performances (either written or oral) of the Jesus tradition, then it becomes unclear exactly how the entextualisation of the Jesus tradition in written gospels signalled the end of the tradition's dynamic variability. In other words, the written Jesus tradition, even in the dominant literary approach to gospels and Jesus studies, does not appear qualitatively more stable than the oral tradition presumed to lie behind our texts.

<sup>63</sup> Josephus's text reads as follows: τὰ μὲν οὖν ἀκριβῆ τῶν ἐν ταῖς ἀναγραφαῖς προῖων ὁ λόγος κατὰ τὴν οἰκείαν τάξιν σημανεῖ· τοῦτο γὰρ διὰ ταύτης ποιῆσειν τῆς πραγματείας ἐπηγγελίαν οὐδὲν προσθεῖς οὐδ' αὖ παραλιπὼν (*Ant.* 1.17).

<sup>64</sup> Similarly, cf. Jaffee 2001:18, cited in §1.1., above.

<sup>65</sup> For an interesting and thorough examination of the first of these questions, cf. Thatcher 2006.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. esp. §4.3., above; also Sanders 1969:36–37.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Schröter 2006:116.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. the discussion in §4.3.a., above.

perceived fixity of a written text. A particular performance of tradition transmitted *the same thing* as earlier performances, even if later performances did not (and could not) reproduce exactly the verbal and sequential structure of earlier performances. We cannot, then, understand this ‘same thing’ in terms of the tradition’s textual shape. As A. N. Doane has aptly said,

Whenever scribes who are part of the oral traditional culture write or copy traditional oral works, they do not merely mechanically hand them down; they rehear them, ‘mouth’ them, ‘reperform’ them in the act of writing in such a way that the text may change but remain authentic, just as a completely oral poet’s text changes from performance to performance without losing authenticity. (Doane 1991:80–81)

Inowlocki suggests the same was true for Josephus: ‘the Jewish historian (like his fellow Jews, he says) gives greater place to the δύναμις (as he puts it) of the Scriptures than to the λέξις’ (2005:59).<sup>69</sup> Similarly, in his preface to the Greek translation of Ecclesiasticus, the grandson of Jesus ben Sirach evidences some anxiety that his translation has altered the δύναμις of his exemplar text and resigns himself to this distortion as a necessary consequence of translation.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, even a translated text maintained sufficient δύναμις to enable ‘the lovers of learning’ (οἱ φιλομαθεῖς) to advance διὰ τῆς ἐννόμου βιώσεως. This distinction between λέξις and δύναμις, phenomena which Sirach suggests were nonetheless closely related, opens up for us the recognition that the Jesus tradition encompasses the story of Jesus itself, and especially the power conveyed through the story. As story, the tradition is unbounded, open, and flexible; it is not confined to the bounded, fixed shape of any textual expression.<sup>71</sup> In this context the early Jesus communities wrote and received the gospel texts; in this context the tradition remained other

---

<sup>69</sup> Inowlocki insists this claim is generalisable beyond Josephus to other élites in Greco-Roman society. ‘Other authors suggest that a text comprises something which transcends its form, whether they call it δύναμις or not. For instance, a passage of Lysias [cf. X.7] supports the idea of a contrast between meaning and words — or, in other words, form and content: indeed, he claims that the debate with which he deals in this passage should not rest on the words (ὀνομάτων) but on their meaning (διανοίας). A sentence later he uses the term δύναμις to refer to the signification of words’ (2005:59; Inowlocki also references Thucydides on the next page). Bauckham dismisses Inowlocki’s essay out of hand (2006:209, fn 20), but his analysis here seems naïvely prejudicial against Josephus in favour of Papias (cf. 2006:209–210).

<sup>70</sup> οὐ γὰρ ἰσοδυναμεῖ αὐτὰ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς Ἑβραϊστὶ λεγόμενα καὶ ὅταν μεταχθῆ εἰς ἑτέραν γλῶσσαν· οὐ μόνον δὲ ταῦτα ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ νόμος καὶ αἱ προφητεῖαι (Sir. 0.21–24). Certainly Jesus’ grandson was not *too* anxious about the distortion produced by translation as he goes on to translate the text from Hebrew to Greek. Thus the comment about the Torah and the Prophets probably suggests a mere shrug of the shoulders rather than a criticism of attempts to render the Tanakh in Greek. Notice also his natural use of αὐτὰ . . . λεγόμενα in reference precisely to a written text (cf. the reference to τῶν ἄλλων πατρίων βιβλίων [0.10] and συγγράψαι [0.12]) even though αὐτὰ . . . γραφόμενα would have been just as, perhaps even more, appropriate (cf. καὶ λέγοντας καὶ γράφοντας; 0.6).

<sup>71</sup> The Targumim apparently functioned similarly, in that a Targum could be circulated and studied as a written text but, ‘according to Rabbinic halakah the Targum had to be given orally in synagogue’ (P. S. Alexander 1992:330). Thus a written text was intended to function as oral tradition. There were, then, differences not just between oral and written tradition but even between different written traditions: ‘The Rabbis were concerned that Targum should be clearly distinguished from Scripture . . . Targum belonged to the oral Torah, and the translator had to recite it orally in public, while the reader had to read (and be manifestly seen to read [cf. Luke 4.16–17!]) the Hebrew from the scroll’ (1992:330). Alexander can nevertheless refer to how these traditions were ‘intended *to be read*’ (1992:329; emphasis added), referring to a broader activity than simply scanning and/or vocalising written signs. Cf. also P. S. Alexander 1988.



than (or at least unrestricted to) its verbal expression.<sup>72</sup> As Campbell wrote with respect to actualising a story (what we are calling ‘tradition’) from a condensed, textualised account, ‘It is not a matter of being bound to a text but bound to a story, to the opportunities that a text offered and limited for the telling of a story’ (2002:431). In this model, the written text ‘cues in’ the story rather than encompasses it within its textual stratum.

#### 6.4.a.ii. Jesus Reads Isaiah

The function of texts in early Christianity affects not only our conception of the interrelationships of the written gospels, but also how we understand the appearance of traditions from the Hebrew Bible in the Jesus tradition. Luke 4.16–17 labours the point that Jesus, attending synagogue in Nazareth ‘according to his custom’, ‘stood up to read’ (ἀνέστη ἀναγνῶναι; 4.16), and that he was given ‘a scroll of the prophet Isaiah’ (βιβλίον τοῦ προφήτου Ἰσαΐου), which he opened (ἀναπτύξας τὸ βιβλίον) to find ‘the place where it was written’ (τὸν τόπον οὗ ἦν γεγραμμένον; 4.17). Here Luke strains to present the image of Jesus physically handling a written text, turning the Isaiah scroll, presumably scanning the text with his eyes to find an intended passage. Though Luke never says explicitly that Jesus read the passage aloud, vocalising the words as his eyes scanned them,<sup>73</sup> the text clearly expects its auditors to imagine Jesus doing precisely this. Indeed, within the dynamics of traditional referentiality<sup>74</sup> the stress Luke places on Jesus’ preparation to read (4.16–17) connotes Jesus’ act of reading. What is more, the text itself assumes Jesus vocalised the reading from Isaiah.<sup>75</sup> Luke portrays Jesus reading, eyes on text, out loud to those around him. He does not, then, perform tradition orally; he reads a traditional text. The words do not simply actualise the tradition at hand. The words carry their own weight; they attract their own attention.

Despite this image, the text Luke has Jesus read aloud suggests against Jesus vocalising words he found written in one place, giving the words themselves value such as readers in the twenty-first century routinely do. Ancient texts, which were always handwritten and never experienced the fixity of a printed text, enjoyed a level of variability and flux foreign to our concepts of ‘text’. As George Nickelsburg has written, ‘Christian writers built their exposition and apologetic on a lively and varying tradition of Jewish exposition and scribal practice, not on a fixed biblical text’ (2003:24). Even so, we cannot attribute the differences between Luke 4.18–19 and the Septuagint<sup>76</sup> text of Isa. 61.1–2 to ‘scribal variation’ because the Lukan text fuses

---

<sup>72</sup> Recall the analogy of tradition as *langue* and an instance of traditional expression as *parole*, introduced in §4.3.a., above.

<sup>73</sup> I owe this observation to an unpublished paper by Dr Hugh Pyper, presented in the post-graduate seminar of the Department of Biblical Studies at the University of Sheffield.

<sup>74</sup> For discussions of ‘traditional referentiality’, cf. §2.3.b., above; also Foley 1991; 1995a.

<sup>75</sup> For one thing, Jesus’ audience reacts to something in v. 22, and it is difficult to see that something as Jesus’ silence as he gazes upon an open scroll (cf. Luke’s ἐπὶ τοῖς λόγοις τῆς χάριτος; 4.22). For another, Jesus’ statement in 4.21 (σήμερον πεπλήρωται ἡ γραφή αὕτη ἐν τοῖς ὤσιν ὑμῶν) is meaningless if he has not read the text out loud to the Nazarene Jews gathered before him, unless Luke envisages Jesus gesturing toward the Isaiah scroll itself as he refers to ἡ γραφή αὕτη. In that case, Luke’s citation in 4.18–19 can only refer to the Isaianic tradition as a whole, which would only reinforce our point here regarding the traditional referentiality of the actual text cited.

the Septuagint<sup>76</sup> text of Isa. 61.1–2 to ‘scribal variation’ because the Lukan text fuses together two disparate texts, as the following table illustrates.

<u>Luke 4.18–19:</u>	<u>Isa. 61.1–2 (LXX):</u>	<u>Isa. 58.6d (LXX):</u>
<p>πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπ’ ἐμέ οὐ εἵνεκεν ἔχρισέν<sup>77</sup> με εὐαγγελίσασθαι πτωχοῖς, ἀπέσταλκέν με,</p> <p>κηρύξαι αἰχμαλώτοις ἄφεσιν καὶ τυφλοῖς ἀνά- βλεψιν, <u>ἀποστεῖλαι</u> τεθραυσ- μένους ἐν ἀφέσει, κηρύξαι ἐνιαυτὸν κυρίου δεκτόν.</p>	<p>πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπ’ ἐμέ οὐ εἵνεκεν ἔχρισέν με εὐαγγελίσασθαι πτωχοῖς, ἀπέσταλκέν με, ιάσασθαι τοὺς συντε- τριμμένους τῇ καρδίᾳ, κηρύξαι αἰχμαλώτοις ἄφεσιν καὶ τυφλοῖς ἀνά- βλεψιν,</p> <p>καλέσαι ἐνιαυτὸν κυρίου δεκτόν, καὶ ἡμέραν ἀνταποδόσεως παρακαλέσαι πάντας τοὺς πενθοῦντας</p>	<p>. . . <u>ἀπόστελλε</u> τεθραυσ- μένους ἐν ἀφέσει,</p>

We cannot but be impressed with the verbal similarities between Luke 4.18–19 and Isa. 61.1–2; 58.6d. If we neglect omissions, we find only two differences between the Lukan and Isaianic texts: (a) Luke’s infinitive ἀποστεῖλαι in place of Isa. 58.6’s imperative ἀπόστελλε (explicable on stylistic grounds), and (b) Luke’s κηρύξαι instead of Isa. 61.2’s καλέσαι. In light of these minor changes, we could reasonably suppose that Luke’s copy of the Isaiah scroll read as we find it in 4.18–19. Luke has not, apparently, modified the text he cites.

But we cannot neglect the omissions; neither can we neglect the insertion of Isa. 58.6d into the middle of Isa. 61.1–2. Especially with regards to this insertion, we find not simply the juxtaposition of two separate texts<sup>78</sup> but the incorporation of one text *into* another. Here we have to decide: given the unlikelihood that Isa. 61.1 and 61.2 inserted 58.6d between them in Luke’s copy of Isaiah (presuming he had one), does Luke intend the insertion of Isa. 58.6d (a) to *further reinforce* the point already made by 61.1–2, (b) to *expand* the point made by 61.1–2, (c) to *broaden* the sweep of Isaianic tradition which ‘has been fulfilled’ (πεπλήρωται; 4.21) in Jesus’ preach-

<sup>76</sup> Hannah remarks that the LXX version of Isa. 61.1 is remarkably similar to the MT (2005:10–11), except that the LXX’s τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν differs markedly from the MT’s תִּקַּח פְּקֻדֵי יְהוֹרֵם וְיִשְׁרָאֵל.

<sup>77</sup> Given the scholarly distinction between prophetic and messianic figures (or activities), Tannehill’s comments regarding Luke 7.22 ought to be cited here: ‘These are acts that might be expected of a prophet in the time of fulfilment but not to the Messiah. For the narrator this is probably not a problem. The one sent to “bring good news to the poor” is also the one whom the Lord “anointed” according to 4:18, where Isa 61:1 is quoted’ (1996:131).

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Mark 1.2–3, which juxtaposes (but does not insert) Exod. 23.20/Mal. 3.1 with Isa. 40.3 and refers to the composite text as ὁ Ἡσαίας ὁ προφήτης.

ing,<sup>79</sup> or (d) for some other reason not already posited?<sup>80</sup> Though we cannot rule out option (d), option (b) seems unlikely because 58.6d does not represent any significant advance on 61.1's κηρύξαι αἰχμαλώτοις ἄφεσιν. Option (a), then, appears fairly automatic; 'to set the oppressed free' reinforces Isa. 61.1–2's anticipation of the prophet's ministry of restoration.<sup>81</sup>

But (c) may prove the most important option to consider, especially in light of the omissions of Jesus' citation from Isaiah.<sup>82</sup> When we read Luke as an oral-derived text (that is, a text with roots in oral performance), we are prepared to see that the *words* Jesus cites do not limit the *significance* of Jesus' citation. In other words, the words Jesus 'reads' *evoke* rather than *contain* the tradition to which Jesus refers.<sup>83</sup> Indeed, even if Luke had not inserted 58.6d into 61.1–2, the δύναμις of Jesus' citation would extend beyond the words of Isa. 61.1–2; certainly the omission of ἰάσασθαι τοὺς συντετριμμένους τῇ καρδίᾳ does not exclude the brokenhearted from the pale of Jesus' activity.<sup>84</sup> The amalgamation of Isa. 58.6d with 61.1–2 reinforces the hypothesis that, despite the very concrete image of Jesus *reading* the Isaianic tradition, Jesus (and the Lukan author) is *performing* the tradition, actualising it via the performative dynamics of traditional presentation, and that the written Isaianic tradition *as written tradition* retains its variability and multi-formity.<sup>85</sup> Ironically, precisely the forcefulness with which Luke presses home the image of Jesus

---

<sup>79</sup> Below we will argue that Jesus' sermon in Luke 4.16–30 evokes *simultaneously* Israelite traditions of restoration *and* judgement. It is interesting, in this regard, that Isa. 61.1–2 (even with the phrase Jesus omits regarding the Lord's ἡμέραν ἀνταποδόσεως) envisages Israel's restoration, whilst Isa. 58, which Jesus does cite, delivers a divine judgement against the people. Cf. Prior 1995:134–135; Koet 2005:84.

<sup>80</sup> Beasley-Murray's proposal is unconvincing: 'Naturally Jesus would not have switched from Isaiah 61 to Isaiah 58 and back again in his reading of scripture, but if he conjoined the two in his exposition, that would suffice to have stamped the recollection of his use of the passage in the tradition' (1986:88). Not only does this scenario take insufficient account of the stress with which Luke has portrayed Jesus *reading* precisely this conflated passage from Isaiah, but it also does not account for the strong implication that this type of interpolation is typical of Luke's method of referencing Israelite scriptural traditions (and might, therefore, be somewhat analogous to Jesus' method). That is, if Luke, as an *author*, exhibits no anxiety about referencing a written text in this manner, on what basis does Beasley-Murray suppose that Jesus, as a[n oral] *prophet*, would have read his text in a manner more aligned with twenty-first century Western values?

<sup>81</sup> 'The insertion was evidently made in order to reemphasize this concept [i.e., ἄφεσις]' (Tannehill 1996:92).

<sup>82</sup> Strangely (and inexplicably), Bock claims that 'this passage [it is unclear whether he means Luke 4.18–19 or 3.15–18] describes a messianic function. The messianic function also serves to make clear why Isa. 58 was added to the list. It guarantees that Jesus' mission is seen in messianic terms' (1994:409–410). Nothing in the Lukan context or in Bock's discussion prepares Bock's readers for the reference to 'a messianic function' (except, perhaps, the verb ἔχρισέν, which Bock isn't discussing at this point), though he has just made a strong distinction between 'prophet' and 'deliverer': 'While a prophet could proclaim the message of liberty for the oppressed, he could not bring it to pass. It is a deliverer who brings deliverance to reality' (1994:409). Perhaps someone ought to have let Josephus (as well as the evangelists!) in on this important theological distinction (cf. *Ant.* 18.85–87; 20.97–99, 167–168, 169–172 [par. *War* 2.261–263], 188; also, Poirier 2003).

<sup>83</sup> In Foley's terms, Jesus' words *connote* more than they *denote* (cf. 1991:xiv–xv); see also Inowlocki 2005.

<sup>84</sup> This is undisputed (though cf. Beasley-Murray 1986:88, who sees the weight of Jesus' citation shifted to 'release' on account of this omission [and the interpolation of Isa. 58.6d]); even so, the number of critics who adopt this procedure for interpreting the other significant Lukan omission (viz., καὶ ἡμέραν ἀνταποδόσεως παρακαλέσαι πάντας τοὺς πενθοῦντας) is astounding, though this procedure is no less implausible for the latter instance as it is for the former.

<sup>85</sup> Commentators have exhibited a remarkable ability to overlook the energy Luke expends portraying Jesus as a reader of texts in order to explain the amalgamation of Isa. 61.1–2 and 58.6d. For ex-

reading from a scroll suggests to us that performative dynamics are in play. The more Luke strains to present Jesus reading words from a page, the stronger the objection that Jesus *could not have been* reading words from a page, simply because no page exists on which Isa. 58.6d is found between Isa. 61.1, 2.<sup>86</sup> And once we realise this, we have only to look up to recognise that Jesus' (and Luke's) citation of Isa. 61.1–2 taps into the larger Israelite tradition of restoration/vindication and the concomitant traditions about God's ἀνταπόδοσις. Luke's Jesus does not claim to fulfil the *text* of Isa. 61.1–2; Luke has in view the Israelite tradition of God's restoration, especially as it finds expression in the Isaianic texts.

As we continue to read Jesus' interaction with the Nazarene synagogue, we find this hypothesis strengthened. Anticipating their objection to his claim to fulfil the Isaianic prophetic tradition, Jesus cites proverbial wisdom in 4.23 and counters with another instance of proverbial wisdom in 4.24. In 4.25–27, then, Jesus invokes the Elijah/Elisha traditions to clarify how his proclamation fulfils God's promise of restoration and to chastise the 'Israel' found outside the sphere of that restoration. Jesus does not 'perform' the Elijah/Elisha cycles in 4.25–27, though the laconic and abbreviated nature of Jesus' and the Jews' interaction here makes it possible that he may have done so before antagonistic audiences.<sup>87</sup> Campbell inquires whether 'independent small story units . . . function as the record of the actual performance of stories in ancient Israel or . . . provide a record of what a particular story contains by way of tradition' (2002:428–429). His proposition that, 'Such a record of what a story is about is an abbreviation of the telling of a story; it is shorter than the performance. Such a record offers a base for future storytelling, or for whatever use may be made of story tradition' (2002:429), bears similarities to our own proposition that the text *evokes* rather than *contains* the traditional story. Jesus' reference to the Elijah/Elisha traditions suggests that Jesus' followers' memory of his message and ministry was not restricted to Isaianic traditions and especially not to a specific Isaianic text or set of texts. Jesus' followers apprehended the significance of Isaiah's prophecy in reference to other traditions of God's activity on behalf of those in need, particularly through the agency of Elijah and Elisha. Thus, Isaiah's 'proclamation of good news to the poor' and 'setting free of the oppressed', for

---

ample, 'None of [Luke's] changes alter Isaiah's basic sense; but *they might indicate that Luke is summarizing textual material used by Jesus in his synagogue address, since a normal synagogue reading would not mix passages quite like this*, and the description of Jesus' remarks here is decidedly brief and dramatic . . . Jesus likely used both passages in the actual setting' (Bock 1994:405; emphasis added). Perhaps, but Luke's presentation of Jesus in the synagogue does not suggest he is 'summarizing' anything; he insists Jesus is *reading from the scroll*, and we cannot get round the fact that what Luke presents as 'reading' looks very unlike what we imagine 'reading' to be.

<sup>86</sup> The emphasis of Luke's portrayal of Jesus *reading* from the Isaiah scroll is especially intriguing in light of later Rabbinic expectations that the reader of the Hebrew Bible must 'be manifestly seen to read' (P. S. Alexander 1992:330). Jesus may be '*seen to read*', but what we *hear* him read presents problems. Thus our own culturally conditioned notions of what constitutes 'reading' may not be appropriate for apprehending what Luke intends when he writes that Jesus ἀνέστη ἀναγνῶναι (4.16).

<sup>87</sup> This is, of course, speculative and, therefore, about as useful as all such speculations. Interestingly, Stephen's speech (Acts 7.2–53), and the circuitous answer to the charges brought against him that his speech represents (cf. Acts 6.11–14), is just such a performance of Israelite tradition, in a similarly adversative context, and to similar purposes as we would find if Jesus had proffered an extended performance of the Elijah/Elisha cycles in Luke 4.16–30.

example, are understood in terms of Elijah's beneficence to a Canaanite widow and Elisha's cleansing of Naaman.<sup>88</sup> Here Jesus' actualisation of Israelite tradition transcends the textual embodiment of that tradition.

#### 6.4.a.iii. Isaiah as a Frame for Christian Memory

So what should we make of Luke's citation of Isaiah as he narrates Jesus' inaugural sermon in Nazareth?<sup>89</sup> Here Barry Schwartz's work on memory as a social frame might provide a productive way forward.<sup>90</sup> Schwartz, citing Clifford Geertz (1973:215), starts with an important premise: 'Every conscious perception is . . . an act of recognition, a pairing in which an object (or event, act, emotion) is identified by placing it against the background of an appropriate symbol' (1996:911). He then turns to two concepts, 'framing' and 'keying', to understand how memory accomplishes its cognitive and associative functions. 'Framing' is the process by which present experiences are integrated into a social group's shared symbolic universe: 'Shared memories become appropriate symbols — backgrounds for the perception and comprehension of current events — when organized into . . . a "primary framework" . . . A framework is primary if its existence and meaning precede the event it interprets' (1996:911; referring to Goffman 1974). Schwartz takes the label 'primary' seriously: 'A primary event, as I narrowly define it, is not any event that is real, originating, and influential. Rather, a primary event is one that unifies and animates a society, orients or reorients it in fundamental ways. Instead of comparing primary events to copies, then, I consider how participants in one primary event . . . interpret their experience by aligning it to another primary event' (1996:911).

'Keying', then, is 'the mechanism of this interpretive process' (Schwartz 1996:911). By pairing one 'primary event', experienced in the present, with another from the past, 'keying' infuses the present with meaning and enables a social group to orientate itself in the present with reference to the past. Importantly, this pairing process is social (rather than individual)<sup>91</sup> and assumes discursive forms:

Keying transforms memory into a cultural system, not because it consists of invisible mental operations, but because it matches publicly accessible (i.e., symbolic) models of the past (written narratives, pictorial images, statues, motion pictures, music, and songs) to the experiences of the present. Keying arranges cultural symbols into a publicly visi-

---

<sup>88</sup> Not so implicit in both of these references is the judgement against the widows 'in Israel' during the days of Elijah and against the lepers 'in Israel' during the days of Elisha. This observation suggests against the hypothesis that it is Jesus' omission of the mention of recompense in Isa. 61.2 that raises the Nazarenes' ire; it also makes it implausible that Jesus' point is that his ministry does not bring the judgement which featured so prominently, for example, in the message of John the Baptist and other Jewish prophets/authors of the Second Temple period. Cf. the discussion of Luke 4.25–27 in §6.4.b.ii., below.

<sup>89</sup> C. A. Evans (1997:659–661) has pointed out another eschatologically orientated reading Isa. 61.1 (11QM<sup>elch</sup>), which reinforces the notion that Luke utilises traditional materials as he portrays Jesus in Nazareth, even if he does so in innovative ways (cf. also Tuckett 2005:54).

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Schwartz 1996.

<sup>91</sup> It is, perhaps, significant that Schwartz highlights the social aspects of keying, as his research is taken up primarily with American memory in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Given the social nature of memory in a cultural context that privileges, in many ways, the individual *over* the social, it would seem especially important for us to emphasise the social nature of memory in various first century settings (cf. the discussions of 'dyadic personality' in Esler 1994; Malina 1996; Malina and Neyrey 1991a, 1996).

ble discourse that flows through the organizations and institutions of the social world. Keying is communicative movement — talk, writing, image- and music-making — that connects otherwise separate realms of history. (Schwartz 1996:911)

As events from ‘otherwise separate realms of history’ are brought together, the meaning of both the past and the present are transformed and mutually reinforced by this association. But we ought not exaggerate the ways in which keying enables the present to remake the past in its own image; in important ways, keying results in the past making the present.

As we return to the image of Jesus reading from the Isaiah scroll, we see that at least one early Christian community understood Jesus’ significance by turning to the Isaianic tradition of God’s judgement against Israel and his promise to restore the nation and return to Zion to reign over the world.<sup>92</sup> Thus question is not simply, Did Jesus turn to the Isaianic tradition to communicate his own significance? or, Is Luke 4.16–21 ‘authentic’? Rather, we ask, What about the Isaianic tradition enabled his followers to perceive and interpret Jesus’ significance and order their behaviour in his light? In light of the pervasive presence of allusions and citations to Isaiah in the gospels,<sup>93</sup> the turn to Isaiah is certainly not peculiar to Lukan theology. Indeed, in light of Darrell Hannah’s (2005) limited exploration of Isaiah in Second Temple Jewish literature, Isaiah appears to meet Schwartz’s criterion that a primary event not be simply ‘any event that is real, originating, and influential. Rather, a primary event is one that unifies and animates a society, orients or reorients it in fundamental ways’ (1996:911). The Isaianic tradition was an organising principle that enabled Jews (including Jesus’ early followers) in the late-Second Temple period to understand their circumstances; it was not simply a powerful resource for ideological legitimation.

As we find ourselves, then, reading Jesus reading the Isaianic tradition, we ought to understand Luke not simply as one who fabricates (or even falsifies) the Jesus tradition in order to transform Jesus into God’s anointed prophet who proclaims good news to the poor, release to the captives, and so on. Neither does our passage simply open the way to turn Jesus into God’s anointed prophet to the gentiles. Instead, we see Luke expressing in innovative ways Jesus’ status as God’s prophet whose concern was for Israel’s marginalised and poor — an already important feature of the Jesus tradition (cf. Luke 6.20b–21; 7.18–23) — and doing so with traditional materials. If the Isaianic tradition already unified and animated Jewish and Galilean society, orientating and reorientating it in fundamental ways, then it is not surprising to find the early Jesus movements, as native movements within first-century Judaism, understanding themselves in

---

<sup>92</sup> Beaton suggests some interesting ways in which past and present interact in Matthew’s use of Isaiah in his own context (e.g., 2005b:66–67), though he does not use the language of social memory theory in his discussion. In another place, he writes, ‘It would be simple to say that [Matthew’s formula quotations] serve as mere proof-texts, passages that are removed from their original context and imbued with an altered meaning in their freshly contrived context. To the contrary, *they are used in a highly sophisticated manner that imports to the gospel intricate layers of meaning.* They represent the exegesis of the early Christian movement and its attempt to come to terms with the life, work and person of Jesus, the Messiah, son of Abraham, son of David’ (2005b:75–76; my emphases; cf. also Koet 2005).

<sup>93</sup> And in the New Testament as a whole; cf. the essays in Moyise and Menken 2005b.

Isaianic terms.<sup>94</sup> And if both non-Christian Jewish groups and the early Jesus movements understood and orientated themselves to the present in terms of the Isaianic tradition, it becomes all the more likely that Jesus understood his milieu (and his role therein) in Isaianic terms. Therefore, our text's 'appropriateness' (or 'continuity') *vis-à-vis* the pre-Lukan Jesus tradition and the man who stands behind that tradition appears fairly secure.<sup>95</sup>

#### 6.4.b. Jesus, Elijah, and Elisha

Besides the citation from Isa. 61, the reference to Elijah and Elisha in Luke 4.25–27 also functions as an important part of the programmatic function of 4.16–30. The Elijah/Elisha traditions are evoked in close proximity to the Isaianic traditions, and this conjunction of traditions resembles that found in Luke 7.18–23. Particularly in Luke's gospel, the accounts of Jesus' healing the centurion's servant (7.1–10) and raising of the son of the widow at Nain (7.11–17) evoke the Elijah/Elisha traditions and contextualise Jesus' reply to John at 7.18–23. Klutz has also suggested that the citation of Isa. 61.1 in 4.18 contextualises the exorcism story in 4.33–37, and this latter story also alludes to 1 Kgs. 17.17–24<sup>96</sup> and 2 Kgs. 5.1–14.<sup>97</sup> These allusions 'all serve to link the story tightly to biblical antecedents' (2004:61), an impressive feat given the paucity of Hebrew biblical traditions which could contextualise exorcistic traditions in Second-Temple texts.<sup>98</sup> All of these texts employ the same traditions for similar purposes: they all establish Jesus' programme in terms of Israel's traditions. But if this is the case, then the near-consensus in Lukan scholarship that 4.25–27's primary significance relates to Luke's interest in the 'mission to the gentiles' comes under question.<sup>99</sup>

According to many Lukan scholars, the specific relation between the programmatic function of 4.16–30 and vv. 25–27 involves Luke's anticipation (and retrojection) of the mission to the gentiles in the proclamation of Jesus.<sup>100</sup> Whether or not Jesus could have had any interest in a ministry extending beyond the borders of ethnic Israel, Elijah and Elisha in Jesus' sermon anticipate and announce both (a) the failure of Israel to accept Jesus and his gospel and (b) the

---

<sup>94</sup> Bock, too, insists that Second-Temple Judaism, like the early Jesus movements (and, according to Luke, Jesus himself) read the Isaianic tradition — especially the traditions of restoration — in terms of its present circumstances (1994:406, fn 22).

<sup>95</sup> Jens Schröter argues for a similar approach to the gospels and the question of Jesus; for example, 'It is less important . . . whether one ascribes a saying to Jesus himself or to the early community. Of greater importance is the question of how to determine the mutual relationships between the different early Christian views and their answers to the ongoing relevance of Jesus also in post-Easter times' (1996:156).

<sup>96</sup> Compare Luke 4.34's ἔα, τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί, followed by a vocative and a form of ἔρχομαι + an infinitive of purpose, with 1 Kgs. 17.18's τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, followed by the same grammatical constructions.

<sup>97</sup> Klutz refers to 'the conceptual link between the impure demon in [Luke] 4.33 and the prophet Elisha's purification of Naaman the Syrian' (2004:61).

<sup>98</sup> Cf. §§7.3.b.; 7.4., below.

<sup>99</sup> Eric Eve notes a similar conjunction of traditions in Ben Sira: 'Moreover, since Ben Sira's survey includes many of the healing and resuscitation miracles associated with Elijah, Elisha, and Isaiah, it might be natural for someone who performed healing miracles to be seen as a prophet in that tradition' (2002:116). What is more, this particular conjunction of traditions shows 'that prophets and miracles could be quite closely associated in the Jewish mind, even to the extent that the miracles could come to be seen as the most important activity of the prophet' (2002:113).

<sup>100</sup> E.g., Nolland 1989:200–201; Culpepper 1995:107–108; Bovon 2002:156.

opportunity created by their failure for gentiles to hear and accept the gospel. Additionally, whereas the Jews will prove unfaithful by rejecting Jesus, the gentiles by contrast will believe in large numbers. Thus Marshall says,

When Jesus goes on to speak by implication of the preaching of the gospel and the performance of mighty works among the gentiles, Nazareth begins to take on the symbolical meaning of the Jewish nation. So the narrative takes on a more than literal significance; it becomes a paradigm not merely of the ministry of Jesus but also of the mission of the church. For the story shows how the words of grace spoken by Jesus met with rejection from his own people. They cried out for confirmatory signs to be done in their midst, since they could not believe the bare words of the son of Joseph — he could hardly be a real prophet. Jesus answered their unbelief with the threat of departure to other people who would (it is implied) be more responsive. God's plan would find fulfilment in the extension of God's mission to the gentiles. This was more than the people of Nazareth could bear; they were filled with anger and would have done away with Jesus, but he escaped unharmed from their midst. (Marshall 1978:178)<sup>101</sup>

Thus the significance of 4.25–27 for the mission to the gentiles: Elijah and Elisha, as prophets of Israel's God, take the blessings intended for Israel to foreigners because the people of Israel have proven unfaithful and unworthy of their election.<sup>102</sup> Jesus translates this point into his own day. Whereas Israel in the days of Elijah and Elisha had turned to the gods of her neighbours, the indictment against 'Israel' in Nazareth is their failure to apprehend God's activity through the prophet Jesus. Fidelity to YHWH in Luke 4.16–30 is conceivable solely on the basis of their response to Jesus.

This is entirely plausible, especially as Luke demonstrates his interest in the gentiles' access to the gospel and the community of God's people. But does the reference to Elijah and Elisha necessarily legitimise the mission to the gentiles? The perception of 'Christianity' and 'Judaism' as distinct entities rather than divergent expressions of a larger entity has factored into this interpretation of Luke 4.25–27.<sup>103</sup> In this light, Jesus, as one who has 'left Judaism behind',<sup>104</sup>

---

<sup>101</sup> Marshall does not divorce this passage from the context of Jesus' ministry; the significance for the so-called 'mission to the gentiles' is additive (*'more than literal significance'*) rather than transformative. That is, Jesus, in Marshall's analysis, comes to mean *more* in Luke than he did in Galilee, rather than meaning something *different*. Siker reads this passage transformatively (Luke reconfigures, rather than adapts, the image of Jesus), but similarly to Marshall understands Nazareth as a cipher for 'Israel' (cf. 1992:83). Siker then goes even further and interprets the reference to Capernaum (4.23) as a cipher for 'the nations/gentiles' (cf. 1992:86; similarly, Conzelmann 1953:34). Tannehill's position, which does not equate Capernaum with gentiles, is better (cf. 1996:94). Todd Klutz, discussing the 'repetition' of συναγωγή in Luke 4.16–37, says rightly, 'The foregrounding of συναγωγή therefore draws attention to the conflicting responses which Jesus evokes in the synagogues. As for the irony, whereas the συναγωγή of Nazareth virtually demonises Jesus, treating him as a danger that ought to be cast outside the city (4.29), the συναγωγή of Capernaum is itself demonised, having to rely on Jesus to cast an unclean spirit from its midst' (2004:34). Klutz's reading of Nazareth and Capernaum in Luke 4 is clearly superior to Siker's, insofar as Klutz's reading does not rely so heavily on Christian theological agenda whereby Capernaum can evoke 'the nations/gentiles'!

<sup>102</sup> Cf. C. A. Evans (1987:79): 'The religiously upright assumed that not only would the Gentiles be cast out, but their apparently less devoted fellow Jews would be excluded as well. The upright were the true children of Abraham and so anticipated God's blessings. But in Luke this thinking is challenged. . . . As it now stands, Luke 4:16–30 provides a prophetic challenge to first-century Jewish assumptions regarding election, and central to this passage are the references to Elijah and Elisha.'

<sup>103</sup> Cf. the discussion of 'lumping' and 'splitting' in E. Zerubavel 1991; cf. also §7.1., below.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. the references to 'the Jewish nation', 'his own people', etc. in the quote from Marshall, above.



critiques 'Judaism' and uses Israel's traditions to call attention to her failings. The mission to the gentiles, clearly an important feature of Lukan theology, becomes a peculiarly Christian (= non- or un-Jewish) enterprise that Luke retrojects into Jesus' life and legitimises on the basis of Israelite traditions about Elijah and Elisha.<sup>105</sup> But can we understand Luke 4.25–27 apart from this Christian theological perspective? If Jesus could have evoked Elijah and Elisha in a manner similar to Luke 4.25–27 in a context similar to Luke 4.16–30, would Jesus and his audience have attributed this significance to the Elijah/Elisha tradition?<sup>106</sup>

#### 6.4.b.i. Elijah and Elisha in Israelite Memory

The Elijah/Elisha traditions in 1 Kgs. 17.8–24 and 2 Kgs. 5.1–19, referenced by Jesus in Luke 4.25–27, are relevant for Jewish beliefs regarding election, but in their biblical contexts they are not critiques of Israel itself. Israel, in these traditions, does not lose her election; YHWH does not turn to the nations as a result of Israel's obduracy. In 1 Kgs. 17.8–24, we ought to understand the story of YHWH sending Elijah to the widow in Sidonian Zarephath in relation to the account given in 1 Kgs. 16.29–33.<sup>107</sup> After introducing Ahab the son of Omri in 16.29, the author adamantly condemns Ahab for doing 'evil in the sight of the LORD more than all who were before him' (16.30). Verse 31 is almost incredulous in its description of Ahab's marriage to Jezebel,<sup>108</sup> which leads then to the king's service of Ba'al and Asherah (16.31–33). Thus, 'Ahab did more to provoke the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, than had all the kings of Israel who were before him' (16.33). The famine announced in 17.1ff., as well as the subsequent accounts of Elijah's activities, results directly from the covenant unfaithfulness of some Israelites, particularly Israel's monarchy and its allies, to the detriment of the people. Tamis Rentería (1992) and Wesley Bergen (1992), among others, read the Elijah and Elisha narratives as explicit critiques of Israel's Omrid dynasty and as political legitimation or propaganda for Jehu's coup (2 Kgs. 9–10). Notice that the story of Elijah serves intramural ideological interests, unlike the dominant interpretation of the reference to Elijah in Luke 4. Inasmuch as references to Israelite tradition incorporate 'layers of meaning' within their New Testament contexts,<sup>109</sup> neither Jesus' nor Luke's audience were likely to perceive a critique of Israel in Luke 4.25–26.

---

<sup>105</sup> Of course, the sense in which the various expressions of the Jesus movement in the first century continued to be also expressions of Judaism has become a vibrant topic of scholarly research. As far back as 1977 James Dunn was able to remind us: '*The OT is an important unifying element in earliest Christianity and in the earliest Christian literature. . . . In this sense all Christianity in the NT is Jewish Christianity, that is to say, the influence of the OT pervades the whole, determines the meaning of its categories and concepts*' (1977:81; original italics).

<sup>106</sup> Prior (1995:142–143), too, is unsure that the scholarly consensus regarding Jesus' reference to Elijah and Elisha and Luke's interest in the mission to the gentiles (at least, an *exclusively* gentile mission) is very helpful.

<sup>107</sup> Thomas Brodie (2000:1), for instance, reckons 'the Elijah-Elisha narrative' comprises 1 Kgs. 16.29–2 Kgs. 13.25. Thus the account of Ahab's ascent to the throne and the summary of his wickedness are important features of the account of Elijah's prophetic activities.

<sup>108</sup> 1 Kgs. 16.31a: 'And as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat' (וַיְהִי הַנְּקִל לְכַתּוֹ בַּחַטָּאוֹת יְרֻבְעָם בֶּן־נָבָט).

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Beaton 2005b:75–76 for the phrase 'layers of meaning'; Beaton is discussing the use of Isaiah in Matthew, but his point is more broadly applicable. Richard B. Hays, for example, has boldly asked, 'How did Paul read Isaiah?', in an intentional effort to demonstrate the ways 'Paul read any indi-

This point applies also to the reference to Elisha in 4.27. In 2 Kgs. 5.1–14, the author starkly contrasts Elisha on the one hand and the unnamed ‘king of Israel’ (5.5, 6, 7, 8) on the other. The king receives the letter about Naaman, tears his clothes, and exclaims, ‘Am I God, to give death or life, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Just look and see how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me’ (2 Kgs. 5.7). Elisha, on the other hand, questions the king’s behaviour and orders the king: ‘Let him come to me, that he may learn that there is a prophet in Israel’ (5.8). Here it is precisely Naaman’s action of coming to Israel that has facilitated his cleansing. The tradition dramatically contrasts Naaman (and Elisha) with the king of Israel.<sup>110</sup> Elijah and Elisha, therefore, provided *internal* critiques of Israel; they condemned apostasy within Israel (particularly within her leadership), but they did not announce Israel’s ‘un-election’. As traditional figures, they certainly did not represent the election of YHWH going to the nations. Indeed, in the case of Naaman and Elisha, Naaman is cleansed *because he comes to Israel’s prophet and washes in the Jordan River*. Even Elijah, after ministering to the widow and raising her son from the dead (1 Kgs. 17.8–24), returns to Israel to confront Ahab and Baal’s prophets (1 Kgs. 18). In the context of Israelite tradition, Elijah and Elisha signify the judgement and restoration of Israel:<sup>111</sup> judgement against the Omrid dynasty and the establishment of a new king over Israel (2 Kgs. 9), judgement against idolatry and the restoration of Yahwism.<sup>112</sup>

#### 6.4.b.ii. Elijah and Elisha in Jesus’ Preaching

We have thus established an important point: even if Luke portrays Jesus referencing Elijah and Elisha in order to pave the way for a later mission to the gentiles, this does not exhaust the significance of Elijah and Elisha within the Jesus tradition. Jesus’ statement about Elijah and Elisha, and the presence of widows and lepers in Israel when Elijah and Elisha provided YHWH’s blessing upon a Canaanite woman and an Aramean captain, makes sense apart from its employment in service of a programme to include gentiles among God’s people. Too much has been made of the supposed expectation on the part of the Jews, particularly in Nazareth, that the *eschaton* (or, in Jesus’ parlance, the coming of God’s kingdom), whether signalled by the return of YHWH himself to Zion or by the advent of his prophet/king/messiah, would signal

---

vidual OT book as a literary or theological unity’ rather than ‘as a collection of oracular proof texts’ (2005:25; cf. Hays’s conclusions regarding ‘Paul’s reading of Isaiah’ on pp. 47–49).

<sup>110</sup> Cf. 2 Kgs. 9.1–3, where Elisha sends his servant to start the rebellion against the Omridic dynasty.

<sup>111</sup> *Pace* Nolland (1989:203): ‘The conversation moves a stage further with the introduction of scenes from the ministry of the prophets Elijah and Elisha (vv 25–27). *Here were instances of prophetic ministry from which the Israelites had not benefited*: the many needy widows and lepers in Israel remained without help. So too the people of Nazareth will not benefit since they have chosen by their unbelief to be outsiders to what God is presently doing’ (emphasis added). Green provides a more nuanced perspective: ‘Neither the Scriptures nor the current narrative presents these prophetic figures as programmatically oriented to the Gentiles; nor are they portrayed as having turned their backs on Israel’ (1997:218). Our analysis confirms this point, which Green correctly makes but does not argue.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. the conclusion of the Elijah/Elisha narrative (2 Kgs. 13.20–25): ‘But the Lord was gracious to [Israel] and had compassion on them; he turned toward them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, *and would not destroy them; nor has he banished them from his presence until now*’ (13.23; my emphasis). Bock, who picks up on the expression of judgement in 1 Kgs. 17–18 (‘Such unfaithfulness brought Israel under judgement at this time’; 1994:417), misses that restoration does not come simply *after* judgement but is *the flip side of it*.

good times for Israel and bad times for the gentiles.<sup>113</sup> Scholars then use this expectation to explain the Jews' rejection of Jesus, especially in Nazareth, because he proclaimed bad times for Israel and good times for the gentiles. For example,

They [Jews in Nazareth] held it to be axiomatic that the *Mebasser* (the Announcer) of the good news would introduce both the liberation of Israel and judgment upon the Gentiles, and yet Jesus stated that the very opposite would occur: Israel was facing judgment and exclusion by the Announcer, and the Gentiles were being offered the emancipation of the kingdom. The rage of the Nazarenes at *this* preaching would have been duplicated in every synagogue in Israel where it was heard. (Beasley-Murray 1986:90; original italics)

Both Jesus and the Israelite tradition orientating him exhibit considerably more sophistication than this scenario suggests. As we have seen, the Elijah/Elisha traditions functioned as *internal* critiques of Israel that were intended to motivate repentance and result in the restoration precisely *of Israel!*<sup>114</sup> Certainly traditions of Israel's restoration involved and were bound up with the anticipation of God's judgement of her enemies, but to construct a rigid Israel/gentile dichotomy and equate that dichotomy with the similar Israel/Israel's enemies dichotomy ignores the fact that our texts evince considerable debate regarding *who* Israel's enemies were.<sup>115</sup>

Instead, we ought to interpret Luke's portrayal of Jesus' message in 4.16–30 and specifically in 4.25–27 as a complicated pronouncement of restoration *and* judgement *for Israel*.<sup>116</sup> Steven Bryan has recently put forward a compelling argument that 'Jesus did pronounce judgement over the nation as had many of the prophets before him'. This, according to Bryan, 'had little place in the restorationism of Jesus', but nevertheless Jesus' message of judgement at the same time 'evoke[d] hopes of restoration' (2002:6). Though the mechanics of how a Second-Temple prophetic figure could pronounce judgement and restoration at the same time are, apparently,

---

<sup>113</sup> Tannehill has brought attention to the ways in which Luke-Acts is concerned for *both* Israel *and* the nations; 'The Abraham promise is a promise of blessing for Israel that will also bring blessing to the Gentiles' (1999:327–328; quote from p. 328).

<sup>114</sup> Bryan (2002:96), making another point, cites *Tg. Pseudo-Jonathan*, which is also instructive for understanding how Elijah, as a figure who stands-in for internal critiques of Israel, could also resonate with expectations of Israel's restoration: 'Bless, Lord, the possessions of the house of Levi . . . and accept with good will the sacrifice from the hand of Elijah, the priest, who offered up at Mount Carmel. Break the loins of Ahab his enemy, and the (neck-)joint of the false prophets who arose against him so that there will not be for the enemies of Yohanan, the high priest, a foot to stand on' (*Tg. Ps.-J. Deut. 33.11*).

<sup>115</sup> Cf. also Koet (2005:100): 'Although it is often said that Luke seems to write the Jews off, we would suggest that Luke finds in Isaiah an authority for his defence of the gentile mission. Together with Israel's glory, Jesus' mission will include salvation for the gentiles' (similarly, Prior 1995:142). It also seems very problematic to universalise Jesus' message, at least at this early stage. For example, 'When one cited Isa. 61, the audience would think immediately of the coming of God's new age of salvation. . . . *The time of deliverance for humankind is present*. It is a time when much of what the prophets called for can be realized among those who respond' (Bock 1994:407; my emphasis). Bock obscures Jesus' point and aligns him with later Christian thinking about the gospel. Jesus' message was precisely judgement and restoration *for Israel*, and though Jesus (and especially his followers) linked closely the nations' fate with Israel's, it is still *Israel* (not 'humanity') at the centre of God's activity. Pace J. Sanders: 'Jesus was saying to the congregation that God was not a Jew' (1982:154); This is problematic on a number of levels, though Sanders rightly insists on reading Jesus in Luke 4.16–30 in the context of Isaiah.

<sup>116</sup> Bock makes too much of Jesus' use of οὐδεμίαν and οὐδεὶς and suggests, 'This double usage stresses that no Israelite received positive benefit from the prophets' presence in this period' (1994:417). This may be possible on the basis of the denotative value of the words of Luke 4.25–27 alone, but this interpretation requires everyone involved (including us!) to understand Elijah and Elisha completely outside their traditional contexts.

somewhat perplexing to modern critics, the evidence in our texts suggests that precisely this characterised the messages of Jesus and other contemporary prophetic figures.<sup>117</sup> Luke's portrayal of Jesus referring to Elijah and Elisha continues this dynamic of judgement-and-restoration in Jesus' message and programme. That is, Elijah and Elisha already evoked connotations of judgement and restoration of Israel, as we have seen, and the negative tone of the reference in Luke 4.25–27 is appropriate for the prophets' condemnation of the Omrid dynasty. But to emphasise the condemnatory overtones of Luke 4.25–27, supposing that Luke shuts the door to Israel and opens one to the nations, to the neglect of the emphasis on fulfilment and restoration in 4.16–21 will not do.<sup>118</sup> Instead, the negative message of 4.25–27 does indeed intend judgement against Israel, as is clear, but it does so as part of Jesus' message of Israel's restoration, of the fulfilment of the prophetic promises (e.g., Isa. 61.1–2; 58.6d), and the re-establishment of YHWH's reign in Zion (i.e., the kingdom of God).

---

<sup>117</sup> Bryan's analysis of Jesus' vineyard parables, and especially the parable of the tenants (2002:47–57) is a breath-taking exposition of the mechanics of the judgement-and-restoration prophetic discourse which was both a feature of Jewish prophetic tradition and a striking feature of Jesus' discourse. Regarding the parable of the tenants and its problematic referential shift (in which Israel, originally identified as the vineyard, is later linked to the tenants), Bryan establishes that the parable 'depict[s] simultaneously both Israel's destruction (through the fate of the tenants) as well as the preservation of all that it meant to be Israel (through the giving of the vineyard to others). The point must be stressed: it is the *vineyard* which is given to others; the power of the vineyard's opening association with Israel now reasserts itself; quiescent through the bulk of the parable, the vineyard again comes to the fore at the climax! Like a carnival shell game, just when one is sure Israel has dropped off the table, it appears again under the cup marked "vineyard". Thus through the deft movement of metaphorical meaning, the parable affirms the continuity of God's commitment to the vineyard even if the nature of that continuity is markedly different from that suggested by Isaiah 27' (2002:56; original italics).

<sup>118</sup> Neither can we suppose that Luke intended an emphasis on Israel's restoration in 4.16–21 but switched his emphasis in 4.23–30 toward God's judgement of Israel. Though 4.22 is difficult to interpret, Jesus' message of the Jubilee year of restoration carries across both halves of 4.16–30, particularly in the link between the ἐνιαυτὸν κυρίου δεκτὸν of 4.19 and the proverbial statement, οὐδεὶς προφήτης δεκτός ἐστιν ἐν τῇ πατρίδι αὐτοῦ in 4.24. What is more, as Poirier has pointed out, 'Isa. 61:1–5 [came] to be identified with Elijah's endtime return' (2003:229–230). If Isa. 61 and Elijah could be evoked within Second-Temple Jewish tradition in terms of each other, the presence of both in Luke 4.16–30 reinforces the notion that Luke 4.16–21 and 4.23–30 move in the same direction. C. A. Evans, too, links Luke 4.25–27 with the citation of Isa. 61.1–2 (1987:78). These observations, I should think, suffice to dispel theories that Luke has awkwardly joined disparate sources; given the coherence of Luke's final product, all evidence for such rough treatment of literary sources vanishes.

## Chapter 7

### ‘No City or House Divided against Itself’: Exorcism as Israelite Tradition

We have to assume that such events [exorcisms] were witnessed, put into oral form, and circulated among Jesus’ followers (and more widely); otherwise the strength and extent of Jesus’ reputation as an exorcist are hardly possible to explain.

James D. G. Dunn  
*Jesus Remembered*, 677

The Lucan account of the Beelzebul conflict is shaped to highlight the significance of Jesus’ ministry (in particular his exorcisms) as the fulfilment of the promise of the prophet like Moses (Deut 18:15, 18). Not only has the eschatological exodus been inaugurated through Jesus, who like Moses backs his claim with miracles, but he also meets resistance in the same way Israel rebelled in the Exodus.

Martin Emmrich  
‘The Lucan Account of the Beelzebul Controversy’, 278–279

#### 7.1. Introduction: Mark, Q, and Beelzebul

We will shortly turn to the ‘Beelzebul controversy’ to analyse the discursive forces surrounding the development of Jesus’ reputation in the gospels, written texts that continue to exhibit the effects of their relation to oral Jesus tradition. Before we do so, however, let us address some source-critical issues. Scholars widely, even consensually, agree that both Mark and Q contained versions of this controversy. That our two earliest written sources preserve versions of the Beelzebul controversy has played a significant role in the affirmation of this story’s historicity.<sup>1</sup> Here we consider the consensus of a ‘Mark-Q overlap’ in light of how New Testament scholars have differentiated the source-critical data.<sup>2</sup> In his discussion of the processes by which human beings make distinctions in everyday life, E. Zerubavel identifies two basic tasks integral to our perception of the wide world.

Creating islands of meaning entails two rather different mental processes — lumping and splitting. . . . It involves grouping ‘similar’ items together in a single mental cluster — sculptors and filmmakers (‘artists’), murder and arson (‘felonies’), foxes and camels (‘animals’). At the same time, it also involves separating in our mind ‘different’ mental clusters from one another — artists from scientists, felonies from misdemeanors, animals from humans. In order to carve out of the flux surrounding us meaningful entities with

---

<sup>1</sup> In this chapter we are especially interested in Matt. 12.28//Luke 11.20; despite the fact that this passage, in the Two-Source Hypothesis perspective, occurs only in Q, scholars have nearly unanimously affirmed its ‘authenticity’ (cf. §7.3.b.ii., below).

<sup>2</sup> E.g., E. Zerubavel says, ‘Things assume a distinctive identity only through being differentiated from other things, and their meaning is always a function of the particular mental compartment in which we place them. Examining how we draw lines will therefore reveal how we give meaning to our environment as well as to ourselves’ (1991:3). The question being pursued here regards how scholars have differentiated issues of Q’s existence from Q’s content and how the patterns of similarities and differences between our texts have been compartmentalised within this differentiation.

distinctive identities, we must experience them as separate from one another. (E. Zerubavel 1991:21)<sup>3</sup>

Though these processes inevitably result in the ‘distortion’ of the continuous, undifferentiated reality of human experience,<sup>4</sup> Zerubavel points out that ‘the ability to ignore the uniqueness of items and regard them as typical members of categories is a prerequisite for classifying any group of phenomena. Such ability to “typify” our experience is therefore one of the cornerstones of social reality’ (1991:17).<sup>5</sup>

What is true of objects also pertains to time. In his discussion of ‘the social shape of the past’,<sup>6</sup> Zerubavel adopts a structuralist perspective of meaning as ‘a product of the manner in which semiotic objects are positioned relative to one another’ and suggests that ‘the historical meaning of events basically lies in the way they are situated in our minds vis-à-vis other events. Indeed, it is their structural position within such *historical scenarios* that leads us to remember past events as we do’ (2003:12; original italics). If we take the pattern of similarities and differences between the synoptic reports of the Beelzebul controversy as themselves a single ‘semiotic object’, we notice that the vast majority of New Testament scholars ‘lump’ this object within the sphere of other textual ‘facts’ relevant to Q’s content and ‘split’ it from that sphere relevant to Q’s existence.<sup>7</sup> When we bring the issue of the ‘overlaps’ in line with the question of Q’s existence, a rather different meaning arises from the fact of the pattern of similarities and differences between Matthew and Luke. In answer to the question, ‘If Luke knew Matthew, why does he never use Matthew’s additions to Mark in triple tradition material?’, Mark Goodacre answers,

---

<sup>3</sup> When we perceive and interpret the world we do not simply *impose* somewhat arbitrary distinctions on the phenomena that assault our senses; we also *exaggerate* and *reify* those distinctions, forgetting that we ourselves (and not the objects of our perceptions) have made them. Regarding exaggeration, ‘Whereas lumping involves playing down mental distances within entities, splitting entails widening the perceived gaps between entities so as to reinforce their mental separateness’; regarding reification: ‘Such reification of the purely conventional is a result of our tendency to regard the merely social as natural. Despite the fact that they are virtually mental, most gaps — as well as the quantum leaps necessary for crossing them — are among the seemingly inevitable institutionalised “social facts” that constitute our social reality. As such, they are in fact “real” in more than just an experiential sense, which explains how we come to perceive the insularity of purely mental entities as a natural, rather than a merely conventional, fact’ (E. Zerubavel 1991:27, 28–29; cf. also Berger and Luckmann 1966).

<sup>4</sup> ‘Distortion’ in the sense established in §3.3., esp. §3.3.a., above.

<sup>5</sup> The generic relationships between Q and the *Gospel of Thomas*, as they have been presented in current scholarship and as they have been facilitated by processes of ‘lumping’ and ‘splitting’, present an interesting topic of research (cf. Goodacre 2002:171).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. E. Zerubavel 2003:11–36.

<sup>7</sup> As one intriguing example, notice the following from Michael Goulder(!): ‘There are some thirty considerable passages where Mark has a wording close to Q . . . How then are these “overlap” passages to be explained? Was Mark familiar with Q . . . or have Mark and Q independently produced versions of a common oral tradition?’ (1997:193). Certainly Goulder employs a type of *prosopopoeia* (compare Goulder 1996:676–678), but it is significant that Fleddermann, too, does not consider the ramifications of the ‘overlaps’ for arguments of Q’s existence: ‘The doublets . . . do not just help establish the existence of Q. They show further that the two sources — Mark and Q — overlap, and they raise the question of the relationship of these sources to each other’ (1995:2). Goodacre is relevant here: Q ‘is forgetting its origin as a hypothesis, indeed a derivative hypothesis . . . Many books and articles on Q now fail to mention this key element in Q’s identity, dispensing with the word “hypothesis” and treating Q simply as part of the established literature of early Christianity’ (2002:3). As one striking example of what Goodacre decries, Robinson boldly states, ‘Now Q need no longer remain purely hypothetical, a mere postulate lurking unattainably behind *Matthew and Luke*’ (2000:xix; emphasis added)!

'He does. Luke prefers Matthew to Mark in several triple tradition instances . . . The challenge which such accounts pose to the Q Hypothesis goes unnoticed because they are placed in a separate (and problematic) category of their own called "Mark-Q overlap".<sup>8</sup> The phenomena of Mark-Q overlaps presents a problem for proponents of the Q hypothesis; it knocks down one of the pillars of the Q hypothesis: that Matthew and Luke do not agree significantly against Mark.<sup>9</sup>

Goodacre's argument suffers, however, in that we can find no *a priori* reason why Mark and Q *could not have* overlapped.<sup>10</sup> If Matthew and Luke independently used both Mark and Q, any 'Mark-Q overlaps' would manifest themselves as divergences from Mark in Matthew and/or Luke. For example, scholars have noted that both Matthew and Luke have the saying, ὁ μὴ ὦν μετ' ἐμοῦ κατ' ἐμοῦ ἐστίν, καὶ ὁ μὴ συνάγων μετ' ἐμοῦ σκορπίζει (Q 11.23), which Mark does not have, and have taken this as evidence that Q, like Mark, contained a version of the Beelzebul controversy (which Mark did not know).<sup>11</sup> Both Matthew and Luke (again, independently) chose to incorporate this saying after their divergent accounts of the parable of the strong man. If Matthew and Luke drew upon Mark and Q independently, it would be more difficult to detect Q's influence in those instances (unverifiable but theoretically entirely reasonable) when one author retains Q's wording while the other goes another way, whether with Mark, another source, or his own redactional interests. Thus Q may have contained the parable of the strong man,<sup>12</sup> and either Matthew or Luke may have preserved Q's reading of this parable more 'accurately'. If Luke does not reflect Q's reading, then Q 11.21–22 and Mark 3.27 read simi-

---

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.ntgateway.com/Q/faq.htm>, accessed 22 June 2007. In answer to the question, 'What is the problem with Mark-Q overlaps?', Goodacre says: 'One of the standard arguments for the existence of Q is that Matthew and Luke never agree with each other against Mark in order and (substantial amounts of) wording. This argument is false: Matthew and Luke do have major agreements between each other against Mark, in both wording and order. The theory of an overlapping between Mark and Q obscures this observation, leaving the standard argument unchallenged. It is because of recourse to Mark-Q overlaps that those sceptical about Q have to lay stress instead on the Minor Agreements between Matthew and Luke against Mark.' Cf. also Goodacre 2002:54–59, and: 'Luke regularly includes Matthew's substantive additions to Mark, but these tend to get placed into a special category of their own labelled "Mark-Q overlap"' (2002:163). Amongst the commentaries on the Beelzebul controversy, Gundry agrees with Goodacre: 'The frequent agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark include a number of Mattheanisms and suggest Luke's use of Matthew' (1982:230–231).

<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, Goodacre divides the arguments adduced in support of Q's existence into two categories ('negative ones . . . and positive ones') and then suggests, 'While the positive arguments need to be taken seriously, they are essentially secondary in character. . . . The most important arguments have been those in the first category, and the foundation of the Q hypothesis remains the independence of Matthew and Luke' (2002:46). Cf. Goodacre's citation of C. M. Tuckett to similar effect (2002:47, citing Tuckett 1996:4, 7).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Boring 1992:615. Notice that we are not here siding with either Goodacre or the proponents of Q. As will be shown below, the textual data themselves do not demand one interpretation over the other, so that a critical component of Goodacre's case against Q is the application of Occam's Razor (e.g., Goodacre 2002:18, 77). The probative value of Occam's Razor, however, is (or ought to be) in question: 'Occam's razor is actually of dubious value in historical explanation' (P. S. Alexander 2007:663). We, following E. Zerubavel, maintain that the narratives sustaining and propelling New Testament scholarship, and not simply 'the facts' relevant to that scholarship, determine the meaning of those facts.

<sup>11</sup> Fleddermann (1995) argues that the Mark-Q overlaps betray Mark's familiarity with Q.

<sup>12</sup> *The Critical Edition of Q* does not print any text in the Q column, but the footnotes ask, first: 'Is Luke 11:21–22 par. Matt 12:29 in Q or from Mark?' (Robinson, *et al.* 2000:234, fn 0), and second, 'Is the Q text that of Luke or Matthew?' (2000:234, fn 1).

larly. Nevertheless, according to the Two-Source Hypothesis when Matthew and Luke differ in their readings we cannot come to a conclusive determination of Q's reading.<sup>13</sup>

This entire scenario is historically reasonable. But scholars often forget, despite Goodacre's clarion call, that one of the load-bearing pillars keeping the Q hypothesis upright is the absence of significant agreements between Matthew and Luke against Mark, agreements which themselves would call into question Q's existence. In an earlier period of New Testament scholarship, when Q's existence was the stuff of debate more than a basis for further hypothesizing, the recognition of Matthew-Luke agreements should have presented important obstacles to the existence of Q. How peculiar, then, that this situation did not obtain. For example,

Since Streeter, the standard explanation for the [pattern of similarities and differences in the Beelzebul controversy] has been the overlapping of Mark and Q in this pericope. For this to be a coherent explanation for this and similar passages, Q must be posited for these passages, at least. But once posited as a hypothesis to account for these passages, it is not necessary to limit Q to these passages, nor is it inherently likely that the extent of Q is confined to those passages that overlap with our Mark. *Thus the overlap phenomenon becomes evidence for the existence of Q. There appear to have been overlaps; but for there to have been overlaps, there must have been a Q.* This is what Streeter meant, or should have said, in his too-easily-caricatured statement that 'to put it paradoxically, the overlapping of Mark and Q is more certain than the existence of Q'. (Boring 1992:614–615, citing Streeter 1924:186; my emphasis)

As a rhetorical move, however, this argument has to 'forget' that one of the arguments that allowed for the postulation of 'Q' was the lack of significant agreements between Matthew and Luke against Mark, *which is what the theory of overlapping Mark and Q attempts to explain*. Once New Testament scholarship entered a new 'period',<sup>14</sup> scholars can emplot these agreements in a dif-

---

<sup>13</sup> At this point we ought to keep some concrete definition of 'Q' in mind. Christopher Tuckett says, 'In other parts of the tradition where Matthew and Luke are parallel (the "double tradition"), the agreements between those two gospels are explained by their dependence on common source material. *This material is usually known as "Q."* . . . It is clearly possible that . . . some passages available to both evangelists may have been omitted by one (or both) of Matthew and Luke. Speculation about Q material which is in neither Matthew nor Luke is clearly futile. However, several have argued that in various cases, some passages which occur only in Matthew or Luke might be Q material which the other evangelist has omitted (Schürmann). Nevertheless, such theories must remain slightly speculative. Further, *they usually depend quite heavily on a prior understanding of Q as a whole* into which the passage in question fits easily (1992:567; emphases added). Allison refers to 'all the Matthean passages with parallels in Luke but not Mark' (1997:ix). Inasmuch as 'Q' refers to the material common to Matthew and Luke but absent from Mark, there is no instance in which Matthew or Luke but not both preserve Q; in such hypothetical instances 'Q' simply ceases to exist, unless we choose, as some have, to abandon this verifiable definition of 'Q' in favour of one without the inconvenience of normative controls (cf. Dunn 2003b:147–160, *passim*, who uses the sigla 'q' and 'Q' to refer to the material common to Matthew and Luke and the hypothetical document, respectfully). Interestingly, I could not find an explicit definition of 'Q' in Streeter 1924; Allison 1997; Koester 1990; Robinson, *et al.* 2000; Robinson 2000. Kloppenborg (1987:1–40) begins immediately with a discussion of Q's genre, a move which suggests he views problems of Q's definition in terms of genre rather than existence. Given the continued status of Q as a hypothesis (*pace* Robinson 2000:xix), this lack ought to signal some alarm. Despite Streeter's failure to provide a careful definition of Q, he does stress its hypothetical status, which, 'though highly probably, falls *just short* of certainty' (1924:184; emphasis added).

<sup>14</sup> Which is to say, since New Testament scholars have periodised their discipline in such a way that a particular fact (*viz.*, the existence of significant agreements between Matthew and Luke against Mark) no longer results in the weakening of the Q hypothesis but rather results in the further hypothesis, on the assumption that Q's actual existence has been sufficiently established, that Q and Mark sometimes preserved the same traditional unit but with different wording. The latter hypothesis, however, is clearly



ferent narrative structure, one which accepts Q's existence and has moved on to consider its content. 'For the [Two-Document Hypothesis]', says Boring, 'the existence of Q is a given, and given the existence of Q the overlap of Q and Mark is an inherent probability' (1992:615). However, *these data are not themselves part of the decision to emplot them in one narrative rather than the other*; scholars have imposed this decision upon the data subjectively, from without.<sup>15</sup>

Is the Q hypothesis, then, a matter of personal preference? Or do external factors encourage us to accept or reject Q?<sup>16</sup> We can hardly answer this question here, but we can make a few observations. First, the near-consensus amongst biblical scholars regarding Q's existence masks significant disagreements regarding Q's nature and extent.<sup>17</sup> Thus ample room exists within biblical studies for 'questioning Q', even amongst those who prefer the hypothesis to its alternatives.<sup>18</sup> Second, Horsley (2006d) especially has drawn our attention to the ways in which our emphasis on Q's written status obscures the ways in which Q (and written texts in general) participated in oral traditional dynamics in the early Christian communities. 'Even if we continue to imagine that the Q speeches evident in parallel passages in Matthew and Luke were in some way composed in writing, it is necessary to work toward a sensitivity and an approach that enables us to appreciate how their composition was embedded in oral communication, emerged from periodic oral performance, and "worked" in oral performance' (Horsley 2006a:19; cf. also 2006d:43). Horsley, taking his lead from Foley and others, reminds us that the ways we conceptualise, perceive, and utilise texts do not necessarily — do not even probably — approximate the ways people of other cultures in other historical periods view and use texts.

Third, the assumptions that have governed our approach to Q (and which Horsley cogently critiques) were responsible for the need to postulate 'Q' in the first place. While Horsley's

not the only interpretation available for Matthean-Lukan agreements, even if it is the most widely accepted. The language of 'periodisation' here does not imply temporal sequence.

<sup>15</sup> This discussion neither 'proves' that Q did not exist nor undermines the consensus that Q and Mark overlap. Rather, we hope to problematise the confidence with which scholars hold to these consensuses and employ them in service of other programmes. Meier provides a responsible corrective: 'Unlike many writers on Q today, I feel obliged to begin my treatment by stressing that the existence of the Q document during the first two Christian generations is a hypothesis, and only a hypothesis' (1994:177; cf. his 'Excursus on the Q Document', pp. 177–181). Neither is the reference to 'subjectivity' meant to denigrate some researches whilst promoting others (particularly mine). Rather, we emphasise, again, the contingency that has always existed at the heart of gospels and 'historical Jesus' research.

<sup>16</sup> Eugene Boring (1992) has mounted an impressive defence of the Two-Source Hypothesis on the basis of this passage's pattern of synoptic similarities and differences. His nuanced and precise study clearly establishes the issues he thinks must be addressed from any source-critical perspective. It is, therefore, all the more interesting to compare the cogency of his rebuff of the Griesbach Hypothesis (1992:608–612) with his much more anaemic demonstration against the Farrer-Goulder Hypothesis (1992:612–614). Boring's redaction-critical discussion of Farrer's theory appeals to Q in his attempt to call into question the 'Matthean character' of the 'Major Agreements'.

<sup>17</sup> E.g., Barrett (1942) and M. Casey (2002) both subscribe to a 'chaotic' model of Q; Horsley (2006a; 2006d), Draper (2006; cf. also Horsley and Draper 1999), and Kelber (2006) each, in their own ways, both question and assume the documentary status of Q, while Dunn (2005b) argues that Kloppenborg's 'Q' 'is best understood as oral tradition'. This, of course, is in addition to the variant stratigraphies of Kloppenborg (1987) and Allison (1997), the alternative compositional proposal of Kirk (1998), and the 'lazy believers' in Q (mentioned in Goodacre 2002:16 (cf. the discussion of 'A Fragile Consensus' in 2002:15–18). Cf. also Bellinzoni 1985a:18.

<sup>18</sup> Robinson (2000:lxvi–lxvii, fn 155) acknowledges this, admitting 'Current opinion is of course widely divided' and citing Schröter 1997:132–136; Horsley and Draper 1999; and Zöckler 1999.

essays, cited in the previous paragraph, do not address the question of Q's existence, Draper's (2006) and Foley's (2006b) do. Draper seems to allow for a written Q,<sup>19</sup> but he explicitly rejects Kloppenborg's claim that an 'oral Q' 'collapses in the face of four considerations' (1987:42).<sup>20</sup> Unlike Goodacre, whose 'Q scepticism' prefers another literary solution to the Synoptic Problem, Draper's apparent 'Q scepticism' is based on the assumption

that the search for an original text of oral-derived text is an illusion that indeed results in neutering the tradition and systematically *mis*-understanding its performative significance. This is because the coherent *discourse* of oral-derived text depends, like all communication, in fact, though more intensively, on discerning the discourse *register*. Words do not mean in and of themselves, but only in combination with other words in particular communicative events, in particular communicative contexts, between particular senders and receivers, and in particular communicative genres. (Draper 2006:77; original italics)<sup>21</sup>

As a result, Draper displays a healthy agnosticism with respect to the written source Q, but he quite rightly suggests that 'there are strong grounds for arguing that the oral features of the covenantal discourse are entrenched in his [viz., Luke's] performance' (2006:96). Draper's essay illustrates a much more responsible use of Q in New Testament research than standard approaches.

Foley, whose work critically informs Draper's, goes even further in supposing (perhaps naïvely) that biblical scholars are 'willing to start from the beginning and ask [the] disarming question' of why we presume Q behind the extant gospel texts (2006b:124). The Q hypothesis itself, says Foley, rests upon an ideological perspective *vis-à-vis* texts that is both ingrained in scholarly inquiry and inappropriate to the phenomena we research.<sup>22</sup> Foley's comments deserve citing in full:

Witness after witness steps forward — whether Byzantine Greek romance, Anglo-Saxon poetry, South Slavic oral epic, or others — to put the lie to lock-step stemmata that assume the simplex model of one text giving birth to another, parthenogenetically it would seem. We may have depended on an unchallengeable (because unexamined) textual procedure to order the shards of once-living traditions into what we conceive of as their original form, but the phenomena of oral transmission, subjective transcription, and even re-composing during "mechanical" copying reveal that we have been insisting on an outdated, misleading Newtonian approximation when we should be confronting the Einsteinian complexity of the situation.

---

<sup>19</sup> E.g., 'Oral tradition continues to be performed even where it exists already in written form as an *aide memoire*. . . . Thus multiple forms of an oral tradition could co-exist side by side with a written text of the same tradition, and emerge in rival texts as well' (Draper 2006:73).

<sup>20</sup> These 'considerations' are: 'the presence of strong verbal agreements of Matthew and Luke, the use of peculiar or unusual phrases by both evangelists, agreements in the order of Q pericopae and the phenomenon of doublets' (Kloppenborg 1987:42, cited in Draper 2006:75; cf. Draper's refutation of each [2006:75–76]).

<sup>21</sup> Note also the peculiar title of Draper's essay: 'Jesus' "Covenantal Discourse" on the Plain (Luke 6:12–7:17) as Oral Performance'. Though the essay, like the book in which appears, focuses on 'Q tradition', Draper avoids reifying Q and examines instead the Lukan text of Jesus' 'Covenantal Discourse' as a performance of Q (hence his inclusion of the narrative frames [Luke 6.12–20a; 7.1–17]; cf. also 2006:96).

<sup>22</sup> Here is a serious lacunae in Horsley's recent work: he properly appraises the 'documentary assumptions' driving our interpretation of Q, but (at least as far as I am aware) he does not attempt a sustained analysis of the ways in which these very assumptions led to the 'Q hypothesis' in the first place.

From a comparative perspective, then, *there seems little reason to place one's faith in an Ur-text called Q as the literal and lettered source of the gospel correspondences, no matter how similar the wording may be* [emphasis added]. In fact, there is every reason *not* to do so [original italics]: in the period during which the gospels took shape, the nature of literacy and, more fundamentally, of the technology of text-creation, -transmission, and -consultation was vastly different from the default set of textual practices in place today. Consider what didn't exist: the familiar and comfortable concepts of the standard work or mass readership for that work, the single ubiquitous printed form (available from online booksellers at a mere click), legal copyright or some other inertial force that privileges the single version and constrains variability, and so forth . . . They didn't have the technology, they didn't have the concept, and even if they miraculously managed to construct such an anachronism they couldn't have mustered a readership. (Foley 2006b:124–125)

Though Foley later acknowledges the possibility that the non-Markan traditions shared by Matthew and Luke may have been written down at some point, he consistently refuses to reify Q as 'a thing'.<sup>23</sup> Rather, Foley speaks of a 'media-mix' in which neither oral nor written versions of the tradition tyrannise the other: 'Oral traditional entities are by their very nature *instances* rather than *items*. That is, they figure forth one version of an idea or story by enacting its potential, but they do not — indeed cannot — serve as the sole basis for the next version or generation of the idea or story' (2006b:125; emphases added). As we saw in Chapter 4, above, this conceptualisation of 'oral tradition' and its influence on our written texts represents a significant advance on the standard gospel-criticism concept of 'oral tradition' as a 'source' of our gospels.<sup>24</sup> Our problem, then, with Q (and any literary approach to the synoptic problem) lies not with the *idea* of a written document underlying our extant gospels but rather the *use* to which we have put that idea.

As should be abundantly clear, I am suspicious of the Two-Source Hypothesis.<sup>25</sup> As a historical hypothesis — that Mark was written before Matthew and Luke, and the latter two were written independently of each other but with some level of awareness of both Mark and another 'sayings source', Q — it is not implausible. The idea that the Matthean and Lukan evangelists went about writing their gospels roughly as I am writing now, with references open on the table before me, this is highly implausible.<sup>26</sup> In light of the problems posed by the 'Mark-Q overlaps', we can interpret the literary evidence in ways that problematise Q's very existence,

---

<sup>23</sup> 'We can start by classifying Q as likewise a *voice from the past*, a designation that effectively reinforces the status quo. Under this rubric Q is understood as a text with roots in oral tradition; we would be both insisting on an oral-written media-mix and concurrently declaring an honest agnosticism about the particular details of its history and provenience' (Foley 2006b:138f; original italics). Cf. §4.3.d.i., above, for a discussion of 'voices from the past'.

<sup>24</sup> In his even-handed reference to the 'Goulder-Farrer' perspective, Meier betrays this conceptualisation by assuming that oral traditions were 'things' (items) that could be 'collected' like written sources (1994:177, though in fairness this language is standard in New Testament scholarship and certainly not unique to Meier; cf. the references to 'cycles of oral tradition' in Streeter 1924:183–184). Twelftree even refers to 'oral . . . tradition-histor[ies]' (1993:55), mythical creatures akin to griffins and chupacabras! Given this literary perspective on oral phenomena, it is not surprising that 'oral tradition' has been widely overlooked as a causative factor in the 'Synoptic Problem', despite the fact that the majority of source-critical hypotheses have postulated strikingly ahistorical behaviour of early Christian authors, as Foley has just pointed out.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. §2.2.c.i., above; also, see the essays in Goodacre and Perrin 2004.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. the essays and responses in part one ('Oral Performance and Popular Tradition in Q') of Horsley 2006c.

even if most scholars opt for alternative interpretations. The primary problem, however, centres on finding a solution to the synoptic problem as plausible as the Two-Source Hypothesis. We obviate (or sheepishly avoid) this problem because, irrespective of the source hypothesis we prefer, both earlier gospels and those which are dependent upon them demonstrate dynamic roots in oral tradition and performance, and these roots pertain to our gospels' composition *and* reception. Our gospels' originative historical contexts, discussed in Chapter 4, mitigate the importance of which evangelist knew which gospel. The exegetically significant factor involves how oral performative dynamics surround and envelop each of our gospels, their composition as well as their reception. Even if Matthew had read Mark and was intimately familiar with Mark's structure, content, even wording, Matthew must have been a *performer* of the gospel traditions before he was an *author* of them. His written gospel bears more direct roots in his performative experiences than to any sources with which he may have been familiar. The same point, *mutatis mutandis*, applies to Luke.

### 7.2. Patterns of Similarities and Differences

The Beelzebul controversy begins with a narrative introduction that varies across all three accounts and extends at least through the parable of the strong man's house (Luke = αὐλή) and the saying on blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Though the analysis below will take account of this entire passage, for reasons of space we will only discuss (a) the accusation against Jesus and his response in terms of (b) divided houses/kingdoms and (c) the Spirit/finger of God. When we look at the verbal similarities and differences between the synoptic accounts of the Beelzebul controversy, all three gospels have a significant amount of material in common, Matthew and Luke have a remarkable amount of material in common that Mark does not have, and the pattern of similarities between Matt. 12.22–32 and Mark and Luke (Q?) are roughly (though certainly not cleanly) alternating.<sup>27</sup> The following table makes visible the verbal similarities and differences between our texts.<sup>28</sup>

<b>Mark 3.20–26:</b>	<b>Matt. 12.22–28:</b>	<b>Luke 11.14–20:</b>
<sup>20</sup> Καὶ ἔρχεται εἰς οἶκον· καὶ συνέρχεται πάλιν [ὁ] ὄχλος, ὥστε μὴ δύνασθαι αὐτοὺς μηδὲ ἄρτον φαγεῖν. <sup>21</sup> καὶ ἀκούσαντες οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐξῆλθον κρατῆσαι	<sup>22</sup> Τότε προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ δαιμονιζόμενον τυφλὸν καὶ κωφόν, καὶ ἑθεράπευσεν αὐτόν, ὥστε τὸν κωφὸν λαλεῖν καὶ βλέπειν. <sup>23</sup> καὶ ἐξίσταντο	<sup>14</sup> Καὶ ἦν ἐκβάλλων δαιμόνιον [καὶ αὐτὸ ἦν] κωφόν· ἐγένετο δὲ τοῦ δαιμονίου ἐξελθόντος ἐλάλησεν ὁ κωφός καὶ ἐθαύμασαν οἱ ὄχλοι.

<sup>27</sup> Though Matt. 12.22–25a is somewhat helter-skelter, 12.25b–26a is largely similar to Mark 3.25–26 (cf. Luke 11.17b–18), Matt. 12.26b–28 is largely similar to Luke (Q) 11.18b–20, Matt. 12.29 is similar to Mark 3.27 (cf. Luke 11.21–22), Matt. 12.30 is similar to Luke (Q) 11.23, and Matt. 12.31–32, like 12.22–25a, mixes language found in Mark and Luke. Similarly, Matt. 9.33 is similar to Luke (Q) 11.14, while Matt. 9.34, Mark 3.22, and Luke 11.15 are all similar to each other.

<sup>28</sup> **Bold** words appear in all the relevant texts (e.g., in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, or just in Matthew and Luke if Mark lacks a parallel); underlined words appear in multiple texts but in different morphological forms, and **bold and underlined** words appear in two texts in identical morphological forms but not in the parallel in the third text. Also, for reasons of space I have omitted Matt. 9.32–34, though the pattern of emboldened and underlined words takes it into consideration (e.g., οἱ δὲ Φαρισαῖοι [Matt. 12.24] is bold and underlined [cf. Matt. 9.34], as is ἐλάλησεν ὁ κωφός καὶ ἐθαύμασαν οἱ ὄχλοι [Luke 11.14; cf. Matt 9.33]).

<p>αὐτόν· ἔλεγον γὰρ ὅτι <u>ἐξέστη</u>.<sup>22</sup> καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς οἱ ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων καταβάντες ἔλεγον ὅτι</p> <p><u>Βεελζεβούλ</u> ἔχει καὶ ὅτι ἐν τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια.</p> <p><sup>23</sup> καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος αὐτούς ἐν παραβολαῖς ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς, Πῶς δύναται Σατανᾶς <u>Σατανᾶν ἐκβάλλειν</u>;<sup>24</sup> καὶ ἐάν βασιλεία ἐφ' <u>ἑαυτὴν μερισθῇ</u>, οὐ δύναται σταθῆναι ἢ βασιλεία ἐκείνη·<sup>25</sup> καὶ ἐάν <u>οἰκία ἐφ' ἑαυτὴν μερισθῇ</u>, οὐ δυνήσεται ἢ οἰκία ἐκείνη σταθῆναι.</p> <p><sup>26</sup> καὶ εἰ ὁ Σατανᾶς ἀνέστη ἐφ' ἑαυτόν καὶ ἐμερίσθη, οὐ δύναται στῆναι ἀλλὰ τέλος ἔχει.</p>	<p>πάντες οἱ ὄχλοι καὶ ἔλεγον, Μήτι οὗτος ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς Δαυίδ; <sup>24</sup> οἱ δὲ <u>Φαρισαῖοι</u> ἀκούσαντες εἶπον,</p> <p>Οὗτος οὐκ ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ <u>Βεελζεβούλ</u> ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων.</p> <p><sup>25</sup> εἰδὼς δὲ τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις αὐτῶν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, <u>Πᾶσα βασιλεία μερισθεῖσα καθ' ἑαυτῆς ἐρημοῦται</u></p> <p>καὶ <u>πᾶσα πόλις ἢ οἰκία μερισθεῖσα καθ' ἑαυτῆς οὐ σταθήσεται.</u></p> <p><sup>26</sup> καὶ εἰ ὁ Σατανᾶς τὸν <u>Σατανᾶν ἐκβάλλει</u>, ἐφ' ἑαυτόν ἐμερίσθη· πῶς οὖν σταθήσεται ἢ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ;</p> <p><sup>27</sup> καὶ εἰ ἐγὼ ἐν Βεελζεβούλ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, οἱ υἱοὶ ὑμῶν ἐν τίνι ἐκβάλλουσιν; διὰ τοῦτο αὐτοὶ κριταὶ ἔσονται ὑμῶν.<sup>28</sup> εἰ δὲ ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ ἐγὼ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, ἄρα ἔφθασεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἢ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ.</p>	<p><sup>15</sup> τινὲς δὲ ἐξ αὐτῶν εἶπον, Ἐν <u>Βεελζεβούλ</u> τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια·<sup>16</sup> ἄλλοι δὲ πειράζοντες σημεῖον ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ἐζήτησαν παρ' αὐτοῦ.</p> <p><sup>17</sup> αὐτὸς δὲ εἰδὼς αὐτῶν τὰ διανοήματα εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, <u>Πᾶσα βασιλεία ἐφ' ἑαυτὴν διαμερισθεῖσα ἐρημοῦται</u></p> <p>καὶ οἶκος ἐπὶ οἶκον πίπτει.</p> <p><sup>18</sup> εἰ δὲ καὶ ὁ Σατανᾶς ἐφ' ἑαυτόν διεμερίσθη, πῶς σταθήσεται ἢ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ; ὅτι λέγετε ἐν Βεελζεβούλ ἐκβάλλειν με τὰ δαιμόνια.</p> <p><sup>19</sup> εἰ δὲ ἐγὼ ἐν Βεελζεβούλ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, οἱ υἱοὶ ὑμῶν ἐν τίνι ἐκβάλλουσιν; διὰ τοῦτο αὐτοὶ ὑμῶν κριταὶ ἔσονται.<sup>20</sup> εἰ δὲ ἐν δακτύλῳ θεοῦ [ἐγὼ] ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, ἄρα ἔφθασεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἢ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ.</p>
---	---	---

Despite the similarities between these texts and the conclusions scholars have drawn from them, we note that a number of these similarities are irrelevant (or less relevant) to theories of literary dependence. A number of words in bold or underlined typeface need only suggest thematic similarities. For example, we can understand Matthew's and Luke's use of κωφόν to describe the demon[-possessed man] (Matt. 9.32; 12.22; Luke 11.14) in terms of Matthew's and Luke's shared content apart from a literary relationship. Indeed, we must explain that Matt. 12.22 (but not 9.32) says the demon-possessed man was τυφλὸν καὶ κωφόν apart from any theory of literary dependence, either in terms of the evangelist's 'redaction' or in reference to the tradition's multiformity. Thus some of the differences *as well as some of the similarities* make sense when we envisage the relationship between Mark 3.20–30 and its parallels in oral-performative terms.

When we discuss the Beelzebul controversy, we will continue to refer to oral-performative dynamics contextualising the texts rather than explaining textual features in terms of chirographic praxis.

### 7.3. Jesus, Beelzebul, and the Kingdom of God

As we resume our analysis of Jesus' statements regarding his therapeutic and exorcistic activities and their significance, the Beelzebul controversy looms especially large for a number of reasons.<sup>29</sup> First, scholars have become increasingly aware of the centrality of exorcism in the activities and reception of the historical Jesus.<sup>30</sup> Second, scholars note that this passage preserves a hostile interpretation of Jesus and his activities, and Jesus' own response to this hostile interpretation may likewise be preserved here. In other words, like Matt. 11.2–6//Luke 7.18–23 but unlike Luke 4.16–30, New Testament scholars broadly agree that we have here Jesus' own assertion of his reputation.<sup>31</sup> Beasley-Murray says boldly, '[Matt. 12.28//Luke 11.20] is one of the few logia in the gospel traditions relating to the kingdom of God that is *universally* acknowledged to be authentic' (1986:75; emphasis added).<sup>32</sup>

Besides the consensus that our two earliest sources preserve accounts of the Beelzebul controversy, two other factors support the conclusion that these accounts are broadly 'authentic' (even if the details still require analysis). First, scholars often suggest that Jesus' earliest followers were unlikely to invent such an accusation as we find in Mark 3.22.<sup>33</sup> While we might agree, we ought to exercise caution when we pronounce upon what Jesus' tradents were 'unlikely' to do. The question arises, Why, if they were unlikely to invent the story of Jesus being accused of demonic possession, were they so keen to preserve such an accusation?<sup>34</sup> Instead, we ought to notice that Jesus' adversaries' accusations, here and throughout the gospels, do serve the evangelists' interests.<sup>35</sup> Precisely because Jesus' opponents (scribes, Pharisees, or whoever) accuse Jesus

<sup>29</sup> Dunn refers to Jesus' response to John the Baptist (Matt. 11.2–6 par.; cf. Chapter 5, above) and the Beelzebul controversy as the 'key data' regarding the attestation of Jesus' success as a healer and exorcist in the sayings tradition (2003b:671). He is undoubtedly correct.

<sup>30</sup> Credit here must be given especially to Twelftree 1992; cf. also Hollenbach 1981:568–569; Dunn 1988; as well as those sources listed in C. A. Evans 2002:12–13, ftns 21, 22.

<sup>31</sup> Humphries is one notable exception; e.g., 'Although it is not impossible that Jesus was at one time charged with belonging to the Beelzebul camp, it is unlikely that this particular *chreia* preserves an actual historical encounter. The rhetoric is simply too calculating and suggests a period of reflection. Like most *chreia*, it is a rhetorical device not a historical narrative. Yet, as indicated above, the *chreia*'s attribution to a character should be apt. We may have here an apt portrayal of one who manifests wisdom at the level of verbal repartee. Jesus' retort may be a small reminder of his way with words' (1999:31). Cf. the judgements of the Jesus Seminar (Funk, Hoover, *et al.* 1993:185, 329–330), who print Luke 11.17–22 in pink (but not, curiously, the parallel material in Matt. 12.25–26, which is printed grey; compare Mark 3.23–26 [1993:51], also grey: 'The difference of one or two words, or a subtle nuance, often results in different ratings for parallel passages' [1993:52]).

<sup>32</sup> Beasley-Murray does address the lack of consensus regarding the interpretation and significance of this logion. Meier agrees, though he says 'Beasley-Murray may be exaggerating slightly' (1994:404).

<sup>33</sup> E.g., Twelftree 1993:105; Wright simply says, 'The church did not invent the charge that Jesus was in league with Beelzebul' (1996:187).

<sup>34</sup> Besides the texts in the synoptics that we are currently considering, cf. John 7.20; 8.48, 52; 10.20.

<sup>35</sup> Compare Humphries 1999:21–22.

of exorcising demons 'by the prince of demons', the gospels demonstrate not only Jesus' rhetorical prowess over against his Jewish opponents<sup>36</sup> but also the decisive role Jesus plays in the advent and establishment of the kingdom of God. Far from being an 'embarrassment' to the early Christians, the accusation that Jesus conspires with Beelzebul becomes a vehicle for the embarrassment of Jesus' opponents.

Second, with regard to Jesus' status ('reputation') as an exorcist, critics frequently note that Jesus' opponents accept that Jesus exorcises demons; the debate driving our texts centres on the means, and therefore the significance, of Jesus' exorcistic success. This, too, has been somewhat overstated; more accurately, the gospels *portray* Jesus' opponents as accepting the fact of Jesus' exorcisms. I do not doubt that Jews other than Jesus and his followers were willing to admit of demonic forces at work within the world and to acknowledge certain people and/or techniques as especially helpful for warding off those forces.<sup>37</sup> For these reasons the gospels' testimony appears plausible, that (many of) Jesus' opponents objected to the *significance* (and popularity) of his exorcistic reputation and not the *fact* of that reputation. But, like the accusation of demonic collusion itself, Jesus' opponents' acceptance of his success as an exorcist works with the evangelists' interests.

At the same time, we cannot label the Beelzebul controversy 'inauthentic' and be done with it.<sup>38</sup> Rather, we should recognise the arbitrariness of our classifications 'authentic' and 'inauthentic'. Of course, Jesus either did say or do something, or he did not; some determination of authenticity or inauthenticity seems in order. But we do not have the actual deeds or sayings of Jesus before us but rather *reports* of those deeds and sayings. Here the distinctions begin to blur: if Jesus was embroiled in controversies regarding the source of his exorcistic power, the accounts before us could still conceivably fail to communicate anything of those controversies. Conversely, if somewhat counterintuitively, perhaps no one ever gave a second thought to Jesus' exorcistic power; the gospels may nevertheless communicate something 'authentic' about the 'real' Jesus.<sup>39</sup> Our point is not that we can never know for sure. Rather, our gospels arose in the context of other known and accepted images of Jesus. Perhaps Mark (or Q) activated new potentialities for Jesus' memory amongst his followers, some of which emphasised the image of Jesus the exorcist.<sup>40</sup> But even if so, Mark's 'innovation' took place in a context in which this development made sense of Jesus to his audience. In other words, this 'innovation' communicated something

---

<sup>36</sup> Cf. the discussions of 'challenge and riposte' in Guijarro 1999.

<sup>37</sup> Famously, even Josephus fits this description (cf. *Ant.* 8.45–49; cf. also *Ant.* 13.415).

<sup>38</sup> Meier points out how trusting scholars have been *vis-à-vis* this saying (Luke 11.20 par.), being for the most part content to note that Bultmann accepted its authenticity. Ever aware of unargued assertions, Meier provides his own detailed argument in favour of authenticity; cf. 1994:413–417.

<sup>39</sup> As an example, it is surely 'inauthentic', according to the typical use of the term, to call Abraham Lincoln the 'father of the civil rights movement', but this in no way detracts from this label's ability to communicate something powerful, useful, even 'authentic', about the sixteenth American president (Schwartz 2000:1–8).

<sup>40</sup> Emmrich, who points to the central role exorcisms played in Jesus' ministry, lists 'seven distinct instances of Jesus' performance of an exorcism' narrated in the synoptic gospels (2000:268; cf. fn 9), though he does not include the Lukan portrayal of Jesus' healing of Simon's mother-in-law (4.38–39) and of the 'bent' woman (13.11–13), both of which have exorcistic harmonics.

about Jesus that Mark's audience already knew (or were already predisposed to know).<sup>41</sup> Even if the Beelzebul controversy were 'inauthentic', we could not simply excise it from our 'Jesus database' in order to quarantine the 'historical Jesus' from statements he never said.

### 7.3.a. Jesus' Opponents and Their Accusation against Him

All three synoptic gospels provide fairly consistent accounts of the charge: ἐν [Βεελζεβούλ]<sup>42</sup> τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια (Mark 3.22 and parallels). The evangelists' do not, however, consistently identify Jesus' opponents. Luke never identifies Jesus' antagonists;<sup>43</sup> they simply speak out from among the crowds who express amazement that the formerly deaf man now speaks plainly. Mark is more specific: scribes who have come down from Jerusalem speak against Jesus. Additionally, Jesus' family has come to oppose Jesus, though their charge is somewhat less serious than the scribes' (France 2002:168). Matthew, somewhat predictably, says that while οἱ ὄχλοι are amazed by Jesus and shout out exclamations of praise,<sup>44</sup> οἱ Φαρισαῖοι accuse him of demonic collusion.<sup>45</sup> Guijarro claims we cannot confidently identify who brought this accusation against Jesus; 'All we can say is that Luke's anonymous accusers and Mark's scribes are to be preferred to Matthew's Pharisees' (1999:120). While this coheres with the current ethos of New Testament scholarship, in which we interpret the Pharisees' opposition to Jesus in the gospels in terms of later communities' conflict with the synagogues, is this really all we can say?

#### 7.3.a.i. Mark's ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΕΙΣ and Matthew's ΦΑΡΙΣΑΙΟΙ

Actually, Luke's anonymous accusers presents the most problems. Does Luke simply not identify who accused Jesus of working with Beelzebul, or does he suggest the accusation came from some in the crowd who remained anonymous? The former is more likely; Jesus' response to his accusers in all three accounts<sup>46</sup> suggests he knew who amongst the crowds spoke against him. What purpose εἰδὼς τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις/τὰ διανοήματα αὐτῶν (Matt. 12.25//Luke 11.17) serves remains unclear, as is what effect, if any, it ought to have in the texts' interpretation.<sup>47</sup> In Mark 2.6//Matt. 9.3 Jesus' opponents<sup>48</sup> question 'in their hearts' (ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν), so

<sup>41</sup> Cf. my comments about Luke's treatment of tradition in 4.16–30 in the previous chapter.

<sup>42</sup> We should note that Βεελζεβούλ, indeclinable in Greek, functions differently in Mark than in Matthew and Luke: in the latter, Βεελζεβούλ, in the dative case, identifies the power by which Jesus is said to exorcise the demons. In Mark, Βεελζεβούλ takes the accusative case: the accusation here is that Jesus is possessed by [ἔχει] Βεελζεβούλ, not simply that he is in league with him.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Luke 11.15: τινὲς δὲ ἐξ αὐτῶν.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. the discussion at §7.3.b.i., below.

<sup>45</sup> E. P. Sanders (1985:198) seems to equate 'scribes' with 'the Pharisees' and/or 'the *haberim*'.

<sup>46</sup> Matt. 9.32–34 contains the Pharisees' charge against Jesus, but in this passage Jesus doesn't respond.

<sup>47</sup> Luz characterises this detail as 'not very important' for the same reasons noted here, though he supposes Jesus' 'sovereign[ty] and superior[ity]' are heightened by it (2001:203).

<sup>48</sup> As we consider Guijarro's judgement that Luke's anonymous accusers or Mark's 'scribes' are preferable to Matthew's 'Pharisees', due to Matthew's redactional tendencies, perhaps we ought to note that Mark 2.6//Matt. 9.3 identify Jesus' opponents as τινες τῶν γραμματέων, while Luke 5.21 names οἱ γραμματεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι. The close associations between the groups οἱ γραμματεῖς and οἱ Φαρισαῖοι suggests that sharp distinctions between them are unjustified (cf. the discussion immediately below).



Jesus' apparent access to their inner musings serves a narratological purpose.<sup>49</sup> In the Beelzebul controversy, however, the texts suggest Jesus heard his opponents' (voiced) accusation of casting out demons ἐν Βεελζεβούλ. Why, then, should Jesus (or those with him) not know who his accusers were?

Luke emphasises the accusation itself, not the accusers; Mark and Matthew, despite their identification of Jesus' opponents, likewise draw our attention to the controversy at hand and not to the parties involved therein. Neither Mark nor Matthew make anything further of Jesus' opponents' identities. Jesus does not, for example, go on about how 'you Pharisees' fail to properly interpret his actions.<sup>50</sup> In both Mark and Matthew, as in Luke, the charge and counter-suit focus on the means and significance of Jesus' exorcisms. What is more, Alan Kirk has demonstrated that the identity of Jesus' accusers does not remain anonymous in Q 11; in the Woes (11.39–48, 52) 'any residual ambiguity with regard to the identity of Jesus' challengers disappears. They are concerned with working out and scrupulously observing purity and dining rules (11:39–42). Their claim to positions of honor in public assemblies . . . and deferential public greetings (11:43) shows them positioned atop a hierarchical system based on prestige, privilege, and ostentatious display of status differences' (2006:187–188).<sup>51</sup> If Luke's audience would have received 11.14–23 in conjunction with 11.37–53, then Luke does identify Jesus' opponents as οἱ γραμματεῖς (compare Mark) and οἱ Φαρισαῖοι (compare Matthew).<sup>52</sup> For sundry reasons some commentators have happily referred to Jesus' opponents simply as 'Pharisees'.<sup>53</sup> Whether or not this is, in the final analysis, historically precise, the identification of Jesus' opponents as Pharisees involves more than simply accepting uncritically Matthew's redactional manoeuvre.<sup>54</sup>

The mention of οἱ γραμματεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι in Luke 11.53 raises the question whether Luke intended these as two distinct groups, both of whom became hostile to Jesus' mission, or whether both labels identify a single group. Matthew frequently pairs 'scribes and Phari-

In this light, Matthew and Mark may agree on Jesus' opponents' identity. How far, then, we should ascribe οἱ Φαρισαῖοι in Matt. 9.34 and 12.24 to Matthew's 'redactional impulses' is not clear at all.

<sup>49</sup> Notice that Matthew uses τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις αὐτῶν in 9.4, just as he has in 12.25. ἐνθύμησις appears only in these two passages and in Acts 17.29 and Heb. 4.12.

<sup>50</sup> Contrast this with Jesus' polemic in Mark 7.1–23 par.

<sup>51</sup> Kirk concludes, 'those who accuse Jesus belong among the elites of a temple city' (2006:188). Kirk's meaning is not very clear. Does he intend to link Q's portrayal of Jesus' opponents with Mark's (οἱ γραμματεῖς οἱ ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων καταβάντες, 3.22), whom we should more appropriately call 'retainers' than 'elites', or does he mean to imply that Jesus' opponents in Q 11 belong to the (high?) priestly class?

<sup>52</sup> Pace Twelftree 1993:104, who sees in Mark and Matthew a 'tendency for tradition to take on proper names during its transmission' and says Luke 'often drops such specific references from his sources'. In light of Luke 11.37–53, Twelftree's assessment of Luke's redactional 'tendencies' requires a selective reading of the evidence.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Hollenbach 1981; I. H. Marshall 1978:470–480. Maccoby is almost defensive in his proposal that Jesus' historical conflicts with Jewish leaders was with Sadducees and *not* with Pharisees (1989:45–46). He recognises that Jesus and the Pharisees actually had much in common, but this recognition does not cut off the possibility of conflict between them (cf. Stemberger 1991:38). Maccoby's proposal assumes the Sadducees had more influence outside Jerusalem and Judea than is historically likely.

<sup>54</sup> For discussions on οἱ Φαρισαῖοι, cf. Neusner 1983; Saldarini 1988; Maccoby 1989; Stemberger 1991. Maccoby's discussion is sympathetic to the Pharisees but then reads the evidence — from Josephus as well as from the New Testament — without nuance (cf. esp. Maccoby 1989:38–51).

sees', especially in his 'woes',<sup>55</sup> but this is certainly not unique to that gospel. Mark also pairs them,<sup>56</sup> even speaking at 2.16 of οἱ γραμματεῖς τῶν Φαρισαίων, in which 'scribes' refers to a professional vocation or role that could attach to various socio-political identities.<sup>57</sup> Besides 11.53, Luke, too, can pair these two labels;<sup>58</sup> in his parallel to Mark 2.16 Luke reads, 'the Pharisees and their scribes' (5.30; emphasis added). If, then, 'scribes' and 'Pharisees' referred to two distinct groups, the synoptic evangelists all suggest some measure of overlap between them. We should also notice that, of the fifty-three uses of the plural οἱ γραμματεῖς in the synoptic gospels,<sup>59</sup> the scribes appear with another group forty times (if we exclude Mark 2.16).<sup>60</sup> Other than some version of οἱ γραμματεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι, the gospels pair 'scribes' most commonly with οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς or οἱ πρεσβύτεροι or both, especially in the passion narratives.

As a group, then, the 'scribes' seem especially prone to further identification, whether Pharisaic 'scribes' or 'scribes' more closely associated with the Jerusalem Temple administration. This proclivity to further specification may be due in part to the wide socio-economic and political functions a γραμματεὺς could serve, from the highly exalted persona of Ben Sira 38.24–39.11 to the servants of the royal court found, for example, in *Ant.* 6.120 to the lowly village scribes who enjoyed very little status (cf. *War* 1.479). As Saldarini has said, 'Some scribes had low status and others very high status during the Herodian period' (1988:263).<sup>61</sup> Even in non-Christian Judaic usage οἱ γραμματεῖς could be identified with other labels, a feature which has caused confusion in texts other than our gospels. For example, 1 Macc. 7.12 refers to συναγωγὴ γραμματέων, but in the very next verse οἱ Ἀσιδαῖοι are on stage.<sup>62</sup> Despite the difficulty scholars have had determining the historical events underlying 1 Macc. 7.12–14, the pro-Hasmonean author of 1 Maccabees apparently had no problems writing of γραμματεῖς and Ἀσιδαῖοι as if the relationship between them would have been widely understood, whether they were one, overlapping, or distinct groups.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Matt. 5.20; 12.38; 15.1; 23.2, 13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Mark 2.16; 7.1, 5.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Saldarini 1988:256. We should also recognise the similarity between Mark 3.22, which refers to scribes οἱ ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων καταβάντες, and Mark 7.1, which refers to οἱ Φαρισαῖοι καὶ τινες τῶν γραμματέων ἐλθόντες ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων. The difference, then, between Mark 3.22 and Matt. 12.24 is probably not as great as many redaction-critical studies have suggested.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Luke 5.17 [? = νομοδιδάσκαλοι], 21, 30; 6.7; 11.53; 15.2.

<sup>59</sup> I have not counted τῶν γραμματέων in Mark 12.28, as the text is referring to 'one of the scribes' (εἷς τῶν γραμματέων).

<sup>60</sup> The references of οἱ γραμματεῖς by themselves are at Matt. 7.29; 9.3; 17.10; Mark 1.22; 2.6, 16 [οἱ γραμματεῖς τῶν Φαρισαίων]; 3.22; 9.11, 14; 12.35, 38; Luke 20.39, 46.

<sup>61</sup> The same was true of the Pharisees. Despite his romanticised view of the Pharisees (or perhaps because of it), Maccoby nearly rightly comments, 'Whereas the leaders of the Sadducees came from the rich and from the hereditary priestly aristocracy, the leaders of the Pharisees were drawn from all strata of society, including the poorest of artisans and agricultural labourers' (1989:38–39). Though those who identified themselves as Pharisees almost certainly were drawn from multiple socio-economic strata (perhaps including the powerful but tiny social elite), the 'leaders of the Pharisees' were almost certainly all from society's higher strata. Maccoby's complaint that the gospels do not 'hint' at this fact is imprecise: the gospels do portray the Pharisees as present in multiple socio-economic situations, even if they do not draw attention to this fact.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Saldarini 1988:251–254 for a discussion of this passage.

Similarly, Matthew's identification of Jesus' opponents as οἱ Φαρισαῖοι may be less a function of his communities' conflict with local synagogues than of how the 'scribes' were installed in early Christian memory and oral performance.<sup>63</sup> Not that we should prefer Matthew's Φαρισαῖοι over Mark's γραμματεῖς or Luke's τινές. Rather, in terms of the interactive performance of the Jesus tradition, in which embodied performers of the tradition conspired with concrete audiences to actualise Jesus' story, all three labels appear to have evoked (or pointed to) the same group. We misconstrue the significance of Matthew's οἱ Φαρισαῖοι when we categorise it as 'redaction', a problem exacerbated by the common assumption that 'authentic' represents the most appropriate opposite of 'redaction'. Matthew's οἱ Φαρισαῖοι does not take the Jesus tradition in new directions (as the label 'redactional' would imply); it makes sufficient sense as an instance of the tradition of which Mark 3.22 and Luke 11.15 represent two other instances.<sup>64</sup> As a consequence, Matt. 12.24 (and other similar passages) cannot be read as evidence of conflict between Matthew's communities and local synagogues, though 12.24 (and similar passages) would become especially relevant in the presence of such conflict (established on other grounds).<sup>65</sup>

One more thing: Saldarini argues, 'The synoptic gospel writers see the scribes as a unified group in opposition to Jesus but say very little about them' (1988:266). Certainly οἱ γραμματεῖς represent one of the primary (and ultimately fatal) sources of opposition to Jesus in the gospels, though we should not overlook more ambiguous texts such as Matt. 8.19; 13.52; 17.10//Mark 9.11; Mark 12.28–34; Luke 20.39, in which the scribes are portrayed neutrally or, in some cases, quite positively. Saldarini's main proposition — that the scribes appear as a unified group in the synoptics — does not find any support in the gospels and is, ultimately, an assertion supported only by the observation that 'the scribes' are usually opposed to Jesus. 'Mark presents them', says Saldarini, 'as a unified, political group because for him their salient, unifying characteristic is opposition to Jesus. Actually, the scribes probably stand for a plethora of Jewish community officials (many of them scribes) who opposed Jesus' claim to authority and growing following' (1988:266). 'Opposition to Jesus', however, does not support the conclusion

---

<sup>63</sup> Saldarini suggests, on the basis of the Maccabean literature, that 'the use of scribe as a title for the learned guardians of the law was a Palestinian usage, not found in the diaspora' (1988:254). Matthew is clearly not averse to referring to οἱ γραμματεῖς (twenty-two uses), but if Saldarini is correct, perhaps Matthew's pairing of γραμματεῖς with other prominent Jewish groups contextualises the term, giving it an appropriate meaning for his audiences.

<sup>64</sup> From a redaction-critical perspective, there is one reason to suspect Mark's identification of Jesus' opponents as οἱ γραμματεῖς as a feature supplied by the evangelist. In his account of Jesus' exorcism in a synagogue in Capernaum, the crowd is amazed at Jesus' authority. The narrator explains the reason for their amazement: ἦν γὰρ διδάσκων αὐτοὺς ὡς ἐξουσίαν ἔχων καὶ οὐχ ὡς οἱ γραμματεῖς (Mark 1.22; compare the onlookers' statement at 1.27). Thus Mark has already established the debate regarding Jesus' authority and his exorcisms as being between him and οἱ γραμματεῖς. I would not suggest that Mark's identification of Jesus' opponents should be attributed to his redactional interests; rather, we should notice that the variations across the three extant instances of 'the Beelzebul controversy' do not obscure the underlying unity of those three instances as 'the Beelzebul controversy'. What is more, Gujjarro's point (1999:120, cited above) that Mark and/or Luke are to be preferred over Matthew clearly has its own problems.

<sup>65</sup> *Pace* Maccoby 1989:39.

that Mark imagines the scribes as a unified group. The various descriptions of οἱ γραμματεῖς in Mark — as coming from Jerusalem, as linked with οἱ Φαρισαῖοι, as linked with οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς and with οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, and even as at least potentially sympathetic to Jesus and his teaching — suggest a social identity only loosely centred round scribal activities, including teaching, preserving, transcribing, and transmitting traditional materials.

We have already seen that Saldarini's comments *vis-à-vis* 'the scribes' in other Hellenistic Jewish literature are appropriate to the gospels, from their varied socio-economic location to their identification with other groups and even their general role as 'one learned in the Jewish law' (1988:266). Saldarini seems to notice his central assertion lacks any real evidence: he acknowledges the likelihood of the scribes' presence in Galilee 'both as village scribes . . . and as low level government officials', as implied by Mark. He also recognises the gospels' portrayal of the scribes as 'low level officials and judges both in Jerusalem and in the towns and villages of the country' and that we can read the gospels' scribes 'as bureaucrats and also as experts on Jewish life' (1988:267).<sup>66</sup> Luke, too, suggests an 'understanding of the scribes [as] either vague . . . or guided by the general functions of scribes in the Greco-Roman world' (1988:267). In his summary of the gospels' evidence, Saldarini recognises, 'Such functionaries would not have made a coherent social class or organization opposed to Jesus' but then adds without argument, 'as the gospels understand them' (1988:267–268). In sum, Saldarini's description of οἱ γραμματεῖς is better than his description of the gospels.

### 7.3.a.ii. Jesus the Deviant Exorcist

We can responsibly speak of a consensus among New Testament scholars, with a handful of exceptions, that some of Jesus' opponents accused him of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebul.<sup>67</sup> Scholars, however, have not come to a consensus regarding the intentions of those who thus accused him. Certainly the most common interpretation centres on interpreting the charge, ἐν τῷ Βεελζεβούλ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων, in terms of 'deviance'. In his seminal essay, 'Jesus, Demoniacs, and Public Authorities', Paul Hollenbach, citing George Rosen (1968:101–121, 90), writes, 'Behavior of this kind, on the "fringes of sanity," shows that the line between sanity and insanity was not always easily determined. The result is that, to an extent, "whether or not a person is considered mentally ill depends on the degree to which his behavior is disturbed, and the attitudes of the members of his social group towards deviant behavior"' (1981:570–571). Owing at least in part to the considerable literature on the sociology of deviance,<sup>68</sup> scholars have subjected the Beelzebul controversy to intense sociological analysis.<sup>69</sup>

Unfortunately, the analysis of Jesus as a deviant tends to over-emphasise Jesus as an individual, even studies that draw attention to the ways ancient social structures differed from

---

<sup>66</sup> Notice the similar description of the Pharisees in Neusner 1983:64, where Neusner summarises the evidence of Josephus's *Life*.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Dunn 1998; 2003b:455–461, 670–673; Meier 1994:413–417; *inter alios*.

<sup>68</sup> Esp. Becker 1963.

<sup>69</sup> Cf., *inter alios*, Theissen 1974; Hollenbach 1981; Malina and Neyrey 1988; Guijarro 1999; 2002; Crossan 1995; Kirk 2006.

Western, north Atlantic individualistic culture(s).<sup>70</sup> Guijarro, for example, correctly insists: ‘deviance is a socially assessed phenomenon [because] deviant behavior can only be defined and enforced by reference to the values and rules of a given society. . . . The values and boundaries of the society are then the framework in which deviant behavior can be understood as such’ (1999:122). Nevertheless, Guijarro’s analysis focuses exclusively upon Jesus and his opponents’ efforts to impute to him ‘a new self of a negative kind’ (1999:123).<sup>71</sup> Despite his correct understanding of deviance as a ‘socially assessed phenomenon’, Guijarro spends very little effort explaining the socio-cultural consequences at stake.<sup>72</sup> Similarly research typically (and accurately) identifies honour and shame as dynamics in the social labelling of deviance,<sup>73</sup> and both honour and shame are certainly socially ascribed values.<sup>74</sup> The Beelzebul controversy, however, addresses deeper issues than simply, Should Jesus be considered a social deviant? At the centre of the Beelzebul controversy we find Jesus’ exorcisms ‘posing a serious threat to the social, cultural, and religious world of his day’ (Wright 1996:190). The accusation levelled against Jesus, and his response to it, takes up the much larger question, What is the current condition of Israel? This latter question must take a more prominent role in our discussions of the Beelzebul charge. The need for this shift in perspective comes into clearer focus when we consider more closely the accusation that Jesus exorcises demons *ἐν Βεελζεβούλ*.<sup>75</sup>

### 7.3.a.iii. Beelzebul, the Prince of Demons

Very early in Christian history *Βεελζεβούλ* became obscure as the name of a demon, as evidenced by the textual problems associated with this name in the manuscript evidence.<sup>76</sup> The

---

<sup>70</sup> I would not deny the existence of the concept ‘individual’ in ancient collectivist cultures, as some social scientific analyses appear to do. The problem being identified here is an overly narrow focus on Jesus as an individual apart from the wider socio-political dynamics that would have attached to him in a controversy like the Beelzebul controversy. Cf. Lawrence 2003, cited in Bauckham 2006:173, fn 46, for a critique of New Testament social scientific analysis from a thoroughly social scientific perspective.

<sup>71</sup> Malina and Neyrey, too, focus on Jesus the individual, and the social processes swirling about him, without considering the wider social issues at stake; e.g., ‘The accusation of demon possession against Jesus, then, was intended to dishonor and discredit him’ (1988:28). But is this really all the accusation was intended to do? The problem is rooted in their definition of key terms, esp. ‘labelling’: ‘Labelling might be described as the successful identification of a person and his/her personhood with some trait or behavior’ (1988:35; emphasis added).

<sup>72</sup> Kirk 2006 provides a corrective to these individualising tendencies and keeps Jesus as well as his interaction with his opponents in its wider socio-political context.

<sup>73</sup> E.g. Crossan 1995:70, though we should note that Crossan is discussing Jesus’ open commensality.

<sup>74</sup> The discussion of honour/shame in ‘Mediterranean cultures’ is vast; cf. Malina and Neyrey 1991b; Plevnik 1993; Esler 1994:25–29; Moxnes 1996; deSilva 2000; Malina 2001:27–57.

<sup>75</sup> We saw that Israel’s current state was also a factor in the interpretation of 4Q521; cf. §5.2.c.i., above.

<sup>76</sup>  $\aleph$  and B both read *Βεεζεβούλ*, which Twelftree explains as ‘an assimilation of *l* to the *z*’ (1992:164; Stanton [1994:169–191] consistently prints *Βεεζεβούλ* without explanation, though he also prints the English form ‘Beelzebul’; cf. also Huck §§59, 85–86). More significantly, the Syriac tradition (the *Vetus Syra* [*syr*<sup>a</sup> (not at Matt. 12.27), *syr*<sup>c</sup> (not at Mark 3.22)] and the *Peshitta* [*syr*<sup>p</sup>]), the Old Latin (*it*<sup>aur</sup>; *it*<sup>ml</sup> [at Matt. 12.24, 27], but not at Mark 3.22), and the Vulgate assimilate *Βεελζεβούλ* with the name of Ekron’s god, *Βεελζεβούβ* (2 Kgs. 1; compare *Ant.* 9.19; cf. Twelftree 1992:164). MacLaurin falsely claims, ‘In only one of [the occurrences of *Βεελζεβούλ* in the NT] is there any textual variant; this is Mtt. x 25’ (1978:156). NA<sup>27</sup>’s textual apparatus shows the same pattern of variants for Matt. 10.25 as for

secondary literature typically translates Βεελζεβούλ as ‘lord [*ba‘al*] of heaven [*z‘bul*]’ (e.g., Twelftree 1992:164), which is then often read in especially theological terms,<sup>77</sup> if it is given any significance at all.<sup>78</sup> Bietenhard contends: ‘most probably, *Bee(l)zeboul* comes from *ba‘al zibbūl* (from post-OT Heb. *zebel* manure, dung; *zibbūl* meaning an idolatrous sacrifice) — lord of the idol-sacrifice — which is at once equalled to dung’ (1978:469). Aitken likewise understands Βεελζεβούλ in terms of monotheistic polemic. He takes *zebul* as a reference to heaven and argues that, ‘inasmuch as in each of the important non-Jewish religions of the period one god held a preëminent place, and he a sky-god, and a foreign god was considered by the Jews to be a demon, the name Beelzebul — *i.e.* Lord of Heaven — was properly applied to the chief of the demons’ (1912:34; cf. 50–51). MacLaurin judges it ‘quite clear’ that ‘the N.T. phrase Βεελζεβούλ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων refers to Ba‘al’s position as ruler of the angelic sons of God — destined to become “fallen angels” — and ruler of the underworld after he had defeated Mot’ (1978:159).<sup>79</sup> Indeed, MacLaurin argues that οἰκοδεσπότης represents a translation of Βεελζεβούλ, both of which feature in Matt. 10.25: ‘In B[iblical]H[ebrew] *z‘bul* means *temple*, and this may also represent οἰκο- — *house-* in Mtt. x 25; the phrase byt YHWH being very frequently used for the Hebrew temple’ (1978:156–157; original italics). In these theological terms ‘Beelzebul’, whether or not we accept the evangelists’ equation with ‘the ruler of the demons’, connotes one of the (primary?) rivals to YHWH, the God of Israel.<sup>80</sup>

Βεελζεβούλ, as an entity of theological import, would also have had political resonances in social conflict over his influence and/or possession of a popular healer/exorcist. We gain a more significant (because more deeply signifying) reading of the charges brought against Jesus when we take account of these resonances.<sup>81</sup> MacLaurin, for example, refers to the appearance

---

the other NT uses of Βεελζεβούλ. Though Foerster (1964:605–606) adjudges Βεελζεβούλ as ‘the normal form’, he seems to understand the meaning of Βεελζεβούλ = Βεελζεβούβ.

<sup>77</sup> E.g., ‘The meaning “lord of heaven” for the prince of demons (Mt 12:24) would have been well understood as a euphemism for Satan in light of the LXX substituting “demons” for “idols” in Psalm 96:5 [95:5]’ (Twelftree 1992:164). This is consistent with Twelftree’s entire approach to ‘demon[s], Devil, Satan’, which is implicitly theological: ‘For Jesus and the Gospel writers the Devil, or Satan, is the chief enemy of Jesus and the establishing of the kingdom of God. In his ministry, especially in his exorcisms, Jesus engages in the first stage of the defeat of Satan in casting out his evil minions. Jesus’ complete defeat of the Devil and his exorcisms is expected in the eschaton’ (1992:163). Cf. also Boring 1995:285, who seems to interpret Jesus’ and the Pharisees’ ‘vie[ing] for the loyalty of “the crowds”’ in terms of modern religious propaganda. Compare France (2002:169): ‘The ultimate significance of the exorcisms is christological’.

<sup>78</sup> Foerster explicitly states: ‘The meaning of the name is of little importance in the NT’ (1964:606). Similarly, cf. Marshall 1978:473; cited in Humphries 1999:13.

<sup>79</sup> MacLaurin’s discussion, in referring to the defeat of Mot, points to Canaanite mythology.

<sup>80</sup> Again, to cite MacLaurin: ‘The rabbis saw in *zbl* something with non-Yahwistic associations. Thus Jerus. Bcrachoth fol. xii 2 . . . took *zbl* to mean *dung* or *dunghill* (obviously a derogatory substitution comparable to bosheth for *ba‘al* etc.)’ (1978:157, fn 8; original italics). Malina and Neyrey, however, remind us of the need ‘to describe and explain the behavior of group members, not disembodied ideas or concepts’ (1988:xii).

<sup>81</sup> Douglas Oakman early on raised similar questions: ‘What was at stake politically in exorcism? What was so offensive in the healing of bodies? Politics and religion were thoroughly fused in the ancient mind. Can we not expect to find some substantive connection between bodily exorcism and βασιλεία, “reign,” (or ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, “the reign of God”)? Indeed, there are overtones of the exorcism of

of *zbl ba 'al arš* ('the prince, the lord of the earth') in some Ugaritic texts,<sup>82</sup> which could be simplified *zbl b 'l*.<sup>83</sup> The possibility arises, therefore, that Βεελζεβούλ, inasmuch as it would have retained its connotative value as a cipher for a rival deity to YHWH, would have been received not simply as 'lord of heaven' but also (and simultaneously?<sup>84</sup>) as 'lord of the earth'. Humphries also turns to the Ugaritic *zbl b 'l arš* and suggests that, if 'the Beelzeboul in our text is the equivalent to *zbl b 'l*, then perhaps what we have here is a local manifestation of "prince Baal" — that is, "the prince, the lord of the earth"' (1999:20).<sup>85</sup> His suggestion that since 'the earth is often considered the abode of demons' this designation ['lord of the earth'] led to the identification of Beelzebul as 'lord of the demons' is unpersuasive. We can nevertheless agree with Humphries that 'it is quite likely that the worshipers of Yahweh would label this foreign and rival deity as a "ruler of demons"'. The conclusion: 'Beelzebul is identified with the shortened form of *zbl b 'l- 'arš* (that is, *b 'l zbl*) and thus associated with the ancient Canaanite deity "prince Baal, lord of the earth"' (1999:20).

Many scholars, not least Richard Horsley and John Dominic Crossan, have drawn our attention to the ways in which the Galilean populace experienced multi-layered systems of oppression under the Romans and their Herodian client-kings, and New Testament scholarship exhibits increasing sensitivity to the ways in which Jesus' message and activities gained a hearing in this context.<sup>86</sup> Israel found itself hopelessly mired in the vortices of varyingly 'global' empires for six centuries prior to Jesus' activities in Galilee, and Rome, like those empires that came before, explained itself internally and externally in terms of salvation and peace for the whole world.<sup>87</sup> In the context of an empire that hailed ἡ γενέθλιος ἡμέρα τοῦ θεοῦ in terms of good news for the world (τῶι κόσμῳι τῶν δι' αὐτὸν εὐαγγελίων),<sup>88</sup> the claim that a Jewish exorcist cast out demons ἐν Βεελζεβούλ may have been heard by other Jews as more than collusion with one of God's enemies of old. Invoking the name Βεελζεβούλ, with its theological and political

---

the body politic in the exorcism of bodies. Exorcisms drew crowds. Exorcism in that context was an act with larger ramifications' (1988:112).

<sup>82</sup> Cf. the references in MacLaurin 1978:157; also, cf. Held 1968:91.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Held 1968:91; Humphries 1999:20, 30; the latter cited in Johnson-DeBaufre 2006:202, fn 3.

<sup>84</sup> The link between heaven and earth is the status of each as the dwelling place of the divine (cf. Aitken 1912:39).

<sup>85</sup> Cf. also Twelftree 2006:418 for the translation 'Baal-Prince'.

<sup>86</sup> France comes close to realising the political resonances of Jesus' parable of the strong man by referring to Isa. 49.24–26: 'Since the "prey" taken from the strong man there represents God's people rescued from their oppressors, we should perhaps understand the strong man's σκεύη here as representing the people rescued (be exorcism) from Satan's oppression' (2002:173). This explanation has merit, but Jesus' parable and its employment of the Isaianic imagery should have suggested to France that 'Satan' and his kingdom would have been received in terms of the pagan empires that had subjugated Israel in exilic times as well as in the first century.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Horsley 2003:15–34, though Horsley's insistence on explaining the rise and effects of Roman imperial power in terms appropriate to discussions of contemporary American foreign policy — e.g., 'superpower', 'pacification', 'terrorism/-ist(s)', 'globalization', etc. — encourages an analogical thinking that disrupts both discourses. See especially the discussions of the Priene Calendar Inscription in Horsley 2003:23–24; C. A. Evans 2000:67–81.

<sup>88</sup> OGIS 2.458; quoted in C. A. Evans 2000:69.

resonances, may have been an economical way of charging Jesus of participating in the oppression of Israel by foreign pagan (especially Roman) power.<sup>89</sup> The charge of ‘deviance’ levelled against Jesus would not have simply excluded him beyond the pale of ‘us’; to the extent that Jesus’ opponents could successfully label him a ‘deviant’ he would have been aligned all the more closely with Israel’s enemies, among whom Rome (and her Jewish collaborators) loomed quite large indeed.<sup>90</sup> ‘That Jesus viewed the Herodian dynasty as doomed to apocalyptic annihilation becomes clearer from a consideration of the Beelzebul controversy in its political and cultural context’ (Freyne 2004:147).<sup>91</sup>

### 7.3.b. Jesus’ Riposte

All three accounts of Jesus’ response to the charge of opposition to Israel’s God and exorcising via the power of Βεελζεβούλ (= ‘prince Baal, lord of the earth’) begin with the parabolic manipulation of the images of a divided kingdom and a divided house. If we continue our interpretation of the Beelzebul controversy with an eye out for socio-political resonances, Jesus’ manipulation of precisely these images — viz., kingdom and house — stands out as strikingly apropos. Contrary to the judgement of some scholars that Jesus’ response shifts the ground from which his opponents levelled their accusation against him, Jesus confronts the logic of his accusers directly and head on. Guijarro, for example, supposes that ‘Jesus’ first response’<sup>92</sup> was not originally a part of the tradition of the Beelzebul controversy, in part because ‘it does not answer [the accusation] directly’ (2002:161).<sup>93</sup> Likewise, Humphries claims that, ‘while Jesus’ retort appears to respond to the accusation, it does not address the intent of the accusation directly. There is nothing contained in the twin images of a divided kingdom and house that counters the implicit charge of deviance. On the contrary, the retort targets the surface of the accusation, not its intent, and thereby simply attacks its logic’ (1999:30–31).

Humphries’s logic, however, confuses etic explanations of the charge against Jesus with emic explanations. ‘Deviance’ as an analytic category opens up questions and avenues of inves-

---

<sup>89</sup> Klutz, who discusses the rhetorical tendency to demonise one’s adversary’s deity, says, ‘Whenever inter-religious conflict erupted in this milieu — indeed, even where the conflict was *intra*-religious — accusations of demon-worship had opportunity to fly, with the preferred deity of the opponent being castigated as an inferior spirit of evil’ (2004:247; original italics). In both inter- or intra-religious polemics, the result of such accusations was to cast one’s opponents beyond the pale of ‘us’ (cf. Jesus’ comment on the ‘unpardonable sin’, Mark 3.27 parr.).

<sup>90</sup> Pace Malina and Neyrey, whose analysis peculiarly neglects the political dimension of conflict despite their emphasis on social processes: ‘The negative label defining Jesus as demon-possessed was an act of social retaliation against Jesus. It was aimed at *decanonizing* him, that is, proving that he was assuredly and permanently a *non-saint* or a *minion of God’s enemy, the Devil*. If such labelling were successful, Jesus would have become in fact what he was called. For all concerned he would have become a permanent “outsider,” rightly ostracized *from the synagogue* and from Jewish society’ (1988:54–57; emphases added). Cf. Klutz’s poetic image to illustrate his point that ‘an audience familiar with the use of δαίμόνιον and πνεῦμα ἀκαθάρτων in the LXX could easily have associated the demon in this story with notions of Gentile religion and idolatry’ (2004:78).

<sup>91</sup> Cf. also Theissen (1974:256), who says of Matt. 12.28 par., ‘The rule of demons is alien rule. The casting out of demons restores the rule of God, and this also means the end of Roman rule, though not of that only’.

<sup>92</sup> By which he means Matt. 12.25–26 parr.

<sup>93</sup> Similarly, cf. Luz 2001:200–201, who sees in Matt. 12.27 Jesus’ original answer to the accusation.



tigation for our own analyses of the Beelzebul controversy, but we cannot suppose that Jesus, facing an ‘implicit charge of deviance’, avoids that charge by reframing the accusation in terms of kingdoms and houses. Instead, when we recall Βεελζεβούλ’s multiple connotations (cf. Humphries 1999:21–22), all of which centre round the idea of opposition to Israel’s God (and to Israel’s people), the kingdom and house images make not-so-subtle claims of innocence *vis-à-vis* the charge of exorcising by the power of Beelzebul. Jesus manoeuvres to locate himself squarely within Israelite socio-political and theological traditional boundaries and claims, indirectly, to belong within the undivided ‘kingdom’/‘house’ of God.<sup>94</sup> Despite Humphries’s dismissal of Matt. 10.25 as ‘most certainly the work of Matthew’ (1999:18), we cannot avoid the striking link between Βεελζεβούλ and οἶκ- imagery in the synoptic tradition.<sup>95</sup> In every New Testament appearance, Beelzebul arrives clothed in household imagery. If the link between Beelzebul and household imagery is popular rather than peculiar to the New Testament,<sup>96</sup> then Matthew’s (and Jesus’) employment of οἶκ- imagery appears exactly relevant. However, the expansion from οἰκία to βασιλεία requires some attention.

Lewis, summarising Aitken (1912) and Gaston (1962), writes, ‘the meaning of *zēbūl* was “dwelling” and often the exalted dwelling of [*sic*] *par excellence* of God, i.e., heaven. . . . the chief rival of Yahweh in the Hellenistic period was the heavenly Baal’ (1992:639). Building on this insight, we notice that the notion of ‘house’ and ‘household’ in the ancient world was not the privatised concept familiar in contemporary Western perspectives. The ‘house’ functioned as a metaphor for thinking about the domain over which the head of the house exercised his (typically) authority.<sup>97</sup> For this reason, paraenetic instruction regarding household management doubled as a vehicle for thinking about the proper workings of wider social structures, from the level of *polis* to that of empire.<sup>98</sup> Given (a) the referential flexibility of *zbl*/οἰκία, (b) the agonistic nature of Israel’s Yahwistic polemic against the influence of the Baals, and (c) the specific features of the social conflict between Jesus and his accusers, the pairing of βασιλεία and οἰκία images

---

<sup>94</sup> Recall that Luke has already made gestures toward this point at 2.41–51, esp. 2.49 (οὐκ ἤδειτε ὅτι ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς μου δεῖ εἶναί με;). Despite the absence of the key vocabulary (*viz.*, οἶκος or its equivalent), the translation ‘in my Father’s house’ makes sense linguistically as well as contextually, where Jesus’ parents found him *in the Temple* (cf. Marshall 1978:129).

<sup>95</sup> Stanton doubts the significance of the wordplay in Matt. 10.25: ‘Even if this is the correct interpretation of rather complicated linguistic evidence, Matthew has failed to unravel the word play for his readers, few of whom are likely to have known Hebrew or Aramaic’ (1994:176, fn 1). If Stanton’s doubt is warranted, Matthew’s ‘failure’ can be read to suggest that 10.25, which Stanton also dismisses as Matthean redaction (1994:173), comes from a pre-Matthean context in which the Aramaic and Greek connotations of the Βεελζεβούλ/οἰκοδεσπότης wordplay would have been appreciated.

<sup>96</sup> The etymological discussions of Βεελζεβούλ provides a basis for this link other than the evangelists’ ideological interests; cf. Aitken 1912; Foerster 1964; Gaston 1962; Held 1968; MacLaurin 1978; Lewis 1992; Twelftree 1992; Humphries 1999:13–22.

<sup>97</sup> The discussion of οἶκος in BDAG refers to ‘temple’, ‘city’, ‘the human body’, and ‘the Christian community’, among others, as the metaphorical references to which οἶκος could point. Cf. also the discussions at L&N §§7.2; 11.58. Compare Oakman 1988:114 (discussing Luke 11:24): ‘Οἶκος is a possible metaphor for the human body, but as Luke 11:17b = Mark 3:25 demonstrates οἶκος and οἰκία can equally well refer to the ruling house or houses’.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. the discussions of the *Haustafeln* in Balch 1992; Fitzgerald 1992.

appears natural, if not quite inevitable. Indeed, the pairing of these images directs their reception: when Jesus responds, καὶ πᾶσα πόλις ἢ οἰκία μερισθεῖσα καθ' ἑαυτῆς οὐ σταθήσεται (Matt. 12.25b), the text instructs us to take οἰκία's reference as parallel with βασιλεία (and, in Matthew, as parallel with πόλις).<sup>99</sup> 'Oriental rulers like Herod and his sons, as well as the Roman emperors, thought of their domains as "households" or by metonymy "houses"' (Oakman 1988:114). Inasmuch, then, as Jesus' opponents accuse him of being beyond the pale of 'us' — of the house and people Israel, over whom YHWH functioned as head — the images of a divided kingdom and a divided house explicitly address the issue at hand.

Of course, as the gospels present these images, Jesus does not invoke the kingdom/house of God. Clearly the text refers to the βασιλεία/οἰκία of Satan, something the Markan performance underscores by having Jesus begin his response with, Πῶς δύναται Σατανᾶς Σατανᾶν ἐκβάλλειν; (3.23b). The gospels maintain the link between Satan and the kingdom/house images through the use of ἐφ' ἑαυτὸν ἐμερίσθη<sup>100</sup> in connection with all three terms. Even so, the two images in Mark 3.24–25 are undoubtedly gnomic in character and represent the general truth of which the application to Satan's βασιλεία and οἰκία represents a particular instance. The reference to ὁ Σατανᾶς addresses specifically the charge to cast out demons ἐν Βεελζεβούλ, but the logic of Jesus' response applies to any kingdom, whether Satan's, YHWH's, Israel's, Rome's, whatever.<sup>101</sup> And inasmuch as Σατανᾶς had political *as well as* theological import, Jesus' response in terms of 'Satan' continues the political resonances of 'Beelzebul' and his reign over the demons (who are explicitly identified as Λεγιῶν at Mark 5.9). Thus Jesus' response overtly (if yet implicitly) understands the accusation as complicity with Rome's (pagan) oppression of Israel, the true people of God (cf. Theissen 1974:253–259).

Jesus' manipulation of the βασιλεία/οἰκία imagery encompasses not merely the theological topics 'kingdom of God' and 'kingdom of Satan' but also the political concepts 'kingdom of Israel' and 'Roman empire'. Satan's kingdom, in Jesus' response, cannot be divided against itself because it continues to demonstrate its strength, typically via demonic influence on the hapless populace. Jesus' audience, however, could be forgiven for thinking of Rome's very visible domination of Israel (indirectly through 'native' rulers and ruling classes), and Rome, as Satan's kingdom, certainly continued to demonstrate its strength. Indeed, in the wake of the division of Herod's kingdom in 4 BCE, Rome's unity and Israel's division might have appeared to go hand-in-hand. When we consider the 'discursive surround' enveloping Jesus' interaction with

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Foley 1991:38–60; 1995a:42ff.; also Foley's discussion of 'self-tutorials' (1995a:140–141).

<sup>100</sup> Matt. 12.25 has the participial μερισθεῖσα καθ' ἑαυτῆς (twice); Luke has διεμερίσθη in 11.18; in 11.17 he has used the participial διαμερισθεῖσα.

<sup>101</sup> The gospels' shift from Βεελζεβούλ to Σατανᾶς has occasioned some discussion, especially by those who see in Jesus' response an attempt to switch the ground of the dispute (e.g., Humphries 1999). Penney and Wise, however, find a similar move in 4Q560 (cf. 1994:633–634), which would suggest that the link between Βεελζεβούλ and Σατανᾶς is more traditional than redactional and may even represent one plausible response open to the historical Jesus.

his interlocutors (as well as the early performances of this tradition), division clearly plagues the kingdom of Israel and not the kingdom of her enemies.

### 7.3.b.i. ΥΙΟΣ ΔΑΥΙΔ and Jesus' Exorcistic Activities

According to Matthew, πάντες οἱ ὄχλοι, after being amazed by Jesus' successful expulsion of a blind and deaf demon, ask, μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς Δαυίδ; Boring reads the crowds as moving 'a step further in the direction of discipleship, entertaining the possibility that Jesus might indeed be the hoped-for Son of David, despite the fact that his merciful deeds *do not correspond to the popular image of what the Son of David will be*' (1995:285; emphasis added). But the reference to ὁ υἱὸς Δαυίδ in the context of Jesus' exorcistic activities and a discussion about divided kingdoms must represent more than simply yet another piece in Matthew's Davidic christology. Boring's comments miss the force of υἱὸς Δαυίδ.<sup>102</sup> Davies and Allison provide a valuable corrective: In Matthew's gospel,

Jesus several times heals as David's υἱός (9.27; 12.23; 15.22; 20.30–1). This intrigues because, with one exception, *ben Dāwid*/υἱὸς Δαυίδ is always, in the OT, used of Solomon, who was later renowned as a mighty healer, exorcist, and magician. Especially significant in this regard is the Testament of Solomon (second century A.D.).<sup>103</sup> Its use of υἱὸς Δαυίδ in connexion with Solomon the healer does not appear to be under Christian influence (cf. the title; 1.7; 5.10; 20.1; 26.9). Matthew, it seems reasonable to suppose, both knew the Jewish legends about Solomon's powers and probably intended to present Jesus in their light. (Davies and Allison 1991:135–136)<sup>104</sup>

The point here concerns not simply Matthew's redactional or theological interests; the conception (and acclamation) of Solomon as a powerful and successful healer and exorcist apparently enjoyed popular and widespread acceptance. Duling says in his introduction to the *Testament of Solomon*: 'One of the historically important features of the testament is that it represents a popular hellenistic Jewish-Christian view of King Solomon. . . . The view that Solomon was a magician goes back to ancient interpretations of 1 Kings 4:29–34 (5:9–14 in Heb.)', and he places this 'popular hellenistic Jewish-Christian view' of Solomon in Palestine, among other places (1983:945). Torijano, too, says, 'Already in the first century BCE a new portrait of Solomon arose that described him as endowed with secrets and esoteric knowledge, i.e., as a powerful exorcist. From then on Solomon and demonology appeared together and this new perception of the character enjoyed great popularity' (2002:41).

---

<sup>102</sup> Gundry's comments are even more surprising: 'The conflation of the two stories offers a double witness to Jesus' Davidic sonship *and deity*' (1982:178; emphasis added).

<sup>103</sup> Klutz, who prefers ms P in his analysis of *Test. Sol.*, writes, 'My own view is that a document quite similar to P probably existed early in the third century CE, and perhaps even as early as the last quarter of the second century' (2005:34). Torijano (2002:55), on the other hand says, 'Preisendanz [1956] thought that the original composition went back to third century CE. However, the fourth century C.E. can be viewed as the likely date for the composition of the *Testament*, since there is no sound basis for the earlier date. Whatever the date of composition may be, the traditions included within the *Testament* are very likely at least as old as the first century C.E., as the traditions preserved by Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*, *Wisdom of Solomon* and 11QPsAp<sup>a</sup> suggest.'

<sup>104</sup> Davies and Allison make an important point, even if their discussion of the titular use of υἱὸς Δαυίδ in the *Test. Sol.* is somewhat imprecise; cf. the works of Duling, cited in the bibliography, for more careful discussion.

Likewise Davies and Allison, whose discussion emphasises Matthew's role as redactor and shaper of the tradition, rightfully point out, "'David's son' was the address applied to Jesus *at the level of tradition* when he was to heal or exorcize in a manner reminiscent of Solomon". That is, Jesus was addressed as David's son because he was known to be descended from David and because he, like Solomon, was a skilled healer' (1991:136; citing Chilton 1982:97; emphasis added). The extent to which υἱὸς Δαυίδ as a successful exorcist should be kept distinct from a messianic expectation for υἱὸς Δαυίδ (see *Ps. Sol.* 17; esp. 17.21) is unclear. Torijano, in reference to Collins and Nickelsburg 1980, suggests a temporal taxonomy:

We find this type of dialogue between past, present and future also in the traditions centered around the figure of Solomon; thus the characterization of Solomon as the "son of David" could be connected at the same time with the glorious past (the building of the Temple), the future (as ideal messianic figure) and the present (when exorcistic powers were viewed as attributes of Solomon as Son of David, and later on of Jesus as Son of David and Messiah). (Torijano 2002:6)

Given the unsystematic theologising of much popular thought in the ancient world, the images of an exorcistic υἱὸς Δαυίδ 'may have influenced the expectation regarding the royal Messiah. That the eschatological "son of David" might have power over evil spirits, like the first son of David, would probably not cause too much surprise for many of Jesus' contemporaries' (Dunn 2003b:668).

If the view of υἱὸς Δαυίδ as the source of sapiential and exorcistic prowess — that is, as Solomon<sup>105</sup> — was common in the early first century CE, then we ought to consider this perspective as part of the reception (or recognition) of Jesus' activities in addition to later theologising on (or interpretation of) Jesus' activities. Dunn has argued that the 'shared memory of a miracle' belongs to the earliest reports of Jesus healing and exorcistic activities; 'there are no objective events of people being healed, no non-miracles to be uncovered by clearing away layers of interpretation. . . . In such cases, we may say, the first "historical fact" was a miracle, because that was how the event was experienced, as a miracle, by the followers of Jesus who witnessed it' (2003b:673). Our point is similar: not just the miraculous element but also the υἱὸς Δαυίδ element were part of the original recognition of Jesus' healings and exorcisms, and this element both developed and was pressed into the service of other theological agenda. Certainly Matthew, in contrast to Mark and Luke, provides the titular υἱὸς Δαυίδ in the crowds' hopeful question.<sup>106</sup> But even if Matthew must bear responsibility for conjoining the motifs of Jesus' status as υἱὸς Δαυίδ and his exorcistic reputation,<sup>107</sup> certainly the popular tradition of υἱὸς

---

<sup>105</sup> Cf. the discussion in Dunn 2003b:667–668, who rightly points out that 'both David and Solomon had reputations as exorcists'.

<sup>106</sup> The commentaries frequently note that, although μήτι typically assumes a negative answer, in the context of the Pharisees' response to their question the crowd's inquiry is hopeful/cautious/uncertain (cf. Davies and Allison 1991:335; Gundry 1982:231; Boring 1995:285; Luz 2001:202; *inter alios*).

<sup>107</sup> Some scholars have helpfully distinguished between 'Davidic descent', which is clearly claimed for Jesus in Matthew and Luke and probably intended in Mark, and acclamation as υἱὸς Δαυίδ, a title that can bear significances other than Davidic descent (cf. Chilton 1982:97, cited in Davies and Allison 1991:136; Duling 1975; 1992).

Δαυίδ as a fount of exorcistic wisdom can help explain how Matthew expected his innovation to gain widespread acceptance.<sup>108</sup> Mark, of course, has the vocative υἱὲ Δαυίδ in conjunction with Jesus' healing blind Bartimaeus (10.46–52), and Duling (1978) has drawn attention to Matthew's interest in expanding the significance of the titular υἱὸς Δαυίδ beyond exorcism to include therapeutic acts more generally.

Thus Matthew's 'redactional impulse' may have been more to continue and expand a feature he found in his Markan source than to take the Jesus tradition in a new direction (viz., to emphasise Jesus as Israel's Davidic messiah).<sup>109</sup> Thus we should probably understand Matt. 12.23 less as the evangelist's 'shaping' or 'editing' Jesus tradition and more his *expressing* the significance that many already attached to the stories of Jesus' exorcistic and healing activities.<sup>110</sup> In Matthew, then, the possibility that Jesus' exorcisms do not remove him beyond the pale of 'true' Israel has already been broached by the crowds; in fact, the Pharisees' accusation against Jesus responds at least as much to the crowds' question as to Jesus' exorcism.<sup>111</sup> This leads us to Jesus' counter-definition of his exorcisms, recorded in Matthew and Luke but not in Mark.

### 7.3.b.ii. The Spirit/Finger of God

Matthew 12.27–28//Luke 11.19–20 has rightly engendered much discussion, and it seems that just these two verses impact a surprising number of issues. Besides the question of Mark-Q overlaps, these verses raise questions of tradition-composition (whether these two verses originally belonged together; if not, why they were later juxtaposed), interpretation of Jesus' exorcisms and their relation to Jewish (or Pharisaic) exorcisms, Jesus' exorcisms and their relation to his message of the kingdom of God, the nature of Jewish (or Pharisaic/Rabbinic) opposition to Jesus and/or the early Christian communities, details of the so-called 'parting of the ways', and others besides. We certainly cannot address all of these issues here. Our interests focus on the question of the juxtaposition of Matt. 12.27, 28, whether by Jesus himself, by someone telling the story of Jesus in oral performance prior to the writing of our texts, or by the author of one of our gospels or their sources,<sup>112</sup> and what significance these statements might have had for Jesus and for those who later remembered him.

---

<sup>108</sup> *Pace* Gundry: 'The Jews did not expect the Davidic Messiah to perform healings or exorcisms. . . . It may therefore be otiose to appeal to Jewish belief in Solomon, David's son, as a master of exorcism' (1982:231).

<sup>109</sup> I am, for the moment, assuming a literary perspective on the gospels' composition because it does not affect the point being made. In terms more characteristic to this project, Matthew's fondness for υἱὸς Δαυίδ language probably characterised his oral performance of the Jesus tradition and contextualised the reception of his written gospel. In other words, the υἱὸς Δαυίδ language *written* within his gospel does not move the Jesus tradition in a particular direction as much as it expresses the direction in which the Jesus tradition was already moving. Importantly, that movement seems to depend much more heavily on Jesus' healing and exorcistic (= prophetic?) reputation than on his reputation as the Davidic messiah.

<sup>110</sup> For the appropriateness of considering Jesus' healing activities within the rubric of Jesus' reputation as υἱὸς Δαυίδ, cf. Mark 10.46–52 and the Matthean texts discussed in Duling 1978; compare the restorationist resonances of Matt. 11.2–6 par., discussed in Chapter 5, above.

<sup>111</sup> E.g., Boring 1995:285.

<sup>112</sup> We should not forget that authors of written collections of Jesus tradition (whether one of our gospels, or 'Q' or some other pre-gospel written source) were in all likelihood also oral performers of the

Source-critical approaches to the question of how Matt. 12.27, 28 relate to each other have assumed particular interpretations of both verses, whereas narratological approaches to the 'final form' of Matthew's text have allowed the text itself to influence the interpretation of its constituent units. The problem with such source-critical procedures, of course, lies precisely in the assumption that individual words or phrases contain within themselves an inherent meaning independent of contextual factors. Twelftree, for example, has rightly steered clear of 'Bultmann's hypothesis that verse 19 is a late insertion from the controversies of the early community with its Jewish opponents' (1993:107; citing Bultmann 1921:14; Creed 1930:160; Carlston 1975:18; *inter alios*). Davies and Allison argue similarly, saying,

The inference made in 12.28 is not from exorcisms in general to the presence of the kingdom. How could Jesus ever have contended that the kingdom of God had come simply because a few demons had been cast out? If exorcisms were not exactly everyday affairs, they were hardly unknown until Jesus. No, the force of his assertion must lie elsewhere, and that can only be in his very presence. What matters is that *Jesus* casts out demons. (Davies and Allison 2004:199–200; original italics)

Arguments such as these take seriously the final form of our gospels (and Q). The more disjunctive our interpretations of Luke 11.19, 20, the more pressing becomes the question how (or why) any early Jesus tradent would have juxtaposed them so tightly. If, however, these two sayings formed a coherent unit in the traditional performances of Matthew and Luke, then the possibility that they could have flowed coherently from Jesus' lips opens up.<sup>113</sup>

If these two sayings originally belonged together, perhaps the sharp distinction typically drawn between them arises because of the secondary, scholarly interpretation of them rather than because of any inherent disjunction between them. In other words, the problem may stem more from, for example, Bultmann's interpretation of Matt. 12.27–28<sup>114</sup> than from the text itself. Hollenbach noted the significance of the accusation itself: 'That the Pharisees take particular notice of Jesus as an exorciser is indicated by their accusation that as an exorciser he practices witchcraft and is himself a demoniac'. Given that 'exorcising could be and was a regular part of the medical establishment's practice', Hollenbach correctly recognises the question requiring address: 'Why is it then that Jesus' exorcisms go beyond the acceptable limits? How do they exceed the limits?' He then proposes two possible answers: 'Jesus *interpreted* exorcisms and *practiced* exorcisms differently from the Pharisees and was thus regarded as a deviant' (1981:582; original italics). Hollenbach's point that Jesus' opponents first attributed some special status to Jesus' exorcistic activities (even if only to oppose him) ought to receive greater attention. Whatever else it does, Matt. 12.28//Luke 11.20 does not *pioneer* a unique significance for Jesus' exorcisms. When it came to Jesus' exorcisms and the social meanings they obtained, Jesus' oppo-

---

tradition. Recall the emphasis from Chapters 2 and 4, above, that our extant written texts bear direct and genetic relationships to oral performative contexts.

<sup>113</sup> Hagner (1993:343), too, allows these two verses to stand together.

<sup>114</sup> 'The two sayings placed together in Q *have nothing to do with each other originally*' (Bultmann 1921:162; emphasis added); Bultmann's position, which continues to find adherents today, fails to explain what Jesus' tradents might have thought Matt. 12.27, 28 had to do with each other.

nents themselves (and perhaps also the on-looking crowds?) felt something to be atypical. Jesus' exorcisms, then, stood out not for *being exorcisms* but for *generating conflict*.<sup>115</sup>

Alan Kirk has found Hollenbach's argument more persuasive than Humphries's reading that Jesus claims to be but another Jewish exorcist. Indeed, in the context of Q's Mission Instruction, Luke 11.19 exacerbates rather than ameliorates the distinction between Jesus and other Jewish exorcists.<sup>116</sup> 'Jesus' mentioning of other, uncontroversial exorcisms calls attention to the fact that his exorcisms give rise to conflict, and hence exposes the double standard of his interlocutors' (Kirk 1998:189–190, ftn 154). A disjunction, then, does exist in our text, but not between Luke 11.19, 20. Rather, according to our texts, Jesus' opponents themselves recognise Jesus' exorcisms (or his claims for them) as unusual and refuse to see in them God's power breaking into first-century Galilean socio-political realities.<sup>117</sup> Jesus did not attribute a *different* meaning to his exorcisms; he attributed *significantly more* meaning to his exorcisms.<sup>118</sup> Again, Matt. 12.27 does not suggest that Jesus' exorcisms were the same as his opponents' 'sons' exorcisms, but Jesus does reject the possibility that the latter could be interpreted positively whilst his own exorcisms were interpreted negatively.<sup>119</sup>

What can we say, then, about this 'more meaning' that Jesus was remembered to have attributed to his exorcisms?<sup>120</sup> Here Luke 11.20 becomes central. Sanders suggests, when think-

<sup>115</sup> Our emphasis on Jesus' exorcisms' generation of conflict as the unusual feature of those exorcisms does not exclude the claim, preserved in Matt. 12.28//Luke 11.20, that Jesus' exorcisms stood out on account of the power by which they were accomplished (i.e., the Spirit/finger of God). E.g., Dunn claims, 'What marked out Jesus' exorcisms was not just their success but the power by which he achieved that success'; (2003b:459; cf. also ftn 364). Twelftree has aptly said, 'Therefore, it is only half correct to say "Where the *Spirit* is there is the kingdom." Jesus' understanding is better reflected by saying that where the *Spirit* is operative in *Jesus* there is the kingdom' (1993:218; original italics).

<sup>116</sup> The possibility that Luke 11.19, 20 both make distinctions between Jesus' exorcisms and those of other Jewish exorcists problematises claims such as, 'The thrust of the two sayings is notably different' (Meier 1994:409). Meier bases his judgement, at least in part, on the formal differences between our verses: 'The tone and thrust of Matt 12:28 | Luke 11:20 differ notably from the preceding verse. Instead of a rhetorical question and an *ad hominem* argument, Jesus makes a flat claim in a declarative conditional sentence that contains nothing that he considers really hypothetical' (1994:409). But Meier never explains why Jesus should be expected to follow the rhetorical question of Luke 11.19 with another rhetorical question and not precisely this type of 'declarative conditional sentence'.

<sup>117</sup> I am aware that this paragraph sounds especially theological. I am not necessarily claiming Jesus' exorcisms *were* God's power coming upon first-century Galilee, only that the evangelists were so arguing (as was Jesus, inasmuch as our texts accurately communicate Jesus' response to the charge of collusion with Beelzebul). The point here is that the evangelists (and, again, Jesus) were making a coherent point rather than clumsily juxtaposing originally contradicting traditions.

<sup>118</sup> *Pace* Sanders 1985:135.

<sup>119</sup> For a similar interpretation, cf. Twelftree 1993:109. Those who would split Matt. 12.27, 28 need to explain why such obviously contradictory traditions were later brought together (cf. Meier 1994:409–410, whose analysis is compelling in raising this question but never addresses it). This may not be an exceedingly difficult task. But to the extent that some tradent (whether the Matthean or Lukan evangelists or the author of Q) thought these verses appropriate together, we must allow for the possibility that the *reception* of these two sayings was *originally* continuous and not disjunctive.

<sup>120</sup> Though scholars regularly point out Sanders's hyper-anxiety about the saying at hand, and he certainly exhibits a peculiar angst about precision of details that he does not exhibit elsewhere (e.g., about the saying in the Temple [cf. 1985:74–75]), we should note that Sanders rightly asks, 'But does the special emphasis [that Jesus attached to his ministry] fall on his ability to exorcize demons?' (1985:135). We should follow Sanders in 'demystifying' exorcism (i.e., Jesus' exorcisms did not make him unique in first-century Judaism); but he goes too far in assuming that the *significance* of exorcism in the first century was

ing about *why* Jesus performed healings and exorcisms, that we ought to drop ‘the idea that exorcisms *necessarily implied* to Jesus’ audience the presence of the reign of God, and that in performing them Jesus was, in effect, proclaiming that presence’ (1985:160; emphasis added). But we are not here championing any ‘necessary implication’. Rather, onlookers could understand the significance of Jesus’ (and, indeed, anyone else’s) exorcisms according to a finite number of interpretations.<sup>121</sup> While Sanders knows this and admits that ‘the miracles themselves do not dictate their own meaning’, he inexplicably suggests, ‘it is entirely reasonable to assume that Jesus’ following, and perhaps Jesus himself, saw them as evidencing his status as true spokesman for God, since that sort of inference was common in the Mediterranean’ (1985:172). Why Sanders should turn to a ‘common inference’ rather than the discursive interpretation Jesus’ tradents remembered him providing for his exorcisms and healings is not at all clear.<sup>122</sup> But we ought to note that Jesus and/or his later tradents remembering him did not construct a significance for his exorcisms from foreign materials. Despite the relative newness of exorcism as a component of Second-Temple Judaic belief and praxis,<sup>123</sup> Jesus’ exorcisms are interpreted in the context of the central themes of Jewish theological, social, and political discourse. But this makes them all the more striking, ‘in that they formed a part neither of the regular Old Testament predictions, nor of first-century Jewish expectations’ (Wright 1996:195). As we will see shortly, Matt. 12.28 and parallel becomes an interesting text not simply for thinking about how Jesus’ tradents ‘distorted’ him to make him relevant for later contexts; we have here a striking instance in which Israelite tradition was shaped to accommodate the development of a new (and increasingly widespread) phenomenon (*viz.*, exorcism).<sup>124</sup>

Arguments regarding the ‘originality’ of Luke’s ‘finger’ versus Matthew’s ‘Spirit’, whether we attribute that ‘originality’ to Jesus or to Q, need not detain us here.<sup>125</sup> We should note that both sides present strong redaction-critical arguments (*cf.* Dunn 2003b:149, *ftn* 39; 459, *ftn* 365). Despite the claim that Luke would not have changed ‘Spirit’ to ‘finger’ given Luke’s ‘overpowering interest in the Holy Spirit’ (Gundry 1982:235), others have noted that

---

not itself subject to discursive forces. Rather, as other scholars have demonstrated, Matt. 12.28//Luke 11.20 can be helpfully located within this discursive field (*e.g.*, Dunn 1988; Meier 1994, *inter alios*).

<sup>121</sup> Twelftree draws two ‘natural conclusions’: ‘First, in declaring no reliance on a power-authority . . . *Jesus’ technique of exorcism, if not innovative, would have at least been very conspicuous.* Secondly, *Jesus believed that while he was operating out of his own resources, at the same time, he believed that it was God who was to be seen as operative in his activity*’ (1993:164, 165; original italics).

<sup>122</sup> Indeed, Sanders recognises that ‘We cannot say that Jesus proffered his miracles to his audience as bearing this significance . . . because of the tradition that he refused to give a sign’ (1985:172). But why should Jesus refuse to offer his healings and exorcisms as signs if that is precisely what he considered them to be? Sanders’s interpretation, then, is anything but an ‘entirely reasonable’ assumption. Instead, Jesus’ ‘mighty works will have been interpreted within the context of his overall proclamation’ (Wright 1996:191).

<sup>123</sup> *Cf.* the discussion in Meier 1994:405.

<sup>124</sup> *Cf.* also 1QapGen 20.16–29; *Ant.* 8.45–49, as well as texts that highlight Solomon as a source of effective exorcistic technique, often building upon an interpretation of 1 Kgs. 5.9–14 (LXX; *cf.* Duling 1975).

<sup>125</sup> *The Critical Edition of Q* reconstructs Q 11.20 as εἰ δὲ ἐν [δακτύλῳ] θεοῦ ἐγὼ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, ἄρα ἔφθασεν ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, but the footnote at δακτύλῳ simply says, ‘Luke’s δακτύλῳ or Matthew’s πνεύματι’ (Robinson, *et al.* 2000:232–233).



Luke avoids attributing Jesus' healings and exorcisms to the Spirit.<sup>126</sup> Why Matthew should have sacrificed Luke's rhetorically effective allusion to Exod. 8.15 (LXX) is unclear, though Matthew, too, exhibits an interest in the Spirit of God.<sup>127</sup> Thus we can understand why Matthew should read 'Spirit of God', but why he should *not* read 'finger of God', if he was looking at a text that read as such, seems less explicable. The problem involves more than the difficulty of deciding upon a definitive conclusion *vis-à-vis* the *ipsissima verba Jesu*. Rather, we should consider the possibility that Matt. 12.28 and Luke 11.20 ought not be read 'against' each other or 'against' a hypothetical exemplar (viz., Q) in search of the 'original reading'. Instead, these verses suggest the variability with which the Jesus tradition could be expressed and the various ways that tradition could invoke different aspects of the ambient Israelite tradition to evoke Jesus' perceived significance, which appears more stable than the wording used to express it.

Scholars have recognised that Luke 11.20, εἰ δὲ ἐν δακτύλῳ θεοῦ [ἐγὼ] ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, ἄρα ἔφθασεν ἐφ' ἐμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, evokes the story of Moses encounter with Pharaoh.<sup>128</sup> The phrase δάκτυλος θεοῦ ἐστὶν τοῦτο (Exod. 8.15 LXX)<sup>129</sup> occurs at a dramatic turning point in Exodus's narrative: Moses and Aaron have performed three σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα<sup>130</sup> in the presence of Pharaoh and his officials. Pharaoh's ἐπαιδοί successfully reproduce Moses' and Aaron's deeds, and Pharaoh remains unimpressed. Upon the third plague,<sup>131</sup> after Aaron stretches out his rod and strikes τὸ χῶμα τῆς γῆς and οἱ σκνῖφες cover the people and the four-legged animals, Pharaoh's ἐπαιδοί attempt to reproduce Aaron's feat ταῖς φαρμακείαις αὐτῶν but fail to produce the gnats. Upon this their first failure to match Moses and Aaron feat for feat, Pharaoh's enchanters declare to him 'the finger of God'. Thus commentators frequently note the significance of the phrase δάκτυλος [τοῦ] θεοῦ in reference to YHWH's victory over magical powers (ταῖς φαρμακείαις). We should also note that δάκτυλος [τοῦ] θεοῦ resonates politically: the 'finger of God' overcomes not just 'magic' nebulously conceived; it defeats 'magic' as the power through which a pagan nation oppresses, enslaves, and taxes the people Israel. While these connotations of δάκτυλος [τοῦ] θεοῦ, which describe YHWH's victory over Israel's enemies, make sense within the context of the Beelzebul contro-

<sup>126</sup> E.g., Dunn 1988:39, fn 24, who also notes Luke's 'clear Exodus typology'. Twelftree routinely refers to the 'Spirit/finger of God' rather than choosing one over the other (1993:164–167; *passim*).

<sup>127</sup> Gundry rightly points to Matt. 12.18's reference to Isa. 42.1 (1982:235), though it could be that Matthew's performance of 12.28, and his reference to Jesus exorcising 'by the Spirit of God', is what attracted the explicit reference to Isa 42.1 to precisely this context. Gundry's other explanations are less convincing.

<sup>128</sup> One question, raised by the issue of traditional reception but which we cannot answer here, is, Does Jesus' exorcistic success ἐν δακτύλῳ θεοῦ resonate in any way with traditions regarding the exorcistic power effected ἐν δακτυλίῳ Σολόμωνος (cf. *Ant.* 8.45–49).

<sup>129</sup> δάκτυλος [τοῦ] θεοῦ translates the Hebrew אֶתְּלֵךְ עַבְדְּךָ, both of which occur only three times in the Hebrew Bible (cf. the discussion later in this paragraph).

<sup>130</sup> Exod. 7.3 (LXX; also at 7.9); note also God's promise καὶ ἐξάξω σὺν δυνάμει μου τὸν λαόν μου τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου σὺν ἐκδικήσει μεγάλῃ in 7.4.

<sup>131</sup> The first σημεῖον (Aaron's staff becomes a δράκων) precipitates the ten plagues (cf. Exod. 7.3).

versy, we should also note the other appearances of our phrase. We find δάκτυλος τοῦ θεοῦ at Exod. 31.18; Deut. 9.10, both of which refer to τὰς δύο πλάκας λιθίνας γεγραμμένας ἐν τῷ δακτύλῳ τοῦ θεοῦ. If, negatively, δάκτυλος [τοῦ] θεοῦ refers to God's judgement of and victory over Israel's enemies, positively it evokes traditions of God's establishment, restoration, redemption, and presence among his people.<sup>132</sup>

We have already said that the accusation levelled against Jesus, and his response to it, takes up the much larger question, What is the current condition of Israel?<sup>133</sup> Jesus' response in Matt. 12.28//Luke 11.20 has important implications for Jesus' understanding of Israel's condition. We have seen the dangerous political evocations of the charge to exorcise demons ἐν Βε-ελζεβούλ: Jesus has not simply stepped beyond the pale of socially acceptable *religious* praxis but has turned in his status as a 'son of Israel'<sup>134</sup> and become a foreigner. Jesus, however, has reversed the accusation. Not only have Jesus' opponents seriously misapprehended the significance of his activities by charging him with complicity in Israel's oppression by foreign powers (political and theological), but in fact they are exactly wrong. Jesus enacts — literally rather than symbolically — the liberation of the children of Israel from the oppressive, foreign powers and at the same time enacts God's judgement against those powers. In the Lukan performance as we have it actualised in our written gospel, Jesus claims in the face of the charges against him that God is (re)establishing his covenant with his people and that this covenant is established precisely in Jesus' restorative activities.<sup>135</sup> Whether Luke's audiences would have understood Jesus as inaugurating a 'new covenant' in line with Jer. 38.31 (LXX; MT = 31.31) or reaffirming an 'old covenant' is probably not significant. In Exodus God makes a 'new covenant' with Israel at Sinai,<sup>136</sup> but this new covenant must surely to be understood as a fulfilment and continuation of YHWH's covenant with Abraham (cf. Gen. 15, also 12.1–3). Even if, then, a 'new covenant' is intended, this was almost surely not understood in Jesus' (or the Lukan evangelist's) day as over against God's previous covenants.

If Jesus in Luke reaches back to the Exodus narrative to describe the significance of his exorcisms, in Matthew Jesus looks back only as far as Israel's hope for restoration from exile.<sup>137</sup>

---

<sup>132</sup> Thus Luke's δάκτυλος τοῦ θεοῦ evokes resonances of both judgement and restoration. Cf. Bryan 2002, who consistently and admirably understands judgement and restoration as two sides of one coin (rather than two distinct phenomena; cf. 2002:6; 127–129; *passim*).

<sup>133</sup> Cf. §7.3.a.i., above.

<sup>134</sup> The reference to 'son' of Israel is intentional; even in Matt. 12.27, in which we have already been told that Jesus addresses οἱ Φαρισαῖοι, the reference to οἱ υἱοὶ ὑμῶν surely has broader, ethnic implications and means, at its broadest level, 'the children of Israel' (*pace* Shirock 1992).

<sup>135</sup> Here Jesus' 'restorative activities' refers especially to his exorcisms, but the similarities with Jesus' response to the Baptist, discussed in Chapter 5, above, and to Luke's elaboration of the tradition in the account of Jesus at Nazareth, discussed in the previous chapter, are clear.

<sup>136</sup> Remember the two δάκτυλος τοῦ θεοῦ passages (Exod. 31.18; Deut. 9.10) in which this 'new covenant' is written on stone tablets by God himself.

<sup>137</sup> I am not importing Wright's 'end-of-exile' schema here, though inasmuch as he argues that Jews perceived a serious socio-political problem with the current situation of Israel, and that this was also a theological problem, he can be fruitfully followed. Bryan, however, has offered a cogent if appreciative critique of Wright's 'end-of-exile' typology that helpfully demonstrates how Jews who thought of the exile

The ‘more meaning’ Jesus ascribed to his exorcisms in Matthew stems from their accomplishment ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ, a phrase which echoes the evangelist’s commentary at 12.15–21. After summarising Jesus’ activity healing the ‘many crowds’ that followed him, the performer turns to the audience and makes explicit the meaning that ought to attach to his activity:<sup>138</sup>

ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος·  
 ἰδοὺ ὁ παῖς μου ὃν ἠρέτισα,  
 ὁ ἀγαπητός μου  
 εἰς ὃν εὐδόκησεν ἡ ψυχὴ μου·  
 θήσω τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπ’ αὐτόν,  
 καὶ κρίσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἀπαγγελεῖ.  
 οὐκ ἐρίσει οὐδὲ κραυγάσει,  
 οὐδὲ ἀκούσει τις ἐν ταῖς πλατείαις τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ.  
 κάλαμον συντετριμμένον οὐ κατεάξει  
 καὶ λίνον τυφόμενον οὐ σβέσει,  
 ἕως ἂν ἐκβάλῃ εἰς νίκος τὴν κρίσιν.  
 καὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ ἔθνη ἐλπιούσιν. (Matt. 12.17–21)<sup>139</sup>

The Lord’s announcement, θήσω τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπ’ αὐτόν,<sup>140</sup> reminds us of the Spirit’s descent after Jesus’ baptism and the voice declaring Jesus God’s well-pleasing son (Matt. 3.16–17). Isaiah 42’s Spirit-led announcement to the nations resembles Moses’ redemptive ‘signs and wonders’ (Exod. 7–8), which functioned to undo Pharaoh’s power, for in the same Isaianic context God describes himself: יתן לפניו גוים ומלכים יתן כעפר חרבו כקש נדף קשתו (Isa. 41.2b).<sup>141</sup> Like Exod. 7–8, then, Isaiah emphasises God’s victory over foreign powers (judgement) as he prophesies God’s protection over Israel (restoration; cf. also Isa. 41.10–16). Jesus’ exorcisms ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ manifest the justice of YHWH: the restoration of Israel and the subduing of kings prophesied by Isaiah. Thus ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, which Luke contrasts with Egypt as the archetypal oppressive kingdom, evokes in Matthew God’s victory over the kingdoms of the exile (Assyria and Babylon). God’s kingdom — and not the oppressive king-

---

as ended could still entertain hopes of restoration (cf. 2002:12–20). Rather, Isaiah’s prophetic activities, which were more immediately relevant for those awaiting the end of exile, could still be evoked to express the wider hope of restoration characteristic of Israel in the Second-Temple era. Thus Matthew evokes a return-from-exile typology to express this wider hope of restoration, in contrast to Luke, who evokes an exodus typology.

<sup>138</sup> The language of a ‘performer turn[ing] to the audience’ is figurative with respect to our written gospels. But inasmuch as an ‘oral-derived text’, which we discussed in §§2.3.b.; 4.3.c., above, instructs its ‘readers’ on its appropriate reception, such language is both accurate and useful for reminding us that texts functioned differently in cultural contexts other than the Western academic context in which this project is written (and received).

<sup>139</sup> Matt. 12.18–21 is significantly distinct from the LXX, which identifies Ἰακώβ as God’s παῖς and Ἰσραήλ as God’s ἐκλεκτός (Matt. 12.18 = ὃν ἠρέτισα). The differences between Matt. 12.18–21 and Isa. 42.1–4 (LXX) continue until καὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ ἔθνη ἐλπιούσιν, which they share almost verbatim (LXX adds ἐπί after καί).

<sup>140</sup> Recall Luke 4.18ff.: πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπ’ ἐμὲ . . .

<sup>141</sup> As with Isa. 42.1–4, the MT and LXX of Isa. 41.2 are significantly different, and given Matt. 12.18–21’s proximity to the MT (cf. the previous fn) I have supplied the Masoretic text-form of Isa. 41.2. Abegg, *et al.*, translate 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>’s reading of Isa. 41.2 as, ‘Who has roused victory from the east *and* summoned it to his path *and* delivers nations before him *and* brings down kings, *and* makes their swords like dust, their bows like *wind-driven* chaff?’ (1999:334–335), where the three appearances of ‘and’ that have been italicised are found in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> but not the MT; the other two italicised phrases use different forms in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> than the reading found in the MT.

doms of Israel's enemies, as Jesus' opponents have charged — ἔφθασεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς. That is, Jesus' exorcisms are part of the restoration prophesied by Isaiah. We can see now the rhetorical effectiveness of Matthew's ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ, which links Jesus' exorcisms with the Isaianic vision of restoration, despite the fact that exorcisms do not figure in the Isaianic vision! In light of the widespread consensus that the evangelists and other early Jesus tradents created Jesus tradition on the basis of the Hebrew scriptures, it is surely significant here to note that the Hebrew scriptural traditions could be moulded to fit the memory of Jesus.

#### 7.4. Remembering Jesus' Exorcisms

Hollenbach pointed out over twenty-five years ago that the colonial presence of Rome in first-century Galilee must have been a compelling factor in the experience of demon-possession, and thus Rome factored into any successful programme of exorcism. Ducharme and Fine have also commented upon the effects of external pressures upon an ingroup's apprehension of undesirable behaviour and mobilisation of resources to counter such behaviour:

Under threat from outside, societies often increase their rejection of internal deviance. Collective reactions against deviance ultimately foster increased social solidarity. Thus, the punishment of deviance may not be strictly a factor of the inherent negative qualities of the act; punishment may itself depend on externally provoked shifts in the society's moral boundaries. (Ducharme and Fine 1995:1310)

Here lies a key to the puzzle Hollenbach sought to fit together, that 'it is directly in connection with [Jesus' exorcistic activities] that all the prominent public authorities manifest extreme hostility toward him' (1981:569). Certainly the gospels do not present the picture of 'prominent public authorities' largely appreciative of Jesus but coming into conflict with him because of his exorcisms. Jesus' exorcisms, in the context of his proclamation of God's kingdom throughout the villages of Galilee and its environs, contributed but one piece against which Jesus' opponents reacted. But opposition to Jesus in the Beelzebul controversy was not merely a reaction to Jesus' exorcistic programme. Behind the challenge-and-riposte of our passage looms the inescapable presence of Rome. Not that Jesus sought to reawaken in Israel a commitment and zeal to her ancestral traditions while his opponents attempted to maintain a façade of Israelite identity while appeasing Rome and her client rulers. We can attribute to both Jesus and his opponents positive intentions and honest convictions in the debate over the cause of his exorcistic success. In this light, Jesus' opponents were involved in processes of 'increas[ing] their rejection of internal deviance'. As Rome's presence loomed over the Galilean (and Judean) populace Jewish leaders must have felt the need to consolidate the populace along lines that both preserved the ancestral heritage and was viable in light of Roman power. Thus the threat posed by Jesus: not that Rome might react negatively against him but that crowds of people were already responding positively to him, and Rome was bound to notice and respond. Matthew's account preserves this aspect of the controversy explicitly: the crowd begins to wonder out loud, μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς Δαυίδ; (12.23), but Mark 3.20 and Luke 11.14 both agree, at least implicitly.

At stake, then, in the Beelzebul controversy was Israelite tradition and identity itself. On the one hand, scribes or Pharisees, perhaps from Jerusalem, demurred at Jesus' proclamation of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ amidst the brutal and irresistible empire of Rome. With Jerusalem and her Temple under Roman control, the idea that God was ushering in his kingdom under precisely these circumstances must have sounded preposterous. For those who looked for the restoration of Israel and the reestablishment of the proper throne and priesthood over the people (as we see, for example, in *Ps. Sol.* 17 and, in another form, in 1QS*a* ii), other courses of action — whether a more stringent practice of purity, a more zealous stance against Roman dominance, a retreat into the Judean wilderness — must have seemed more appropriate. For Jesus, however, it was precisely in acts of healing and exorcism, along with public teaching and an apparently unrestricted practice of table fellowship, that the coming of God's kingdom was most clearly visible.<sup>142</sup> Like the Pharisees, the Essenes and Qumranites, and even Josephus's 'Fourth Philosophy', Jesus most likely did not conscientiously set out to introduce innovations in the ancestral traditions. Despite the absence of exorcisms from Israelite tradition,<sup>143</sup> we have seen the ways that Jesus' exorcisms were nevertheless rendered resonant with Mosaic and Isaianic traditions of God's covenantal presence with his people.<sup>144</sup> Indeed, in the traditional dynamics underlying the Beelzebul controversy, the seams between past and present are so finely smoothed over that we should doubt whether Jesus or his later tradents perceived the differences between their own experiences and that of their traditional ancestors.

Both Jesus and his opponents, then, used traditional tools to answer traditional questions in an imperial context that exerted pressure upon the integrity of Israelite tradition. Both Jesus and his opponents sought to maintain that integrity in the face of Rome's tyrannising presence. This is not 'the invention of tradition' (*pace* Klutz 2004:66–67), though it certainly is the

---

<sup>142</sup> Klutz aptly says, 'As the impure spirit in this story [Luke 4.31–37] therefore represents on a vertical axis almost everything that was dangerous to Jewish identity and distinctiveness on the concrete level of socioreligious and political experience, the "holy" figure that successfully expels it can be viewed as a zealous champion of traditional Jewish boundaries and modes of self-definition' (2004:78). This is exactly the point we have been making regarding the dynamics driving the accounts of the Beelzebul controversy.

<sup>143</sup> But remember 1Q*ap*Gen 20.16–29 and *Ant.* 8.45–49, in which late Second-Temple views of exorcism are rooted in older traditional materials. Cf. also the 'curious recension' of Psa. 91 preserved in 11Q*PsAp*<sup>a</sup> (cf. Duling 1975:239; for a discussion of 11Q*PsAp*<sup>a</sup>, see Torijano 2002:43–53). David and Solomon, and also Abraham, could be credibly associated with exorcistic technique in Second Temple Jewish memory, though this represents a striking instance of the past being reformulated in terms of the present. Even so, we ought to notice that stories of Abraham's, David's, or Solomon's exorcisms were not fabricated out of whole cloth. Rather, traditional stories were reinterpreted in terms of later beliefs and concerns regarding exorcism. For that matter, it is interesting that other figures (Moses, Elijah, Daniel, *et al.*) were not transformed into exorcising exemplars in later tradition. Torijano says, 'The pervasive interest in the Bible and the traditions that surround it characterizes the Jewish literature of the Second Temple period; almost every preserved text is in dialogue with biblical traditions, transforming and adapting them to the changing times and concerns of the Jewish community' (2002:1).

<sup>144</sup> Klutz, interacting with Kirschläger 1981, refers to 'the inadequacy of Jewish Scripture as an explanatory resource for the demonological and exorcistic assumptions of Luke-Acts' (2004:5). The Hebrew Bible clearly does not evince the robust demonology and reflection on exorcistic technique as do Second-Temple (and later) texts, but we have seen that later texts continue to frame exorcistic discourse within interpretive traditions attached to Hebrew biblical texts (cf. the previous footnote).

manipulation of tradition in light of problems and perspectives that arose relatively recently. Even so, the turn to Abraham, David, and Solomon (and Elijah and Elisha; cf. Klutz 2004:61 on Luke 4.33–37) to understand and respond to exorcism in Second-Temple times was a turn to the past *as past* rather than remaking the past in terms of the present.<sup>145</sup> In this light it is surely significant that Luke, as well as Josephus, Pseudo-Philo, and the author of 1QapGen, appropriate tradition (e.g., the story of David and the πνεῦμα πονηρὸν παρὰ κυρίου [1 Sam. 16.14]) and reinterpret it in the light of an ever-changing context. That is, our Second-Temple era authors are turning to a past that already orientates and constitutes their stance *vis-à-vis* the present even as they reconfigure that past to understand their present.<sup>146</sup> What we have, then, is not ‘invented tradition’ so much as ‘reconfigured tradition’, but it is no less ‘tradition’ for being reconfigured.

Jesus’ exorcistic activities and his debates with other first-century Jews regarding those activities illustrate the interface between the heightened demonology of Second-Temple Judaism and the concerns generated by Rome’s presence over Judean and Galilean society. Jesus and his opponents understood that interface in terms of Israelite tradition which enabled them to orientate themselves in a difficult present, but that interface also transformed the tradition’s significance. Theissen has drawn our attention to the ways in which politics and exorcisms interacted: ‘Within a society which can express its problems and intentions in mythical language, social and political pressure can be expressed as the rule of demons. Or, to put it more carefully, political control by a foreign power and the resulting socio-cultural pressure can intensify the experience expressed in belief in demons’ (1974:256). This connection between Rome and demons bubbles up into the polemical discourse we find in the Beelzebul controversy. Both Jesus and his opponents engaged in processes of ascribing negative reputations to the other in order to reaffirm the vitality of Israel and her traditions. Ducharme and Fine are again relevant: ‘While similarities exist among all forms of commemoration, differences occur in the specific processes by which heroic acts and villainy are remembered’ (1995:1311).<sup>147</sup>

Ducharme and Fine identify two factors that characterise the memory of the villainous: demonisation and the transformation into nonpersonhood. ‘Demonization’, overtly relevant in the case of the Beelzebul controversy, ‘refers to a process in which ambiguities of moral character are erased, so that the commemorated figure is seen as fully, intensely, and quintessentially evil’ (1995:1311). Sanders’s (1985) and Maccoby’s (1989) objection that Pharisees in particular

---

<sup>145</sup> If Klutz is correct that Luke frames the exorcistic account of Luke 4.33–37 in terms of, among other things, the reference to Elijah and Elisha in 4.25–27, and I think he is, we can see another potential evocation of Elisha in an exorcistic Jesus tradition. Both Matthew and Luke include Jesus’ statement ὁ μὴ ὦν μετ’ ἐμοῦ κατ’ ἐμοῦ ἐστίν, καὶ ὁ μὴ συνάγων μετ’ ἐμοῦ σκορπίζει (Matt. 12.30 par.). This statement does not bear any verbal similarities to 2 Kgs. 6.16 and so does not cite that text, but the rhetorical pattern of Jesus’ statements bears similarities to Elisha’s πλείους οἱ μεθ’ ἡμῶν ὑπὲρ τοὺς μετ’ αὐτῶν (LXX). Interestingly, 2 Kgs. 6.16 happens in the context of divine giving, taking, and restoring of sight (6.17–28, 20 LXX); cf. §5.2.c.i. and Koet 2005:99; J. Sanders 1982:148–149, cited there.

<sup>146</sup> Cf. §3.3., above.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. §3.4.c.i., above.

would have been enthusiastic supporters of an itinerant rabbi provoking repentance among the populace or working healings even on the Sabbath loses its potency precisely here. Taken in isolation, Jesus' opponents would almost certainly have agreed with certain aspects of Jesus' activities and teachings. But in the context of his larger programme, some Pharisees, scribes, and other potential leaders within first-century Galilean Judaism could not support *Jesus'* teaching and activities. Similarly, the Babylonian Talmud relates a story in which R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, after being arrested by the Romans, 'interprets his arrest as punishment for improperly close contact with followers of Jesus . . . [and] believes he deserves punishment for listening to, and approving of, Yaakov's quotation of Jesus' midrash' (Kalmin 1994:157).<sup>148</sup> The demonisation of Jesus meant that even actions that would have otherwise been received positively take on negative significances.<sup>149</sup> Opposition to Jesus' proclamation of repentance and his healings and exorcisms were precisely opposition to *Jesus*, not opposition to repentance, healing, and exorcism.<sup>150</sup> Whereas Philip Alexander has written, 'The vilification of Jesus . . . already seems to have begun in the second century C.E.' (2007:683), the gospels, especially *vis-à-vis* the Beelzebul controversy, attests this process even in the first century, whether actually or in the narratives' (and therefore in the churches') symbolic universes.

The 'transformation into nonpersonhood' performs a similar function. Despite the ambiguities that accompany the actual history of any person's life, which invariably encompasses positive and negative elements, groups essentialise historical reputations into either positive or negative narratives. Essentialisation is especially important in the construction of negative, or villainous, reputations.

Most villains are known for a single highly condemned act. . . . The construction of villainous reputations depends upon society's ability to negate positive actions and characteristics and to see only those deeds and qualities that confirm the malefactor's trans-

---

<sup>148</sup> *b. 'Aboda Zar.* 16b–17a; cf. also *b. Ber.* 17a–b, cited in Kalmin 1994:157, ftns 8–9. We do not refer to Rabbinic texts here to illuminate or explicate historical realities regarding either Jesus or the gospels. Rather, we see in them an analogy for understanding the dynamics we propose were operative in the conflicts between Jesus and first-century Jews as those conflicts were remembered in communities of Jesus' followers. Cf. also P. S. Alexander 2007 for a similar discussion.

<sup>149</sup> Philip Alexander raises the intriguing possibility that 'the rabbinic version of the Amidah may have been a response to Jewish Christians attempting to introduce the Paternoster into the synagogue service'. The problem, from a non-Christian Jewish perspective, with the Lord's Prayer is not the prayer itself but rather that it is *Jesus'* prayer. Indeed, as Alexander has noted, 'There is nothing intrinsically objectionable to any Jew, rabbinic or not, in the Paternoster, and it would not have been out of place in public worship. *That would have made it all the more dangerous in rabbinic eyes.* The problem would not have been the content of the prayer but its source. It would have been the prayer of Jesus, and any congregation reciting it and saying "Amen" to it would have been aligning itself with the Christian party in the synagogue' (2007:674–675; emphasis added).

<sup>150</sup> Similarly Kalmin: 'The message of this story in its diverse contexts [e.g., *b. 'Aboda Zar.* 16b–17a] is that nonrabbis and outsiders pose a serious threat to rabbinic Judaism. Even, or especially, when these outsiders state opinions and offer interpretations that suit rabbinic tastes, *they are to be avoided at all costs.* They are dangerous, in no small part because of the attractiveness of their words to many Jews and/or rabbis. . . . Jesus and his followers know how to talk like rabbis, claims the story, and therefore *close contact with them is all the more to be avoided*' (1994:157, 159; emphases added). Note also the tension, described by Kalmin, in 'several early Palestinian sources [that] urge avoidance of *minim* and Christians, contact with whom is depicted as dangerous but sought after because of their skill as healers and the attractiveness of their "words"' (1994:160; original italics).

formed identity. In this transformation, the self is essentialized, so all that remains from the public's perspective is the evil core. 'Nonpersonhood' describes, not the erasure of the *whole* person, but the denial of the virtuous aspects of self in the villain's commemoration. (Ducharme and Fine 1995:1311–1312; original italics)

We can see this transformation clearly enough in the gospels, as in the otherwise surprising reaction of Pharisees and scribes to Jesus' preaching of repentance and increased piety towards God. Jesus' transformation into nonpersonhood continued beyond his lifetime and is evident in later, non-Christian texts. For instance, the charge that Jesus achieved his exorcisms by socially (and politically) unacceptable powers in Mark 3.22 and parallels finds a counterpart in the Babylonian Talmud's accusation that Jesus 'practised and enticed Israel to apostasy' (*b. Sanh.* 43a). The gospels are somewhat ambiguous in their charge; What should be done about Jesus if ἐν τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια (Mark. 3.22 and parallels)? What should happen to those who were sent out to preach and perform exorcisms in like manner (Mark 6.6b–13)? In *b. Sanh.* 43a the description of Yeshu as a beguiling magician who led Israel astray provides explanation for why he was hanged on the eve of Passover, and this precisely in the context of a discussion about the proper method for administering capital punishment.<sup>151</sup>

Here the significance of Jesus' social status appears in crisp focus, as in other Rabbinic texts, especially in early Palestinian sources. For example, after Elazar ben Dama has been bitten by a snake, he asks to be cured 'in the name of Jesus. Elazar ben Dama asserts that the Torah permits his cure, but he dies before revealing his proof. At the conclusion of the story Elazar ben Dama's uncle, R. Yishmael, expresses joy that his nephew died without transgressing the words of the rabbis' (Kalmin 1994:160–161). Elazar ben Dama's death is interpreted as a divine blessing and 'shows the hand of God, who intervenes at precisely the proper moment to insure removal of the temptation to follow heresy' (1994:161). Not only halakhic judgements but also healing power are considered suspect not because of their content or their efficacy but because of their source. The polemical dynamics behind the Beelzebul controversy are thus evident even in these much later texts.<sup>152</sup>

---

<sup>151</sup> Interestingly, *b. Sanh.* 43a twice affirms that Yeshu was hanged, but the herald who announced his impending execution is reported to have cried, 'He is going forth *to be stoned*' (emphasis added). Here is yet another example of the past and present interacting in messy ways, in which Jesus' historical death via Roman methods could be appealed to in a discussion of Jewish capital punishment (i.e., stoning) but without falsifying the fact of the crucifixion. Certainly the memory of Jesus' crucifixion in the Babylonian Talmud was influenced (even restrained?) by the emphasis on the crucifixion (and the cross as its symbol) in Christian preaching, art, and literature. But *b. Sanh.* 43a suggests that Jews could nevertheless co-opt Jesus' death as an instance of *Jewish* capital justice and group boundary maintenance.

<sup>152</sup> Cf. also *b. Sanh.* 107a–107b, discussed in P. S. Alexander 2007:699–701. Alexander's conclusion is both nuanced and instructive: 'The convergence of the story with Christian sources suggests that it echoes real debate. Already in the New Testament Jesus is described by his Pharisaic opponents as a "deceiver" (Matt 27:63–64), and as a magician who cast out demons by the power of Beelzebul (Mark 3:28; Matt 12:31). The latter charge is seen by the Christian sources as constituting the unforgivable sin' (2007:701). Though the polemical dynamics characterising Christian-Jewish relations in antiquity vary in their expression, the dynamics are evident on both sides and across centuries.



Much more complicated, from the perspective of Jesus' social value in a Jewish context, is Josephus' testimony (*Ant.* 18.63–64).<sup>153</sup> The description of Jesus as 'a wise man' and 'a doer of startling deeds' is striking and not at all negative, and Josephus portrays Jesus' followers in a similarly positive light.<sup>154</sup> Why does Josephus present Jesus and his followers neutrally (at worst) or positively (at best), especially if the gulf between Jews and Christians was widening when Josephus was writing his *apologia* for Jews to Romans at the close of the first century? Certainly he could have included Jesus among the γόητες and ἀπατεῶνες<sup>155</sup> he elsewhere blames for the Jewish revolt. Whatever the reasons for Josephus's sympathetic portrayal of Jesus, the debate over the latter's significance for Israel found dramatic expression in the Beelzebul controversy and continued to be addressed in future performances of that controversy within later Christian contexts. Jews who rejected claims — whether Jesus' or his followers' — of Jesus' central role in the inauguration of the kingdom of God likewise continued this debate, as is clear from the Rabbinic texts cited above. Josephus's testimony, being roughly contemporary with the gospels and certainly earlier than the Rabbinic texts, suggests that in Rome at the end of the first century CE the need to distance Jesus and his followers from Judaism was not universally felt.

The memory of Jesus' exorcisms continued to function as an essential aspect of the memory of Jesus' itself. This is especially true insofar as Jesus in Rabbinic memory reflects ongoing interaction with a growing Christian presence in the Roman empire rather than a lingering memory of aspects of Jesus' actual life. Had Jesus' exorcisms and healing abilities ceased to carry any social currency amongst his followers or others who recognised the potency of Jesus' name for exorcistic purposes, we likely would not read of them in Rabbinic texts. In light of the evidence from Paul's letters, Acts, and other early Christian writings, the memory of Jesus as a healer and an exorcist seems to have been all out of proportion with the significance of healings and exorcisms in later Christian contexts, though miraculous elements of other sorts appear frequently in Christian martyrdom texts.<sup>156</sup> The most plausible explanation for this must certainly be that the significance of Jesus' healings and exorcisms, expressed in conjunction with Israelite (and especially Isaianic, but also Mosaic and of Elijah/Elisha) traditions of restoration and renewal, continued to be communicated in other Christian practices, as we will suggest in the closing chapter.

---

<sup>153</sup> For thorough discussions of this passage, cf. especially Meier 1991:56–111 and Vermes 1987.

<sup>154</sup> I.e., as 'people who received the truth with pleasure', 'those who had loved him previously', and 'the tribe of Christians'.

<sup>155</sup> E.g., *Ant.* 18.97; 167. The New Testament never uses ἀπατεῶν (though it does use ἀπάτη [seven times] and ἀπατάω [three times]), but πλάνοσ occurs four times, including one reference to Jesus (Matt. 27.63).

<sup>156</sup> Miracles in Christian martyrdom texts (e.g., *Acts of Paul and Thecla*; Gregory of Nyssa's homily on Theodore the Recruit, *inter alia*) typically authenticate the martyr's innocence and the guilt of the power(s) that are trying and torturing Christ's witnesses; cf. MacDonald 1983:19; Lemans *et al.* 2003:89 for examples.

# Part IV:

*Conclusion*

## Chapter 8 Remembering Jesus Speaking

I have said that we have nothing better than our memory to assure us of the reality of our memories — we have nothing better than testimony and the criticism of testimony to accredit the historian's representation of the past.

Paul Ricoeur,  
*Memory, History, Forgetting*, 278

### 8.1. Looking Back

Thankfully, scholarship has moved beyond the days in which the most pressing questions regarding Jesus' unusual healings and exorcisms (as well as his other 'miracles') centred upon the philosophical debate over the possibility of 'divine interruptions' of natural processes.<sup>1</sup> Even if we agree that 'miracles' do not — because they *can not* — happen, questions persist regarding why people thought they received or witnessed a miraculous healing. Similarly, scholars have rightly recognised that the *narratives* of miraculous events convey meanings beyond merely, 'What happened was humanly impossible; God must have accomplished this.' Indeed, narratives of healings and exorcisms bear the marks of being crafted precisely to communicate additional meanings, and many scholars now take into consideration the contextual nature of miraculous events, including Jesus' παράδοξα.<sup>2</sup> For example, stories such as Mark 1.21–28 do not merely claim for Jesus the power to exorcise demons; they position him *vis-à-vis* an entire traditional universe in which such actions acquire (or can be ascribed) meaning and significance. Similarly, the narrator's comment at Mark 1.22, καὶ ἐξεπλήσσοντο ἐπὶ τῇ διδαχῇ αὐτοῦ· ἦν γὰρ διδάσκων αὐτοὺς ὡς ἐξουσίαν ἔξων καὶ οὐχ ὡς οἱ γραμματεῖς, does not simply elevate Jesus above the scribes (and any other group responsible for preserving and transmitting Jewish tradition). Rather, the comment locates both Jesus and the scribes within Jewish tradition itself. (We should note that this exacerbates rather than ameliorates the polemical nature of Mark 1.22.)

The analyses conducted in Part III, above, emphasised the ways in which the memories of Jesus' discourse regarding his healings and exorcisms both resonated with Israelite tradition and communicated something of Jesus' significance in an early first-century Galilean context. With respect to the traditions preserved in Matt. 11.2–6//Luke 7.18–23, we spoke of Jesus' answer to the Baptist resonating with 'traditions of Israel's restoration' (cf. Chapter 5, above). We

---

<sup>1</sup> Vincent Taylor pleaded for a movement precisely in this direction when he called for 'complete frankness' with respect to the 'Miracle-Stories': 'There is the frankness of those who are prepared to defend the miracles of the Gospels against all comers; and there is the frankness of those who leave us in no doubt about their wholehearted rejection of the miraculous. There is, however, another manner of approach which is bent less on winning a verdict than on facing all the facts of the case, and which leads the inquirer to accept conclusions when the evidence is clear, and also to confess ignorance and uncertainty when unknown factors are met. This is the kind of frankness I desire to display in the present lecture' (1933:119). Cf. the characteristically careful discussion regarding the possibility of 'miracles' in both the ancient and modern worlds in Meier (1994:509–534; 535–575).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Eve 2002 for a thorough discussion of Jesus' miracles firmly within their Jewish universe.

employed this cumbersome phrase, rather than the easier 'Isaianic tradition', primarily because the extant Isaianic texts make no mention of the third term of Jesus' response, λεπροὶ καθαρίζονται. We noted, however, the tradition preserved at 2 Kgs. 5.1–19a in which Elisha instructs the Syrian commander, Naaman, how to be cleansed (implicitly: by YHWH, the God of Israel) of his leprosy. Thus the Elijah/Elisha cycle of tradition provide the textual link between Jesus' reference to cleansing lepers and the traditional milieu in which he made that reference.

Our use of the phrase 'traditions of Israel's restoration' served another purpose. Implicitly throughout, and explicitly in places, we did not explain Jesus' answers in terms of *texts*, a term which continues to suggest fixed, bounded entities,<sup>3</sup> but in terms of *tradition*. Whilst our access to ancient tradition may be mediated solely through texts, we saw in §§2.3 and 4.3., above, the interpretative violence that results when we forget that the tradition transcended and contextualised our texts in dynamic and robust ways. In this sense our argument regarding the six terms of Jesus' response to the Baptist would not have collapsed without the appeal to 2 Kgs. 5.1–19a because, inasmuch as λεπροὶ καθαρίζονται would have been received alongside τυφλοὶ ἀναβλέπουσιν, χωλοὶ περιπατοῦσιν, and so on, as instances of restoration, the cleansing of lepers 'fit' within the Isaianic tradition despite its absence from Isaianic texts. Jesus' answer thus evoked traditional realities much larger than any textual expression. Inasmuch as a similar invocation of Israel's traditions of restoration appears in 4Q521, we can see that the traditional image of YHWH's provision for and protection of the 'prisoners', of 'strangers', and of 'the oppressed' conveyed in Psa. 146 could be evoked along with *and at the same time as* Isaianic expressions of restoration. This would seem incidental, especially inasmuch as Psa. 146 does not appear to be particularly important for the New Testament authors. But 4Q521's reference to 'straightening the bent' (compare Psa. 146.8) does call to mind Luke 13.11–13, in which Jesus heals a woman ἥν συγκύπτουσα. I do not suppose Luke knew 4Q521; neither does Luke cite Psa. 146.8. But certainly the same traditional realities figure in both texts. In this light, the exorcistic overtone of Luke 13.11–13, as well as Luke's otherwise strange mention that Jesus ἐθεράπευσεν πολλοὺς ἀπὸ . . . πνευμάτων πονηρῶν at 7.21, raise the possibility that exorcisms, too, belonged under the rubric 'traditions of Israel's restoration'.

With respect to the traditions preserved in Matt. 12.28//Luke 11.20, the traditional resonances of Jesus' answer to the charge of casting out demons ἐν Βεελζεβούλ were more complicated but no less effective. The first difficulty, of course, concerns whether Jesus claimed to exorcise demons ἐν δακτύλῳ θεοῦ or ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ. Even posing the question in these terms, however, reveals the extent to which processes of editing and printing texts have affected our thinking. As we stated in the previous chapter, the redaction-critical arguments for the

---

<sup>3</sup> We emphatically stressed in various places, especially in Chapter 4, that texts in the ancient world were anything but fixed and bounded, as can be seen in the various textual traditions preserved at Qumran or by the Rabbis (cf. the discussions in Nickelsburg 2003 and Jaffee 2001). When New Testament scholars speak of 'texts', however, they continue to hear (and mean) 'fixed texts'.

originality of either reading are strong. But certainly we can imagine Jesus discussing his exorcisms' significance on multiple occasions in terms of either the Spirit or the finger of God. Why Jesus should feel any pressure to consistently speak of his exorcisms, using only 'the Spirit of God' or 'the finger of God' to do so, is not clear. It seems more plausible that any pressure Jesus would have felt would have been to speak of his exorcisms in traditionally significant terms. This is precisely what we find in Matthew and Luke. We are not arguing that Jesus was accused of exorcising ἐν Βεελζεβούλ on multiple occasions, though perhaps he was. Rather, nothing about εἰ δὲ ἐν πνεύματι/δακτύλῳ θεοῦ ἐγὼ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, ἄρα ἔφθασεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (Matt. 12.28//Luke 11.20) is restricted to the Beelzebul controversy. If we consider the text of Matt. 12.28 and Luke 11.20 as the evangelists' presentation of *the type of response* Jesus would have given to his opponents in this type of situation, rather than *the verbatim record of that response*, then the *force* of Jesus' response, rather than the *wording*, becomes prominent.<sup>4</sup> As performers of the tradition, Matthew, Luke, and anyone else authorised within the community to actualise the Jesus tradition may have recognised in εἰ δὲ ἐν πνεύματι/δακτύλῳ θεοῦ . . . an appropriate response to opposition to Jesus' exorcisms. Contrary to the reconstructive procedures of the so-called 'New Quest', the texts of Matt. 12.28//Luke 11.20 preserve not the *words* Jesus spoke but a more encompassing *image* of Jesus speaking. As critical scholars we can accept or reject that image on evidentiary grounds, but we cannot suppose an early tradent preserved *ipsissima verba Jesu* apart from any overarching and contextualising view of Jesus.<sup>5</sup>

The contextualisation of Jesus' exorcisms in 'traditionally significant terms' was not a straightforward task. Exorcism was not an authentically ancient aspect of Israelite tradition. Raphael instructed Tobias, for example, to secure the heart, gall, and liver of a fish, which are 'useful as medicine', explaining to Tobias that at the smoke of the fish's burning heart and liver 'every affliction will flee away and never remain' (Tobit 6.5, 8 NRSV).<sup>6</sup> On his wedding night Tobias 'put [the fish's liver and heart] on the embers of the incense' to drive away the demon Asmodeus (8.2). Tobit's relatively late date (second or third century B.C.E.)<sup>7</sup> helps explain exorcism's presence within the narrative: exorcism became a more prominent traditional theme in the Second Temple period. It is striking, however, that Tobit expends no energy trying to ex-

---

<sup>4</sup> Inowlocki refers to the text's δύναμις, a term which 'conveys meanings other than "force" or "power", among which are the "use, meaning or significance of a word" (2005:61; citing *LSJ*). Cf. Hudson-Williams on Thucydides's approach to speech-writing: 'Thucydides uses the same methods in discovering the *gist* of what was actually said as he does in discovering the *exact truth* about historical events (22.2). In the case of the speeches he can only get at the *gist* because it is difficult to remember the *exact words*. So far Thucydides is "objective". He then expands this by his own conception of what was demanded by the various occasions. It is here that he begins to be "subjective"' (1948:79; original italics).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Wright's critique of inductive 'historical Jesus' programmes, referred to in §2.2.a.ii., above.

<sup>6</sup> The Septuagint reads differently: καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ἡ καρδία καὶ τὸ ἥπαρ εἰάν τινα ὄχλη δαιμόνιον ἢ πνεῦμα πονηρὸν ταῦτα δεῖ καπνίσαι ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπου ἢ γυναικός καὶ οὐκέτι οὐ μὴ ὄχληθῆ (Tob. 6.8).

<sup>7</sup> Helyer (2000:1239) considers Tobit's internal evidence to suggest a date of composition between 250–175 BCE.

plain Raphael's exorcistic recipe in traditional terms (for example, as a recipe divinely revealed to Solomon).<sup>8</sup>

Contrast Tobit's rough contemporary, 1QapGen,<sup>9</sup> which expands the story of Abram's sojourn in Egypt (Gen. 12). The biblical story speaks only of YHWH 'afflicting Pharaoh and his house with a great plague',<sup>10</sup> a condition which apparently was reversed when Pharaoh gave Sarai back to Abram. *Genesis Apocryphon* recasts YHWH's 'affliction with a great plague' in demonic terms: 'That night, the God Most High sent [Pharaoh] a chastising spirit, to afflict him and all the members of his household, an evil spirit that kept afflicting him and all the members of his household' (1QapGen 20.16–17; García Martínez and Tigchelaar 1998:43). After consulting all the wise men, wizards, and healers of Egypt, Pharaoh discovers Sarai is Abram's wife and returns her to him (20.27–28). Sarai's return, however, does not suffice to ease Pharaoh's and his household's suffering, and he pleads with Abram, 'But now pray for me and for my household so that this evil spirit will be banished from us. I prayed that [he might be] cured and laid my hands upon his [hea]d. The plague was removed from him; the evil [spirit] was banished [from him] and he recovered' (20.28–29).

Thus the tradition portrays Abram in exorcistic terms.<sup>11</sup> This portrayal must reflect the author's social context, which included anxieties over the malevolence of evil spirits, rather than any 'authentic' feature of Abraham's life. It is significant, however, that 1QapGen accomplishes the transformation of Abram from merely a person who experiences YHWH's protection to an exorcist whose prayers banish evil spirits by reframing an existing image *rather than through the wholesale 'invention of tradition'*. Despite Klutz's positive appropriation of Hobsbawm 1983a (2004:67), which we are qualifying here, we can appreciate this 'reconfiguration of tradition' even as it pertains to the conjunction of exorcistic and purity traditions in some streams of Second-Temple Judaism that Klutz identifies at work in Luke 4. 'And finally', says Klutz,

both through the lexis of holiness and impurity within [Luke 4.33–37] itself and through the link between this emphasis and the reference in the antecedent co-text to Elisha's cleansing of Naaman, potentially significant but largely ignored interfaces emerge in this

---

<sup>8</sup> In this same context, however, Tobit's prayer on his wedding night expresses the significance of marriage and prays for the safety of the newly married couple in terms of the traditional origins of marriage found in Gen. 2 (Tob. 8.5–8).

<sup>9</sup> For the text and translation of 1QapGen, see García Martínez and Tigchelaar 1998:28–49.

<sup>10</sup> וַיִּגַע יְהוָה אֶת פַּרְעֹה נְגַעִים גְּדֹלִים וְאֵת בֵּיתוֹ (Gen. 12.17); the LXX only slightly expands this phrase: καὶ ἤτασεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν Φαραὼ ἑτασμοῖς μεγάλοις καὶ πονηροῖς καὶ τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ. The LXX does not import exorcistic overtones into this story, unless the reference to ἑτασμοῖς . . . πονηροῖς would have been evocative of πνεῦμα πονηρόν (cf. LXX Jud. 9.23; 1 Sam. 16.14, 16, 23; Tob. 6.8). Perhaps any reading community with a pre-established demonology would have accessed this layer of meaning, but the text does not require it. LXX Hos. 12.2 translates קְרִיָּה וְרַרְרָה as πονηρόν πνεῦμα ἐδίωξεν; this may have demonological significance (cf. *Test. Sol.* 22; discussed in Klutz 2005:7).

<sup>11</sup> Klutz points out that Pharaoh does not instruct Abram to utter the exorcistic command (גַּעַר) but rather to pray that it would be uttered (2004:193–194), but note that Abram participates in the exorcism, not least via his efficacious prayer and the laying on of hands on Pharaoh's head.

story between demonology and impurity on the one hand, and between exorcism and rituals of purification on the other. (2004:80–81)<sup>12</sup>

Tradition could, of course, be invented (cf. *Test. Sol.* 1.1–7),<sup>13</sup> but we should not be quick to assume that the ancients had to falsify the past to address present concerns. In this sense, we should realise that Abraham could be reconfigured in exorcistic terms precisely because he already functioned as an orientating symbol in Jewish tradition. Our text, then, continues to speak ‘authentically’ *about* Abraham *to* its present context. We miss this dynamic when we simply label 1QapGen’s portrayal of Abraham ‘inauthentic’ and brush it aside.<sup>14</sup>

This leads us back to Luke 4.16–30, which we discussed in Chapter 6, above. Scholars have largely concluded that, apart from the odd ‘authentic tradition’, this passage arose from Luke’s redactional work with his sources. On this basis, the image of Jesus scholars have seen behind Luke 4.16–30 has relied at least as strongly — though in fact even more strongly — on the rest of Luke-Acts than on 4.16–30 itself. Our analysis suggested two alternative observations. First, when analysed apart from later salvation-historical conclusions regarding the ‘mission to the gentiles’, elements of Luke 4.16–30 (esp. 4.25–27) appear completely coherent within the context of a Jewish prophet’s programme of announcing and effecting Israel’s restoration. Second, when analysed in terms of Israel’s traditions of restoration, we see that Luke’s creativity was already constrained by existing expressions of the Jesus tradition and images of Jesus. Luke has certainly transformed the story of Jesus in Nazareth into a frame for the Jesus tradition as a whole, but the significance he draws from the tradition by doing so was already an aspect of the tradition. Thus we see Luke emphasising Jesus’ healings (and exorcisms; cf. 7.21) and their resonance with restorative traditions in new ways. But the Lukan Jesus continues to be recognisable as the same Jesus known in other Christian communities. These continuities and vicissitudes within early images of Jesus do not pull against each other; rather, they enable Jesus in his followers’ memory to both continue *as images of Jesus* and to speak relevantly and dynamically to new and unpredictable cultural situations.

What, then, does all of this allow us to say about the ‘historical Jesus’, if anything at all? We have seen that Jesus’ healings and exorcisms resonated with various aspects of Israel’s traditions of restoration and judgement, and Jesus’ sayings overtly activate this resonance. Indeed, this resonance seems to provide not just the meaning but also the purpose for Jesus’ healings and

---

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Klutz 2004:125–137 for a detailed discussion of interfaces between exorcism and purity.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Klutz 2005:5. But even in this instance of ‘invented tradition’, in which a story about Solomon and the construction of the First Temple was developed in order to explain the origins of Solomon’s exorcistic prowess, Solomon’s pre-established reputation as a source of exorcistic tradition constrains the newly invented tradition. That is, Solomon already functioned as an orientating symbol for third- and fourth-century Jews and Christians with concerns regarding exorcism; thus, the ‘invention of tradition’ ought not send us enthusiastically into ‘presentist’ analyses without recognising the complex dialectic by which past and present inform each other in collective memory (cf. §3.3., above).

<sup>14</sup> We should note one important difference between the story from Tobit 6, 8 and 1QapGen xx. Tobit narrates an exorcism and does so without overt references to biblical tradition; the *Genesis Apocryphon* narrates a traditional story and includes exorcistic overtones. This may help account for the differences between these texts *vis-à-vis* what we have called ‘traditionally significant terms’.

exorcisms, at least insofar as the sayings contextualise Jesus' healings and exorcisms in terms of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (Matt. 12.28//Luke 11.20, but see also Matt. 11.5//Luke 7.22.; Luke 4.16–30). Jesus was not merely acting out of compassion for sick and oppressed individuals;<sup>15</sup> he conceptualised his therapeutic work in terms of God's restored reign over Israel and, through her, over the nations. The relationship between Jesus' healings and exorcisms, on the one hand, and Israelite tradition, on the other, could be expressed in various ways and manipulated to emphasise different aspects of Jesus' significance. But the link between the healings/exorcisms and Israelite tradition was an established aspect of the Jesus tradition, and this almost certainly because Jesus himself understood his therapeutic and exorcistic programme in terms of Israelite tradition. This may not make Jesus 'unique' (*per* E. P. Sanders) or 'distinctive' (*pace* the Jesus Seminar), but it does make him eminently understandable.

This may seem like modest gains, for certainly others have been pointing to ways in which not just the Jesus tradition but Jesus himself are illuminated within their hellenistic Jewish context (and vice versa). What is more, others have been pointing in these directions precisely in reference to the texts considered in this project (with the exception, perhaps, of Luke 4.16–30). As we stated in Chapter 1, however, this project is not 'about' the healings and exorcisms in the sayings traditions; rather, these latter comprise the 'field' in which we have put to the test larger hypotheses concerning the historical Jesus and the gospels. With this in mind we can make two more significant statements *vis-à-vis* our access to the historical Jesus.

First, we have not based our judgement that Jesus himself understood his therapeutic and exorcistic programme in terms of Israelite tradition on any of the criteria of authenticity. Like other Jesus scholars, we could appeal to the criterion of multiple attestation in that Jesus' healings and exorcisms occur in multiple *gattungen* (miracle stories, pronouncement stories, and in the sayings tradition). But the fact that the image of Jesus as an exorcist appears in multiple forms of the tradition suggests little more than that that image exhibited some flexibility of expression. Perhaps more importantly, Jesus' healings and exorcisms are attested in multiple sources, especially our two earliest sources, Mark and Q. But aside from the anachronistic view of texts and tradition upon which this conclusion depends, the fact that the image of Jesus as a healer appears in our earliest sources suggests little more than that that image achieved widespread popularity amongst Jesus' followers in the first decades after Jesus' death. We could even appeal to the criterion of 'embarrassment' in that we might suppose Jesus' followers were unlikely to invent the image of John questioning Jesus or Jesus facing charges of demon-possession. But nothing in the texts we examined suggest that Jesus' tradents were 'embarrassed' by John's question or the Pharisees' accusation. Indeed, these set up the situation so that Jesus can express the significance he attributed to his healings and exorcisms. Thus none of the criteria move us from the data about Jesus to our reconstructions of Jesus in any direct way. Many scholars mask this disconnect between data and reconstruction by appealing to 'scholarly consensus' as if this

---

<sup>15</sup> Cf. E. P. Sanders 1985:160.



reduces the idiosyncrasies and subjectivity of our scholarship. In fact the appeal to consensus builds into the 'historical Jesus' a high level of collective subjectivity.<sup>16</sup>

Second, our judgement that Jesus himself understood his therapeutic and exorcistic programme in terms of Israelite tradition is rooted in the theoretical perspective, established in Chapter 3, above, that past and present are mutually constitutive. Social memory theory enables us to see the past not simply as a tool for addressing the present but also as the field within which present concerns are addressed. At the same time, however, we always perceive and reconstruct the past in light of the interests, concerns, and needs of the present, a fact that, as the example of nineteenth-century 'Life of Jesus' scholarship makes clear, applies not simply to 'oral' or 'traditional' societies.<sup>17</sup> But 'historical Jesus' scholars often fail to allow that the location of presentations of the past squarely in the present does not disqualify these as images *of the past*, either in real life or in 'historical Jesus' scholarship. This explains why different aspects of the past can be highlighted or neglected, celebrated or mourned, depending upon present concerns. The past and present inform one another. 'Historical Jesus' scholars have overlooked this point and assumed (a) that at least some 'authentic' traditions illustrate the past imposing itself tyrannically upon the present (e.g., Jesus' acceptance of John's baptism of repentance) and (b) that 'inauthentic' traditions illustrate the present imposing itself tyrannically on the past (e.g., Jesus' anticipation of the 'mission to the gentiles').

The discussions in Part III, above, have suggested these are overly simplistic ways of thinking about 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' traditions. Instead of conceptualising 'historical Jesus' research as a programme of distinguishing and categorising tradition into 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' bins, our research in the future will have to attend more closely to the gospels as we have them and as we can reconstruct their function within their originative contexts. When we realise, then, that in the first century nothing guaranteed that Jesus' speaking about his miracles in terms of Isaiah, Elijah, and Elisha would enjoy long-term success, we have to ask, Why did

---

<sup>16</sup> The point about 'collective subjectivity' requires emphasis. As 'historical Jesus' scholars we not only read the same books, attend the same conferences, and analyse the same texts. We also ask largely the same questions and think with the same tools. Certainly we have developed a vibrant diversity of images of Jesus, but we have also minimised the extent to which these diverse images of Jesus remain recognisable to us as Jesus. Despite the different reconstructions of, say, Horsley and Funk, Dunn and Crossan, or Wright and Patterson, as participants in 'historical Jesus' scholarship we still perceive the debates between these figures as intramural. This does not delegitimise 'historical Jesus' scholarship in any way, but it does call into question the significance of 'scholarly consensus'. As both Meier (1994:413–417 and Dunn (1988) had to face with respect to Luke 11.20 par., an appeal to a consensus does not a historical argument make. Indeed, because Jesus scholars do form a social group with common interests and perspectives (again, with considerable diversity), a consensus regarding any traditional unit usually says more about the community of 'historical Jesus' scholars than it does about the historical Jesus or the texts that mediate him to us. This point is immediately recognisable with respect to, for example, scholarship from the nineteenth century, which did not accord much significance to Jesus' healings and exorcisms. Do we really think it any less true of ourselves? Cf. Mathiesen 2005 for a discussion of 'collective subjectivity'.

<sup>17</sup> We refer here (and in the previous footnote) to nineteenth-century scholarship not because it was manifestly flawed in comparison to our own scholarship but because it may be easier for us to see the connection between past and present in their scholarship than in our own. Of course, this mutual relationship characterises our own historical reconstructions, too.

Jesus' healings and exorcisms 'work'?<sup>18</sup> The answer this project has proposed centres on Jesus' activities' evocation of Isaiah, the Elijah/Elisha cycles, and other traditions of Israel's restoration. But this evocation hardly explains why any first-century Jew should be 'susceptible' to Jesus' message and interpretation of his actions.

Here Rome's domination over the nation must factor into why Jesus could be positively received on any mass scale.<sup>19</sup> The social pressures on the Galilean (and Judean?) populace rendered that populace susceptible to messages of restoration. Josephus complains about this very thing.<sup>20</sup> Rome's colonial presence in Palestine factored into the phenomena of demon-possession, as Hollenbach has already pointed out (1981:572–580); we have emphasised that Rome also factored into Jesus' exorcisms (and debates about his exorcisms). Our qualifications of Kvalbein's reading of 4Q521 (1998) remind us that not just exorcisms but also the healing of physical ailments (blindness, deafness, leprosy, etc.) take on significance *vis-à-vis* Israel's subjection to foreign empires. But a second factor presents itself, especially when we ask not just why Jesus' contemporaries were susceptible to respond to him but also why his followers were positively received in the last seven decades of the first century and beyond. Though Jesus' reputation would centre on his healing and exorcistic prowess in some circles,<sup>21</sup> in the New Testament his salience centres on his crucifixion and resurrection. As a phenomenon in itself resurrection did not necessitate Jesus' status as messiah or guarantee him a hearing with onlookers.<sup>22</sup> But in New Testament traditions the traditional significance of Jesus' healings and exorcisms transferred onto his death and resurrection, so that these latter, like Jesus' exorcisms, took on 'more significance' (see §7.3.b.ii., above). In this latter case, Isaiah continued to function as a vital repository of tradition, but here texts like Psa. 22 also came into play. Though we cannot pursue this avenue of inquiry here, the way is thus opened up for us to not only understand Jesus' healings and exorcisms within the context of Jesus' overarching βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ programme but also to understand the connections between the historical Jesus and the memory of Jesus among his followers.

---

<sup>18</sup> Michael Schudson has already raised similar questions: 'Sometimes culture "works" and sometimes it doesn't. . . . Why? What determines whether cultural objects will light a fire or not? How does culture work? . . . That is the question I ask here — so long as it is understood that the answer has to do not just with features of the cultural "organism" but also with the susceptibility of people to it, and not just with their "natural" susceptibility but their variable susceptibility depending on the circumstances of their life at a given moment' (Schudson 1989a:158).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Hollenbach 1981; §7.4., above.

<sup>20</sup> Famously, Josephus explains the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple as God's judgement against the people and those who deceived them: διὰ τοῦτ' οἶμαι καὶ τὸν θεὸν μισήσαντα τὴν ἀσεβείαν αὐτῶν ἀποστραφῆναι μὲν ἡμῶν τὴν πόλιν . . . τὰ μὲν οὖν τῶν ληστῶν ἔργα τοιαύτης ἀνοσιότητος ἐπλήρου τὴν πόλιν οἱ δὲ γόητες καὶ ἀπατεῶνες ἄνθρωποι τὸν ὄχλον ἔπειθον αὐτοῖς εἰς τὴν ἐρημίαν ἔπεσθαι· δείξειν γὰρ ἔφασαν ἑναργῆ τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα κατὰ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ πρόνοιαν γινόμενα (*Ant.* 20.166, 167–168).

<sup>21</sup> Note the discussions of Jesus' reputation as an effective source of healings in some Rabbinic literature referred to in the previous chapter and in Kalmin 1994 and P. S. Alexander 2007, as well as references to Jesus' name in magical papyri and incantation bowls. Cf. also Acts 19.13–20.

<sup>22</sup> E. P. Sanders is emphatic here: 'A teacher who comes into conflict with the Pharisees over the law and who offends the priests by striking at their revenue (the main-line depiction of Jesus), but who appears in visions after his death, does not seem to deserve the title "Mesiah"' (1985:409, fn 49).

## 8.2. Looking Ahead

If our synthesis of social memory theory and oral-traditional approaches to ancient texts sheds any light on the gospels and the historical Jesus, to which areas of New Testament research might we fruitfully apply these methods in the future? We have already suggested that the approach advocated here has the potential to illuminate and relate stable and dynamic aspects of Jesus' reputation across the Easter-event. Even more importantly, perhaps, social memory theory offers us the possibility of seeing larger issues of Christian origins, and especially the processes by which first- and second-century expressions of Christianity and Judaism differentiated themselves from one another, in a new light.<sup>23</sup> Specifically, Paul's identity as a Jew, expressed in strong terms even as late as Phil. 3, at least raises questions concerning the validity of more traditional analyses that assume the Pauline 'mission to the gentiles' signalled the end of Christianity as Jewish phenomena. Also, the ways in which present concerns affect our apprehension of the past raise hermeneutical questions regarding the significance of our own socio-religious context, in which Christianity and Judaism are two distinct (though not monolithic) social structures, for our readings of the New Testament. Specifically, how does the classification of the New Testament as 'Christian' literature result in different readings of New Testament documents than if we understood them as documentary evidence for a loosely coherent expression of first-century Judaism? Also, do the New Testament documents themselves exhibit this change in perspective, or have we used them as vehicles for that change despite themselves?

In addition, this project has suggested throughout that scholars ought to revisit questions of our gospels' sources. Here two possibilities present themselves. First, and negatively, we need to press the criticisms levelled against source-critical analyses that have assumed *a priori* a literary approach to the synoptic problem to see if those criticisms can be sustained throughout the entire gospel tradition. This project has focussed on two instances in which our texts exhibit a high degree of the verbal similarity (Matt. 11.2–6 and parallel; Luke 11.14–20 and parallel[s].) and one instance in which source-critical questions have struggled with their predominantly literary perspective (Luke 4.14–30). Though source critics have insisted that such questions have to be addressed at the level of detailed analysis of the text (cf. Boring 1992), such approaches have assumed that we know what 'texts' are and that the evangelists perceived 'texts' in the same way we do. While source critics do have to engage the text in considerable detail, they have exhibited a naïveté with respect to larger historical and social issues.

Second, and positively, source critics need to familiarise themselves with current literature regarding oral traditional poetics. The field has developed considerably since Bultmann, Dibelius, and Schmidt first attempted to apply the insights of folkloristics to the synoptic tradi-

---

<sup>23</sup> The recently published volume, *Jewish Believers in Jesus* (Skarsaune and Hvalvik 2007) continues a trend in scholarship that promises to illuminate ancient Jewish and Christian relations in more sophisticated terms than 'mother-daughter' or even 'sister-sister' (cf. also Boyarin 1999; 2004). As many of the important questions this scholarship needs to address concern issues of identity, social memory theory would seem an especially apropos perspective from which to address these questions.

tion. Anthropological and comparative research has shed light on the almost overwhelming variety of expression 'oral tradition' can take, and source criticism can no longer justify its reification of oral tradition as one potential 'source' of gospel tradition in competition with physical, written texts. Indeed, research into oral traditional dynamics have called into question the extent to which we can treat even written texts as 'things'; as we noted in §6.4.a., above, 'Literacy is not textuality. One can be literate without the overt use of texts, and one can use texts extensively without evidencing genuine literacy' (Stock 1983:7). Thus the possibility arises that the written texts of a gospel (say, Mark) factored into the composition of another gospel (say, Matthew) without the latter evangelist ever consulting a written manuscript. Inasmuch as traditional source criticism has assumed the widespread availability of written texts to be consulted in the production of other texts, source critics also have to explain how our evangelists would have pursued such unusual behaviour in light of what we now know concerning the prohibitive expense and effort required to access written texts. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, source critics have to take care to define such basic concepts as 'text', 'word', 'agreement', 'parallel', and so on, and they also have to explicitly address a model by which they envisage the evangelists to have written the gospels. Only after these issues have been addressed can we be sure we are talking about the same things when we actually do engage the text.

What is more, tradition criticism appears to be a much more problematic endeavour. We have suggested that the concept of oral performance actualising the Jesus tradition calls into question the very idea of 'tradition history', a concept that relies on print-based editorial procedures in which texts give birth to texts. Instead, in the early communities of Jesus' followers, Jesus tradition was actualised in events that were in some senses constrained by previous performances but in other senses were each autonomous events. It is unclear, then, that the programme of reading one gospel against another, or a gospel against any real or hypothetical written sources, actually illuminates the gospels as first-century expressions of the Jesus tradition. Indeed, the Jesus tradition was not actualised solely in oral performances; inasmuch as continuities of composition, performance, and/or reception linked oral and written expressions of the Jesus tradition the written texts themselves appear as actualisations of that tradition rather than reactions to or editions of each other. Even if our instincts here are wrong and the quest for tradition histories is historically appropriate, the breadth and condition of our evidence does not at all appear sufficient to sustain such an enterprise.

### 8.3. Concluding Remarks

Richard Bauckham has recently written rather eloquently about the evidentiary value of testimony in historical-critical research (2006:472–508), and of course he identifies the gospels (especially Mark and John) as eyewitness testimony to the historical Jesus. Whatever problems and pitfalls scholars point out with respect to Bauckham's theses,<sup>24</sup> 'historical Jesus' scholars will have to account for the gospels as coherent, culturally conditioned and relevant portrayals of

---

<sup>24</sup> Cf. my review of *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* (forthcoming).

Jesus. We still require critical analysis of the texts in order to properly apprehend them as authentic cultural artefacts in their own right as well as to assess their testimony to the historical Jesus. But the programme of atomising, decontextualising, and recontextualising snippets of the gospel tradition in order to critically reconstruct the 'historical Jesus' has been exposed as culturally and historically inappropriate. It still remains for scholars to determine how much and how far they will accept the evangelists' portrayals of Jesus. But the question of whether we ought to take them seriously as instances of the Jesus tradition has been answered. Unless we decide to give up the historical analysis of Jesus and of Christian origins, we have no other option.

## Bibliography

- Abegg, Martin G., Jr.  
1995 'The Messiah at Qumran: Are We Still Seeing Double?'. *DSD* 2/2:125-144.
- Abegg, Martin G., Jr., Peter Flint, and Eugene Ulrich  
1999 *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible: The Oldest Known Bible Translated for the First Time into English*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.
- Abrahams, Roger D.  
1985 review of J. Opland, *Xhosa Oral Poetry*. *PT* 6:553-558.
- Achtemeier, Paul J.  
1990 'Omne Verbum Sonat: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity'. *JBL* 109/1:3-27.
- Aitken, W. E. M.  
1912 'Beelzebul'. *JBL* 31/1:34-53.
- Albright, William F. and C. S. Mann  
1971 *Matthew*. AB. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Alexander, Loveday C. A.  
1986 'Luke's Preface in the Context of Greek Preface-Writing'. *NovT* 28/1:48-74.  
1993 *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1-4 and Acts 1.1*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
1998a 'Ancient Book Production and the Circulation of the Gospels'. *The Gospels for all Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*. Edited by R. Bauckham. Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 71-111.  
1998b 'Fact, Fiction and the Genre of Acts'. *NTS* 44:380-399.  
2001 'IPSE DIXIT: Citation of Authority in Paul and in the Jewish and Hellenistic Schools'. *Paul beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide*. Edited by T. Engberg-Pedersen. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 103-127.  
2006 'What is a Gospel?'. *The Cambridge Companion to the Gospels*. Edited by S. C. Barton. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 13-33.
- Alexander, Philip S.  
1988 'Jewish Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Scriptures'. *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*. Edited by M. J. Mulder and H. Sysling. Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 217-253.  
1992 'Targum, Targumim'. *ABD* vol. 6. Edited by D. N. Freedman. New York: Doubleday, 320-331.  
2007 'Jewish Believers in Early Rabbinic Literature (2d to 5th Centuries)'. *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries*. Edited by O. Skarsaune and R. Hvalvik. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 659-709.
- Allison, Dale C.  
1997 *The Jesus Tradition in Q*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International.  
1998 *Jesus of Nazareth: Millenarian Prophet*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.  
2001a 'A Response'. *The Apocalyptic Jesus: A Debate*. Edited by R. J. Miller. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 83-105.  
2001b 'Assessing the Arguments'. *The Apocalyptic Jesus: A Debate*. Edited by R. J. Miller. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 109-127.  
2001c 'Jesus was an Apocalyptic Prophet'. *The Apocalyptic Jesus: A Debate*. Edited by R. J. Miller. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 17-29.
- Assmann, Jan  
1992 *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*. Munich: Beck.  
1995 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity'. Trans. by J. Czaplicka. *NGC* 65:125-133.

- Bailey, Kenneth E.  
1991 'Informal Controlled Oral Tradition and the Synoptic Gospels'. *AJT* 5:34-54. Repr. in *Them* 20/2 [1995]:4-11.
- Bakker, Egbert  
1997 'Storytelling in the Future: Truth, Time, and Tense in Homeric Epic'. *Written Voices, Spoken Signs: Tradition, Performance, and the Epic Text*. Edited by E. Bakker and A. Kahane. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 11-36.
- Bakker, Egbert and Ahuvia Kahane  
1997a 'Introduction'. *Written Voices, Spoken Signs: Tradition, Performance, and the Epic Text*. Edited by E. Bakker and A. Kahane. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1-10.  
1997b *Written Voices, Spoken Signs: Tradition, Performance, and the Epic Text*. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press.
- Balch, David L.  
1992 'Household Codes'. *ABD* vol. 3. Edited by D. N. Freedman. New York: Doubleday, 318-320.
- Barrett, C. K.  
1942 'Q: A Reexamination'. *ExpTim* 54. Reprinted in *The Two-Source Hypothesis: A Critical Appraisal* [1985]. Edited by A. J. Bellinzoni, Jr. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 259-268.
- Barthel, Diane  
1996 *Historic Preservation: Collective Memory and Historical Identity*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Bartlett, Frederic C.  
1932 *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology*. New York: The Macmillan Co., and Cambridge: The University Press.
- Barton, Stephen C.  
2001 'Many Gospels, One Jesus?'. *The Cambridge Companion to Jesus*. Edited by M. Bockmuehl. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 170-183.
- Basso, Rosanna  
1990 'Myths in Contemporary Oral Transmission'. *The Myths We Live By*. Edited by R. Samuel and P. Thompson. London and New York: Routledge, 61-69.
- Bauckham, Richard  
2006 *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*. Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans.
- Bauman, Richard  
1977 *Verbal Art as Performance*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Bäumli, Franz H.  
1997 'Writing the Emperor's Clothes On: Literacy and the Production of Facts'. *Written Voices, Spoken Signs: Tradition, Performance, and the Epic Text*. Edited by E. Bakker and A. Kahane. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 37-55.
- Beasley-Murray, George R.  
1986 *Jesus and the Kingdom of God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, and Carlisle: Paternoster Press.
- Beaton, Richard C.  
2005a 'How Matthew Writes'. *The Written Gospel*. Edited by M. Bockmuehl and D. A. Hagner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 116-134.  
2005b 'Isaiah in Matthew's Gospel'. *Isaiah in the New Testament*. Edited by S. Moyise and M. J. J. Menken. London and New York: T&T Clark International, 63-78.
- Becker, Howard Saul  
1963 *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. New York: Free Press.

- Bellinzoni, Arthur J.  
 1985a 'Introduction'. *The Two-Source Hypothesis: A Critical Appraisal*. Edited by A. J. Bellinzoni, Jr. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 3–19.  
 1985b *The Two-Source Hypothesis: A Critical Appraisal*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press.
- Ben-Amos, Dan  
 1999 'Foreword'. *The Hebrew Folktale: History, Genre, Meaning*. Eli Yassif. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, vii–xvii.
- Ben-Yehuda, Nachman  
 1995 *The Masada Myth: Collective Memory and Mythmaking in Israel*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Benson, Larry D.  
 1966 'The Literary Character of Anglo-Saxon Formulaic Poetry'. *PMLA* 81. Reprinted in *Oral-Formulaic Theory: A Folklore Casebook*. [1990] Edited by J. M. Foley. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 189–225.
- Bergen, Wesley J.  
 1992 'The Prophetic Alternative: Elisha and the Israelite Monarchy'. *Elijah and Elisha in Socioliterary Perspective*. Edited by R. B. Coote. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 127–137.
- Berger, Peter L. and Thomas Luckmann  
 1966 *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York and London: Doubleday.
- Betz, Otto  
 1987 'Miracles in the Writings of Flavius Josephus'. *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity*. Edited by L. H. Feldman and G. Hata. Detroit: Wayne State University Press: 212–235.
- Bietenhard, Hans  
 1978 'διάβολος' (part). *NIDNTT*, vol. 3. Edited by C. Brown. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 468–472.
- Blackburn, Barry L.  
 1994 'The Miracles of Jesus'. *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research*. Edited by B. Chilton and C. A. Evans. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 353–394.
- Blee, Kathleen  
 1993 'Evidence, Empathy and Ethics: Lessons from Oral Histories of the Klan'. *JAH* 80/2. Reprinted in *The Oral History Reader*. [1998] Edited by R. Perks and A. Thomson. London and New York: Routledge, 333–343.
- Bock, Darrell L.  
 1994 *Luke: Volume 1 — 1:1–9:50*. BECNT. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.
- Bodnar, John  
 1989 'Power and Memory in Oral History: Workers and Managers at Studebaker'. *JAH* 75/4:1201–1221.  
 1992 *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Boomershine, Thomas E.  
 1987 'Peter's Denial as Polemic or Confession: The Implications of Media Criticism for Biblical Hermeneutics'. *Orality, Aurality and Biblical Narrative*. Semeia 39. Edited by L. H. Silberman. Decatur, GA: Scholars Press, 47–68.
- Borg, Marcus J.  
 1984 *Conflict, Holiness and Politics in the Teachings of Jesus*. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press.  
 1986 'A Temperate Case for a Non-Eschatological Jesus'. *FFFor* 2/3:81–102. Reprinted in Borg 1994:47–68.  
 1987 *Jesus, A New Vision: Spirit, Culture, and the Life of Discipleship*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.



- 1991 'Portraits of Jesus in Contemporary North American Scholarship'. *HTR* 84/1:1-22. Reprinted in Borg 1994:18-43 (with Addendum).
- 1994 *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship*. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International.
- 2001a 'Assessing the Arguments'. *The Apocalyptic Jesus: A Debate*. Edited by R. J. Miller. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 114-119.
- 2001b 'The Historical Jesus and Early Christianity'. *The Apocalyptic Jesus: A Debate*. Edited by R. J. Miller. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 131-137.
- 2001c 'Jesus was not an Apocalyptic Prophet'. *The Apocalyptic Jesus: A Debate*. Edited by R. J. Miller. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 31-48.
- 2002 'Jesus: A Sketch'. *Profiles of Jesus*. Edited by R. W. Hoover. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 129-136.
- Boring, M. Eugene
- 1988 'The Historical-Critical Method's "Criteria of Authenticity": The Beatitudes in Q and Thomas as a Test Case'. *The Historical Jesus and the Rejected Gospels*. Semeia 44. Edited by C. W. Hedrick. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 9-44.
- 1992 'The Synoptic Problem, "Minor" Agreements, and the Beelzebul Controversy'. *The Four Gospels, 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck*. Edited by F. Van Segbroeck, C. M. Tuckett, G. Van Belle, and J. Verheyden. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 587-619.
- 1995 'The Gospel of Matthew: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections'. NIB vol. 8. Edited by L. Keck. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 87-505.
- Borland, Katherine
- 1991 "'That's not What I Said": Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research'. *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*. Reprinted in *The Oral History Reader*. [1998] Edited by R. Perks and A. Thomson. London and New York: Routledge, 320-332.
- Botha, Pieter J. J.
- 1991 'Mark's Story as Oral Traditional Literature: Rethinking the Transmission of Some Traditions about Jesus'. *HvTSt* 47/2:304-331.
- Bovon, François
- 2002 *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50*. Hermeneia. Translated by C. M. Thomas. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Bowman, Alan K. and Greg Woolf
- 1994a *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 1994b 'Literacy and Power in the Ancient World'. *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World*. Edited by A. K. Bowman and G. Woolf. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-16.
- Boyarin, Daniel
- 1999 *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- 2004 *Border Lines: The Partition of Judeo-Christianity*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Brodie, Thomas L.
- 2000 *The Crucial Bridge: The Elijah-Elisha Narrative as an Interpretive Synthesis of Genesis-Kings and a Literary Model for the Gospels*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press.
- 2004 *The Birthing of the New Testament: The Intertextual Development of the New Testament Writings*. NTM. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press.
- Bryan, Steven M.
- 2002 *Jesus and Israel's Traditions of Judgement and Restoration*. SNTSMS 117. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Buckhout, Robert
- 1982 'Eyewitness Testimony'. *Memory Observed: Remembering in Natural Contexts*. Edited by U. Neisser. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Company, 116-125.
- Burkett, Delbert
- 2004 *Rethinking the Gospel Sources: From Proto-Mark to Mark*. NTG. London: T&T Clark.

- Bultmann, Rudolf K.  
1921 *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*. ET: *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*. [1963] Trans. by J. Marsh. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Butler, Basil C.  
1969 'The Synoptic Problem'. *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*. Reprinted in *The Two-Source Hypothesis: A Critical Appraisal* [1985]. Edited by A. J. Bellinzoni, Jr. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 97–118.
- Byrskog, Samuel  
2000 *Story as History — History as Story: The Gospel Tradition in the Context of Ancient Oral History*. WUNT 123. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.  
2004 'A New Perspective on the Jesus Tradition: Reflections on James D. G. Dunn's *Jesus Remembered*'. *JSNT* 26/4:459–471.
- Campbell, Antony F.  
2002 'The Storyteller's Role: Reported Story and Biblical Text'. *CBQ* 64/3:427–441.
- Cannadine, David  
1983 'The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the "Invention of Tradition", c. 1820–1977'. *The Invention of Tradition*. Edited by E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 101–164.
- Carlston, Charles E.  
1975 *The Parables of the Triple Tradition*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.  
1994 'Prologue'. *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research*. Edited by B. Chilton and C. A. Evans. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1–8.
- Casey, Edward S.  
1987 *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*. [Second edition, 2000] Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Casey, Maurice  
2002 *An Aramaic Approach to Q: Sources for the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*. SNTSMS 122. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Chatman, Seymour Benjamin  
1978 *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Chilton, Bruce D.  
1980 'Targumic Transmission and Dominical Tradition'. *Gospel Perspectives: Studies of History and Tradition in the Four Gospels*. Vol. 1. Edited by R. T. France and D. Wenham. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 21–45.  
1982 'Jesus ben David: Reflections on the *Davidsohnfrage*'. *JSNT* 14:88–112.
- Collins, John J.  
1994 'The Works of the Messiah'. *DSD* 1/1:98–112.  
1995 "'He Shall not Judge by What His Eyes See": Messianic Authority in the Dead Sea Scrolls'. *DSD* 2/2:145–164.  
1997 *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Collins, John J. and George W. E. Nickelsburg  
1980 'Introduction'. *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism: Profiles and Paradigms*. Edited by J. J. Collins and G. W. E. Nickelsburg. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1–12.
- Connerton, Paul  
1989 *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Conzelmann, Hans  
1953 *Die Mitte Der Zeit*. ET: *The Theology of St. Luke*. [1961] Trans. by G. Buswell. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- Coser, Lewis A.  
1992 'Introduction: Maurice Halbwachs, 1877–1945'. *On Collective Memory*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1–34.
- Craghan, John F.  
1967 'A Redactional Study of Lk 7,21 in the Light of Dt 19,15'. *CBQ* 29/3:353–367.

- Creed, John Martin  
 1930 *The Gospel According to St. Luke: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Indices*. London: Macmillan.
- Crossan, John Dominic  
 1973 *In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus*. New York: Harper & Row.  
 1988 'Materials and Methods in Historical Jesus Research'. *FFFor* 4/4:3–24.  
 1991 *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.  
 1995 *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.  
 1998 *The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately after the Execution of Jesus*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.  
 2001a 'Assessing the Arguments'. *The Apocalyptic Jesus: A Debate*. Edited by R. J. Miller. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 119–123.  
 2001b 'The Historical Jesus and Early Christianity'. *The Apocalyptic Jesus: A Debate*. Edited by R. J. Miller. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 137–142.  
 2001c 'Jesus was not an Apocalyptic Prophet'. *The Apocalyptic Jesus: A Debate*. Edited by R. J. Miller. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 48–69.
- Crossan, John Dominic and Jonathan L. Reed  
 2002 *Excavating Jesus: Beneath the Stones, Behind the Texts*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.
- Crossley, James G.  
 2004 *The Date of Mark's Gospel: Insight from the Law in Earliest Christianity*. London: T&T Clark.
- Cruikshank, Julie  
 1990 'Myth as a Framework for Life Stories: Athapaskan Women Making Sense of Social Change in Northern Canada'. *The Myths We Live By*. Edited by R. Samuel and P. Thompson. London and New York: Routledge, 174–183.
- Culpepper, R. Alan  
 1995 'The Gospel of Luke: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections'. NIB vol. 9. Edited by L. Keck. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1–490.
- daSilva, David A.  
 2000 'Honor and Shame'. *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. Edited by C. A. Evans and S. E. Porter. Downers Grove, IL, and Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 518–522.
- Davies, William D. and Dale C. Allison, Jr.  
 1991 *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew. Volume 2: Matt. VIII–XVIII*. ICC. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.  
 2004 *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*. London and New York: T&T Clark International.
- DeConick, April D.  
 2005 'Reading the *Gospel of Thomas* as a Repository of Early Christian Communal Memory'. *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity*. Semeia 52. Edited by A. Kirk and T. Thatcher. Atlanta: SBL, 207–220.
- Delobel, Joël  
 1973 'La Rédaction de Lc., IV, 14–16a et le "Bericht vom Anfang"'. *L'Évangile de Luc. Problemes litteraires et theologiques*. Edited by F. Neiryck. Gembloux: J. Duculot, 203–223.
- Derico, Travis  
 2004 'Upgrade and Reboot: A Re-appraisal of the Default Setting'. *SBLSP*. [http://www.sbl-site.org/PDF/Derico\\_Upgrade.pdf](http://www.sbl-site.org/PDF/Derico_Upgrade.pdf).
- Dewey, Joanna  
 1989 'Oral Methods of Structuring Narrative in Mark'. *Int* 43:32–44.  
 1992 'Mark as Aural Narrative: Structures as Clues to Understanding'. *STR* 36:45–56.  
 1995 'Textuality in an Oral Culture: A Survey of Pauline Traditions'. *Orality and Textuality in Early Christian Literature*. Semeia 65. Edited by J. Dewey. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 37–65.

- Doane, Alger N.  
 1991 'Oral Texts, Intertexts, and Intratexts: Editing Old English'. *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History*. Edited by J. Clayton and E. Rothstein. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 75–113.
- Downing, F. Gerald  
 1985 'Ears to Hear'. *Alternative Approaches to New Testament Study*. Edited by A. E. Harvey. London: SPCK, 97–121.
- Draper, Jonathan A.  
 2006 'Jesus' "Covenantal Discourse" on the Plain (Luke 6:12–7:17) as Oral Performance: Pointers to "Q" as Multiple Oral Performance'. *Oral Performance, Popular Tradition, and Hidden Transcript in Q*. Edited by R. A. Horsley. Atlanta: SBL, 71–98.
- Ducharme, Lori J. and Gary Alan Fine  
 1995 'The Construction of Nonpersonhood and Demonization: Commemorating the Traitorous Reputation of Benedict Arnold'. *SF* 73/4:1309–1331. Reprinted in Fine 2001:32–59.
- Duling, Dennis C.  
 1975 'Solomon, Exorcism, and the Son of David'. *HTR* 68:235–252.  
 1978 'The Therapeutic Son of David: An Element in Matthew's Christological Apologetic'. *NTS* 24:392–410.  
 1983 'Testament of Solomon: A New Translation and Introduction'. *OTP* vol. 1. ABRL. Edited by J. H. Charlesworth. New York: Doubleday, 935–987.  
 1985 'The Eleazar Miracle and Solomon's Magical Wisdom in Flavius Josephus's *Antiquitates Judaicae* 8:42–49'. *HTR* 78/1–2:1–25.  
 1992 'Matthew's Plurisignificant "Son of David" in Social Science Perspective: Kinship, Kingship, Magic, and Miracle'. *BTB* 22:99–116.
- Dundes, Alan  
 1988 'Foreword'. *The Theory of Oral Composition: History and Methodology*. J. M. Foley. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, ix–xiii.
- Dungan, David L.  
 1970a 'Critique of the Q Hypothesis'. *Jesus and Man's Hope*. Reprinted in *The Two-Source Hypothesis: A Critical Appraisal* [1985]. Edited by A. J. Bellinzoni, Jr. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 427–433.  
 1970b 'Mark — The Abridgement of Matthew and Luke'. *Jesus and Man's Hope*. Reprinted as 'Critique of the Main Arguments for Mark's Priority as Formulated by B. H. Streeter'. *The Two-Source Hypothesis: A Critical Appraisal* [1985]. Edited by A. J. Bellinzoni, Jr. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 143–161.  
 1990 *The Interrelations of the Gospels: A Symposium Led by M.-É. Boismard, W. R. Farmer, F. Neirynck, Jerusalem 1984*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, and Macon, GA: Mercer University Press.
- Dunn, James D. G.  
 1977 *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity*. London: SCM Press.  
 1987 *The Living Word*. London: SCM Press.  
 1988 'Matthew 12:28/Luke 11:20 — A Word of Jesus?' *Eschatology and the New Testament: Essays in Honor of George Raymond Beasley-Murray*. Edited by W. H. Gloer. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 29–49.  
 1997 *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.  
 2000 'Jesus in Oral Memory: The Initial Stages of the Jesus Tradition'. *SBLSP*. Atlanta: SBL, 287–326.  
 2003a 'Altering the Default Setting: Re-envisioning the Early Transmission of the Jesus Tradition'. *NTS* 49/2:139–175. Reprinted in 2005:79–125.  
 2003b *Jesus Remembered*. Vol. 1. Christianity in the Making. Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans.

- 2005a *A New Perspective on Jesus: What the Quest for the Historical Jesus Missed*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic; London: SPCK.
- 2005b 'Q' as Oral Tradition'. *The Written Gospel*. Edited by M. Bockmuehl and D. A. Hagner. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 45–69.
- Durkheim, Émile
- 1915 *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse, le système totémique en Australie*. Paris: F. Alcan. ET: *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* [1995]. Trans. by K. E. Fields. New York: Free Press.
- Ehrman, Bart D.
- 1993 *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- 2005 *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Emmrich, Martin
- 2000 'The Lucan Account of the Beelzebul Controversy'. *WTJ* 62/2:267–279.
- Esler, Philip F.
- 1987 *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- 1994 *The First Christians in Their Social Worlds: Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation*. London: Routledge.
- 1998 *Galatians*. New Testament Readings. London and New York: Routledge.
- 2005 'Collective Memory and Hebrews 11: Outlining a New Investigative Framework'. *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity*. Semeia 52. Edited by A. Kirk and T. Thatcher. Atlanta: SBL, 151–171.
- Evans, Craig A.
- 1987 'Luke's Use of the Elijah/Elisha Narratives and the Ethic of Election'. *JBL* 106/1:75–83.
- 1997 'From Gospel to Gospel: The Function of Isaiah in the New Testament'. *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition*. Vol. 2, Formation and Interpretation of Old Testament Literature. Edited by C. C. Broyles and C. A. Evans. Leiden and New York: Brill: 651–691.
- 2000 'Mark's Incipit and the Priene Calendar Inscription: From Jewish Gospel to Greco-Roman Gospel'. *JGRChJ* 1:67–81.
- 2002 'Authenticating the Activities of Jesus'. *Authenticating the Activities of Jesus*. Edited by B. Chilton and C. A. Evans. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 3–29.
- Eve, Eric
- 2002 *The Jewish Context of Jesus' Miracles*. JSNTSup 231. London: Sheffield Academic Press.
- 2005 'Meier, Miracle and Multiple Attestation'. *JSHJ* 3/1:23–45.
- Farmer, William R.
- 1976 'A New Introduction to the Problem'. *The Synoptic Problem: A Critical Analysis*. Reprinted in *The Two-Source Hypothesis: A Critical Appraisal* [1985]. Edited by A. J. Bellinzoni, Jr. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 163–197.
- Farrer, Austin M.
- 1955 'On Dispensing with Q'. *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot*. Reprinted in *The Two-Source Hypothesis: A Critical Appraisal* [1985]. Edited by A. J. Bellinzoni, Jr. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 321–356.
- Feldman, Louis H.
- 1994 'Josephus' Portrait of Elisha'. *NovT* 36/1:1–28.
- Fentress, James and Chris Wickham
- 1992 *Social Memory*. Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Fine, Gary Alan
- 1996 'Reputational Entrepreneurs and the Memory of Incompetence: Melting Supporters, Partisan Warriors, and Images of President Harding'. *AJS* 101/5:1159–1193. Reprinted in Fine 2001:60–94.

- 2001 *Difficult Reputations: Collective Memories of the Evil, Inept, and Controversial*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Finnegan, Ruth
- 1976 'What is Oral Literature Anyway? Comments in the Light of Some African and Other Comparative Material'. *Oral Literature and the Formula*. Reprinted in *Oral-Formulaic Theory: A Folklore Casebook*. [1990] Edited by J. M. Foley. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 243–282.
- 1989 'Communication and Technology'. *LangCom* 9:107–127.
- 1990 'What is Orality — if Anything?' *BMGS* 14:130–149.
- Fitzgerald, John T.
- 1992 'Haustafeln'. *ABD* vol. 3. Edited by D. N. Freedman. New York: Doubleday, 80–81.
- Fitzmyer, Joseph A.
- 1970 'The Priority of Mark'. *Jesus and Man's Hope*. Reprinted in *The Two-Source Hypothesis: A Critical Appraisal* [1985]. Edited by A. J. Bellinzoni, Jr. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 37–52.
- 1981 *The Gospel According to Luke: I–IX*. AB. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Fleddermann, Harry T.
- 1995 *Mark and Q: A Study of the Overlap Texts, with an Assessment by F. Neirynck*. BETL. Leuven: Leuven University Press.
- Foerster, Werner
- 1964 'Βεεξεβούλ' [sic]. *TDNT* vol. 1. Edited by G. Kittel. Edited and trans. by G. W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 605–606.
- Foley, John Miles
- 1988 *The Theory of Oral Composition: History and Methodology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- 1990a 'Introduction'. *Oral-Formulaic Theory: A Folklore Casebook*. Edited by J. M. Foley. New York and London: Garland Publishing, xiii–xvii.
- 1990b 'Literary Art and Oral Tradition in Old English and Serbian Poetry'. *Oral-Formulaic Theory: A Folklore Casebook*. Edited by J. M. Foley. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 337–377.
- 1990c *Traditional Oral Epic: The Odyssey, Beowulf, and the Serbo-Croatian Return Song*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- 1991 *Imminent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- 1995a *The Singer of Tales in Performance*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- 1995b 'Words in Tradition, Words in Text: A Response'. *Orality and Textuality in Early Christian Literature*. *Semeia* 65. Edited by J. Dewey. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 169–180.
- 1997 'Traditional Signs and Homeric Art'. *Written Voices, Spoken Signs: Tradition, Performance, and the Epic Text*. Edited by E. Bakker and A. Kahane. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 56–82.
- 2002 *How to Read an Oral Poem*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- 2006a 'Memory in Oral Tradition'. *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory, and Mark: Essays Dedicated to Werner Kelber*. Edited by R. A. Horsley, J. A. Draper, and J. M. Foley. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 83–96.
- 2006b 'The Riddle of Q: Oral Ancestor, Textual Precedent, or Ideological Creation?'. *Oral Performance, Popular Tradition, and Hidden Transcript in Q*. Edited by R. A. Horsley. Atlanta: SBL, 123–140.
- Ford, Andrew
- 1997 'The Inland Ship: Problems in the Performance and Reception of Homeric Epic'. *Written Voices, Spoken Signs: Tradition, Performance, and the Epic Text*. Edited by E. Bakker and A. Kahane. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 83–109.

- France, R. T.  
2002 *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, and Carlisle: Paternoster Press.
- Fredriksen, Paula  
1988 *From Jesus to Christ: The Origins of the New Testament Images of Christ*. [Second edition, 2000] New Haven, CT, and London: Yale Nota Bene.  
1999 *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Freyne, Sean  
2004 *Jesus, A Jewish Galilean: A New Reading of the Jesus-Story*. London and New York: T&T Clark International.
- Friedlander, Peter  
1975 'Theory, Method and Oral History'. *The Emergence of a UAW Local, 1936–1939*. Extracted in *The Oral History Reader*. [1998] Edited by R. Perks and A. Thomson. London and New York: Routledge, 311–319.
- Fry, Donald K.  
1981 'The Memory of Cædmon'. *Oral Traditional Literature: A Festschrift for Albert Bates Lord*. Reprinted in *Oral-Formulaic Theory: A Folklore Casebook*. [1990] Edited by J. M. Foley. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 71–82.
- Funk, Robert W.  
1996 *Honest to Jesus: Jesus for a New Millennium*. San Francisco: HarperCollins.
- Funk, Robert W., Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar  
1993 *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus*. New York: Macmillan Publishing.
- Fusi, Alessandra  
2003 *The Oral/Literate Model: A Valid Approach for New Testament Studies?* PhD Thesis. Sheffield: The University of Sheffield.
- García Martínez, Florentino and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar  
1998 *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*. 2 Vols. Leiden and Boston: Brill.
- Gaston, Lloyd  
1962 'Beelzebul'. *TZ* 18:247–255.
- Geertz, Clifford  
1973 *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gerhardsson, Birger  
1977 *The Origins of the Gospel Traditions*. London: SCM Press. Reprinted in Gerhardsson 2001:1–58.  
1986 *The Gospel Tradition*. Malmö: CWK Gleerup. Reprinted in Dungan 1990:497–545 and in Gerhardsson 2001:89–143.  
1998 *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity*, with *Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity*. [1961; 1964] Trans. by E. J. Sharpe. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.  
2001 *The Reliability of the Gospel Tradition*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.  
2005 'The Secret of the Transmission of the Unwritten Jesus Tradition'. *NTS* 51/1:1–18.
- Goffman, Erving  
1974 *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Goodacre, Mark  
1996 *Goulder and the Gospels: An Examination of a New Paradigm*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.  
2002 *The Case against Q: Studies in Markan Priority and the Synoptic Problem*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International.  
2004 'When Is a Text Not a Text? The Quasi Text-Critical Approach of the International Q Project'. *Questioning Q: A Multidimensional Critique*. Edited by M. Goodacre and N. Perrin. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 115–126.

- Goodacre, Mark and Nicholas Perrin  
2004 *Questioning Q: A Multidimensional Critique*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Goodman, Martin D.  
1994 'Texts, Scribes and Power in Roman Judea'. *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World*. Edited by A. K. Bowman and G. Woolf. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 99–108.
- Goody, Jack R.  
1968 'The Consequences of Literacy'. *Literacy in Traditional Societies*. Edited by J. R. Goody. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 27–68.
- Goulder, Michael D.  
1985 'A House Built on Sand'. *Alternative Approaches to New Testament Study*. Edited by A. E. Harvey. London: SPCK, 1–24.  
1996 'Is Q a Juggernaut?'. *JBL* 115:667–681.  
1997 review of Harry T. Fleddermann, *Mark and Q: A Study of the Overlap Texts* (with an assessment by F. Neiryneck). *NovT* 39/2:193–194.
- Green, Joel B.  
1997 *The Gospel of Luke*. NICNT. Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, and Carlisle: Paternoster Press.
- Grele, Ronald J.  
1985 'Movement without Aim: Methodological and Theoretical Problems in Oral History'. *Envelopes of Sound: The Art of Oral History*. Extracted in *The Oral History Reader*. [1998] Edited by R. Perks and A. Thomson. London and New York: Routledge, 38–52.
- Guijarro, Santiago  
1999 'The Politics of Exorcism: Jesus' Reaction to Negative Labels in the Beelzebul Controversy'. *BTB* 29:118–129.  
2002 'The Politics of Exorcism'. *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels*. Edited by W. Stegemann, Bruce J. Malina, and G. Theissen. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 159–174.
- Gundry, Robert H.  
1982 *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution*. [Second edition, 1994] Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Hägg, Tomas  
1994 'Orality, Literacy, and the "Readership" of the Early Greek Novel'. *Contexts of Pre-Novel Narrative: The European Tradition*. Edited by R. Eriksen. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 47–81.
- Hagner, Donald A.  
1993 *Matthew 1–13*. Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 33a. Edited by R. P. Martin. Dallas: Word Books.
- Halbwachs, Maurice  
1925 *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*. ET: *The Social Frameworks of Memory*. Edited and trans. by L. A. Coser. *On Collective Memory*. [1992] Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 35–189.
- Hamilton, Diane  
1996 'Historical Consciousness as Collective Memory'. *JPN* 12/1:5.
- Hammock, Clinton E.  
2000 'Isaiah 56:1–8 and the Redefining of the Restoration Judean Community'. *BTB* 30/2:46–57.
- Hannah, Darrell D.  
2005 'Isaiah within Judaism of the Second Temple Period'. *Isaiah in the New Testament*. Edited by S. Moyise and M. J. J. Menken. London and New York: T&T Clark International, 7–33.
- Harris, William V.  
1989 *Ancient Literacy*. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press.



- Harvey, Anthony E.  
1982 *Jesus and the Constraints of History: The Bampton Lectures, 1980*. London: Duckworth.
- Hays, Richard B.  
2005 *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture*. Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans.
- Healy, Chris  
1997 *From the Ruins of Colonialism: History as Social Memory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hearon, Holly E.  
2003 'The Implications of "Orality" for Studies of the Biblical Text'. Presented at 'Orality, Narrativity, Memory: A Tribute to the Scholarship of Werner Kelber', in *The Bible in Ancient and Modern Media*. SBL Annual Meeting, Atlanta.  
2006 'The Implications of Orality for Studies of the Biblical Text'. *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory, and Mark: Essays Dedicated to Werner Kelber*. Edited by R. A. Horsley, J. A. Draper, and J. M. Foley. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 3–20.
- Held, Moshe  
1968 'The Root ZBL/SBL in Akkadian, Ugaritic and Biblical Hebrew'. *JAOS* 88/1:90–96.
- Helyer, Larry R.  
2000 'Tobit'. *DNTB*. Edited by C. A. Evans and S. E. Porter. Downers Grove, IL, and Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1238–1241.
- Hobsbawm, Eric  
1983a 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions'. *The Invention of Tradition*. Edited by E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1–14.  
1983b 'Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870–1914'. *The Invention of Tradition*. Edited by E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 263–307.
- Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger  
1983 *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hollenbach, Paul W.  
1981 'Jesus, Demoniacs, and Public Authorities: A Socio-Historical Study'. *JAAR* 49/4:567–588.
- Hoover, Roy W.  
2002a 'Introduction'. *Profiles of Jesus*. Edited by R. W. Hoover. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 1–7.  
2002b 'The Jesus of History: A Vision of the Good Life'. *Profiles of Jesus*. Edited by R. W. Hoover. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 41–64.  
2002c *Profiles of Jesus*. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press.
- Horsley, Richard A.  
1981 'Ancient Jewish Banditry and the Revolt against Rome, AD 66–70'. *CBQ* 43:409–432.  
1985 "'Like One of the Prophets of Old": Two Types of Popular Prophets at the Time of Jesus'. *CBQ* 47:435–463.  
1987 *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.  
1995 *Galilee: History, Politics, People*. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International.  
1996 'What has Galilee to do with Jerusalem? Political Aspects of the Jesus Movement'. *HvTSt* 52:88–104.  
2001 *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press.  
2003 *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.  
2006a 'Introduction'. *Oral Performance, Popular Tradition, and Hidden Transcript in Q*. Edited by R. A. Horsley. Atlanta: SBL, 1–22.

- 2006b 'Introduction'. *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory, and Mark: Essays Dedicated to Werner Kelber*. Edited by R. A. Horsley, J. A. Draper, and J. M. Foley. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, vii–xvi.
- 2006c *Oral Performance, Popular Tradition, and Hidden Transcript in Q*. Atlanta: SBL.
- 2006d 'Performance and Tradition: The Covenant Speech in Q'. *Oral Performance, Popular Tradition, and Hidden Transcript in Q*. Edited by R. A. Horsley. Atlanta: SBL, 43–70.
- 2006e 'A Prophet Like Moses and Elijah: Popular Memory and Cultural Patterns in Mark'. *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory, and Mark: Essays Dedicated to Werner Kelber*. Edited by R. A. Horsley, J. A. Draper, and J. M. Foley. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 166–190.
- Horsley, Richard A. and Jonathan A. Draper  
1999 *Whoever Hears You Hears Me: Prophets, Performance, and Tradition in Q*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International.
- Horsley, Richard A., Jonathan A. Draper, and John Miles Foley  
2006 *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory, and Mark: Essays Dedicated to Werner Kelber*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Hudson-Williams, H. Ll.  
1948 'Thucydides, Isocrates, and the Rhetorical Method of Composition'. *CQ* 42:76–81.
- Humphries, Michael L.  
1999 *Christian Origins and the Language of the Kingdom of God*. Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Hurtado, Larry W.  
1997 'Greco-Roman Textuality and the Gospel of Mark: A Critical Assessment of Werner Kelber's *The Oral and the Written Gospel*'. *BBR* 7:91–106
- Innes, Matthew  
1998 'Memory, Orality and Literacy in an Early Medieval Society'. *PP* 158:3–36.
- Inowlocki, Sabrina  
2005 "'Neither Adding nor Omitting Anything": Josephus' Promise not to Modify the Scriptures in Greek and Latin Context'. *JJS* 56/1:48–65.
- Jaffee, Martin S.  
1995 'Figuring Early Rabbinic Literary Culture: Thoughts Occasioned by Boomer-shine and J. Dewey'. *Orality and Textuality in Early Christian Literature*. Semeia 65. Edited by J. Dewey. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 67–73.  
2001 *Torah in the Mouth: Writing and Oral Tradition in Palestinian Judaism 200 BCE–400 CE*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Jenkins, Richard  
1996 *Social Identity*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Jervell, Jacob  
1972 *Luke and the People of God: A New Look at Luke-Acts*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.  
1996 *The Theology of the Acts of the Apostles*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Johnson-DeBaufre, Melanie  
2006 'Communities Resisting Fragmentation: Q and the Work of James C. Scott'. *Oral Performance, Popular Tradition, and Hidden Transcript in Q*. Edited by R. A. Horsley. Atlanta: SBL, 193–207.
- Kalmin, Richard  
1994 'Christians and Heretics in Rabbinic Literature of Late Antiquity'. *HTR* 87/2:155–169.
- Käsemann, Ernst  
1954 'Das Problem des historischen Jesu'. *ZTK* 51:125–153. ET: 'The Problem of the Historical Jesus'. *Essays on New Testament Themes* [1964]. Trans. by W. J. Montague. London: SCM: 15–47.

- Kelber, Werner H.
- 1983 *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q*. [Second edition, 1997] Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
  - 1987a 'Biblical Hermeneutics and the Ancient Art of Communication: A Response'. *Orality, Aurality and Biblical Narrative*. Semeia 39. Edited by L. H. Silberman. Decatur, GA: Scholars Press, 97–105.
  - 1987b 'Narrative as Interpretation and Interpretation of Narrative: Hermeneutical Reflections on the Gospels'. *Orality, Aurality and Biblical Narrative*. Semeia 39. Edited by L. H. Silberman. Decatur, GA: Scholars Press, 107–133.
  - 1995 'Jesus and Tradition: Words in Time, Words in Space'. *Orality and Textuality in Early Christian Literature*. Semeia 65. Edited by J. Dewey. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 139–167.
  - 2005 'The Works of Memory: Christian Origins as MnemoHistory — A Response'. *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity*. Semeia 52. Edited by A. Kirk and T. Thatcher. Atlanta: SBL, 221–248.
  - 2006 'The Verbal Art in Q and Thomas: A Question of Epistemology'. *Oral Performance, Popular Tradition, and Hidden Transcript in Q*. Edited by R. A. Horsley. Atlanta: SBL, 25–42.
- Kertzer, David I.
- 1988 *Ritual, Politics, and Power*. New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press.
- Kirk, Alan
- 1998 *The Composition of the Sayings Source: Genre, Synchrony, and Wisdom Redaction in Q*. NovTSup 91. Leiden and Boston: Brill.
  - 2005a 'The Memory of Violence and the Death of Jesus in Q'. *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity*. Semeia 52. Edited by A. Kirk and T. Thatcher. Atlanta: SBL, 191–206.
  - 2005b 'Social and Cultural Memory'. *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity*. Semeia 52. Edited by A. Kirk and T. Thatcher. Atlanta: SBL, 1–24.
  - 2006 'Going Public with the Hidden Transcript in Q 11'. *Oral Performance, Popular Tradition, and Hidden Transcript in Q*. Edited by R. A. Horsley. Atlanta: SBL, 181–191.
- Kirk, Alan and Tom Thatcher
- 2005a 'Jesus Tradition as Social Memory'. *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity*. Semeia 52. Edited by A. Kirk and T. Thatcher. Atlanta: SBL, 25–42.
  - 2005b *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity*. Semeia 52. Atlanta: SBL.
- Kirschläger, W.
- 1981 *Jesu exorzistisches Wirken aus der Sicht des Lukas: Ein Beitrag zur lukanischen Redaktion*. Klosterneuburg: Verlag Österreichisches Katholisches Bibelwerk.
- Kloppenborg, John S.
- 1987 *The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
  - 2000 *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Klutz, Todd E.
- 2004 *The Exorcism Stories in Luke-Acts: A Sociostylistic Reading*. SNTSMS 129. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
  - 2005 *Rewriting the Testament of Solomon: Tradition, Conflict and Identity in a Late Antique Pseudepigraphon*. LSTS 53. London and New York: T&T Clark.
- Koester, Helmut
- 1990 *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development*. London: SCM Press, and Philadelphia: Trinity Press International.

- Koet, Bart J.  
2005 'Isaiah in Luke-Acts'. *Isaiah in the New Testament*. Edited by S. Moyise and M. J. J. Menken. London and New York: T&T Clark International, 79–100.
- Kümmel, Werner G.  
1973 'In Support of Q'. *Introduction to the New Testament*. Reprinted in *The Two-Source Hypothesis: A Critical Appraisal* [1985]. Edited by A. J. Bellinzoni, Jr. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 227–243.
- Kvalbein, Hans  
1998 'The Wonders of the End-Time: Metaphoric Language in 4Q521 and the Interpretation of Matthew 11.5 Par.'. *JSP* 18:87–110.
- Lane Fox, Robin  
1994 'Literacy and Power in Early Christianity'. *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World*. Edited by A. K. Bowman and G. Woolf. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 126–148.
- Lawrence, Louise  
2003 *An Ethnography of the Gospel of Matthew: A Critical Assessment of the Use of the Honour and Shame Model in New Testament Studies*. WUNT. Tübingen: Mohr.
- Leemans, Johan, Wendy Mayer, Pauline Allen, and Boudewijn Dehandschutter  
2003 'Let Us Die that We May Live': *Greek Homilies on Christian Martyrs from Asia Minor, Palestine and Syria c. 350–c. 450 AD*. London: Routledge.
- Lewis, Theodore J.  
1992 'Beelzebul'. *ABD* vol. 1. Edited by D. N. Freedman. New York: Doubleday, 638–640.
- Lohse, Eduard  
1974 'χειροποίητος, ἀχειροποίητος'. *TDNT* vol. 9. Edited by G. Friedrich. Edited and trans. by G. W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 436.
- Lord, Albert B.  
1960 *The Singer of Tales*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.  
1974 'Perspectives on Recent Work on Oral Literature'. *FMLS* 10/3. Excerpted in *Oral-Formulaic Theory: A Folklore Casebook* [1990] Edited by J. M. Foley. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 31–55.  
1978 'The Gospels as Oral Traditional Literature'. *The Relationships among the Gospels: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*. Edited by W. O. Walker, Jr. San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 33–91.  
1986 'Perspectives on Recent Work on the Oral Traditional Formula'. *OT* 1/3. Excerpted in *Oral-Formulaic Theory: A Folklore Casebook* [1990] Edited by J. M. Foley. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 379–405.
- Lummis, Trevor  
1983 'Structure and Validity in Oral Evidence'. *IJOH* 2/2. Reprinted in *The Oral History Reader*. [1998] Edited by R. Perks and A. Thomson. London and New York: Routledge, 273–283.
- Luz, Ulrich  
2001 *Matthew 8–20*. Hermeneia. Translated by J. E. Crouch. Edited by H. Koester. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Maccoby, Hyam  
1989 *Judaism in the First Century*. IRS. London: Sheldon Press.
- MacDonald, Dennis Ronald  
1983 *The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press.
- Mack, Burton A.  
1988 *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- MacLaurin, E. C. B.  
1978 'Beelzeboul'. *NovT* 20/2:156–160.

- Malina, Bruce J.  
 1996 'Understanding New Testament Persons'. *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*. Edited by R. L. Rohrbaugh. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 41–61.  
 2001 *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Malina, Bruce J. and Jerome H. Neyrey  
 1988 *Calling Jesus Names: The Social Value of Labels in Matthew*. FF. Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press.  
 1991a 'First-Century Personality: Dyadic, Not Individual'. *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*. Edited by J. H. Neyrey. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 67–96.  
 1991b 'Honor and Shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal Values of the Mediterranean World'. *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*. Edited by J. H. Neyrey. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 25–65.  
 1996 *Portraits of Paul: An Archaeology of Ancient Personality*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Marcus, Joel  
 2002 'The Beelzebul Controversy and the Eschatologies of Jesus'. *Authenticating the Activities of Jesus*. Edited by B. Chilton and C. A. Evans. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 247–277.
- Marshall, Christopher W.  
 1996 'Literary Awareness in Euripides and His Audience'. *Voice into Text: Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece*. Edited by I. Worthington. Leiden and New York: E. J. Brill, 81–98.
- Marshall, I. Howard  
 1978 *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Mathiesen, Kay  
 2005 'Collective Consciousness'. *Phenomenology and Philosophy of the Mind*. Edited by D. W. Smith and A. L. Thomasson. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 235–250.
- McGaughy, Lane C.  
 2002 'The Search for the Historical Jesus: Why Start with the Sayings?'. *Profiles of Jesus*. Edited by R. W. Hoover. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 117–127.
- Meier, John P.  
 1991 *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus. Volume 1: The Roots of the Problem and the Person*. ABRL. New York and London: Doubleday.  
 1994 *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus. Volume 2: Mentor, Message, and Miracles*. ABRL. New York and London: Doubleday.
- Meyer, Ben F.  
 1979 *The Aims of Jesus*. London: SCM Press.
- Miller, Robert J.  
 2001a *The Apocalyptic Jesus: A Debate*. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press.  
 2001b 'Introduction'. *The Apocalyptic Jesus: A Debate*. Edited by R. J. Miller. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 1–13.
- Mills, Margaret  
 1990 'Domains of Folkloristic Concern: The Interpretation of Scriptures'. *Text and Tradition: The Hebrew Bible and Folklore*. Edited by S. Niditch. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 231–241.
- Misztal, Barbara A.  
 2003 *Theories of Social Remembering*. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Moberly, R. Walter L.  
 2001 'The Christ of the Old and New Testaments'. *The Cambridge Companion to Jesus*. Edited by M. Bockmuehl. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 184–199.

- Moule, Charles F. D.  
1967 *The Phenomenon of the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Implications of Certain Features of the New Testament*. London: SCM Press.
- Moxnes, Halvor  
1996 'Honor and Shame'. *The Social Sciences and new Testament Interpretation*. Edited by R. L. Rohrbaugh. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 19–41.
- Moyise, Steve and Maarten J. J. Menken  
2005a 'Introduction'. *Isaiah in the New Testament*. Edited by S. Moyise and M. J. J. Menken. London and New York: T&T Clark International, 1–5.  
2005b *Isaiah in the New Testament*. London and New York: T&T Clark International.
- Murko, Matija  
1929 *La Poésie populaire épique en Yougoslavie all début de Xxe siècle*. ET: 'The Singers and their Epic Songs'. Trans. by J. M. Foley. Reprinted in *Oral-Formulaic Theory: A Folklore Casebook*. [1990] Edited by J. M. Foley. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 3–30.
- Nagy, Gregory  
1996a *Homeric Questions*. Austin: University of Texas Press.  
1996b *Poetry as Performance: Homer and Beyond*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
1997 'Ellipsis in Homer'. *Written Voices, Spoken Signs: Tradition, Performance, and the Epic Text*. Edited by E. Bakker and A. Kahane. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 167–189.
- Nagy, Joseph F.  
1990 'Reflections'. *Text and Tradition: The Hebrew Bible and Folklore*. Edited by S. Niditch. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 221–224.
- Neiryneck, Frans  
1997 'Q 6,20b–21; 7,22 and Isaiah 61'. *The Scriptures in the Gospels*. Edited by C. M. Tuckett. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 27–64.
- Neusner, Jacob  
1983 *Formative Judaism: Religious, Historical and Literary Studies. Third Series: Torah, Pharisees, and Rabbis*. BJS. Chico, CA: Scholars Press.
- Nickelsburg, George W. E.  
2003 *Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins: Diversity, Continuity, and Transformation*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Nolland, John  
1989 *Luke 1:1–9:20*. WBC, vol. 35a. Waco: Word Books.
- Oakman, Douglas E.  
1988 'Rulers' Houses, Thieves, and Usurpers: The Beelzebul Pericope'. *FFFor* 4/3:109–123.
- Oesterreicher, Wulf  
1997 'Types of Orality in Text'. *Written Voices, Spoken Signs: Tradition, Performance, and the Epic Text*. Edited by E. Bakker and A. Kahane. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 190–214.
- Olick, Jeffrey K.  
1999a 'Collective Memory: The Two Cultures'. *ST* 17/3:333–348.  
1999b 'Genre Memories and Memory Genres: A Dialogical Analysis of May 8, 1945 Commemorations in the Federal Republic of Germany'. *ASR* 64:381–402.  
2006 'Products, Processes, and Practices: A Non-Reificatory Approach to Collective Memory'. *BTB* 36.1:5–14.
- Olick, Jeffrey K. and Daniel Levy  
1997 'Collective Memory and Cultural Constraint: Holocaust Myth and Rationality in German Politics'. *ASR* 62:921–936.
- Ong, Walter J.  
1977 'African Talking Drums and Oral Noetics'. *NLH* 8. Reprinted in *Oral-Formulaic Theory: A Folklore Casebook*. [1990] Edited by J. M. Foley. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 109–155.

- 1982 *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. New Accents. London and New York: Routledge.
- 1983 'Forward'. *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q*. Werner H. Kelber. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, xiii–xiv.
- 1987 'Text as Interpretation: Mark and After'. *Orality, Aurality and Biblical Narrative*. Semeia 39. Edited by L. H. Silberman. Decatur, GA: Scholars Press, 7–26.
- Passerini, Luisa
- 1990 'Mythbiography in Oral History'. *The Myths We Live By*. Edited by R. Samuel and P. Thompson. London and New York: Routledge, 49–60.
- Patterson, Stephen J.
- 1993 *The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus*. Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press.
- 2001a 'The Historical Jesus and Early Christianity'. *The Apocalyptic Jesus: A Debate*. Edited by R. J. Miller. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 142–146.
- 2001b 'Jesus was not an Apocalyptic Prophet'. *The Apocalyptic Jesus: A Debate*. Edited by R. J. Miller. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 69–82.
- Peneff, Jean
- 1990 'Myths in Life Stories'. *The Myths We Live By*. Edited by R. Samuel and P. Thompson. London and New York: Routledge, 36–48.
- Penney, Douglas L. and Michael O. Wise
- 1994 'By the Power of Beelzebub: An Aramaic Incantation Formula from Qumran (4Q560)'. *JBL* 113/4:627–650.
- Perks, Robert and Alistair Thomson
- 1998 *The Oral History Reader*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Perrin, Norman
- 1967 *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus*. London: SCM Press.
- Plevnik, Joseph
- 1993 'Honor/Shame'. *Biblical Social Values and Their Meaning: A Handbook*. Edited by J. J. Pilch and B. J. Malina. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 95–104.
- Poirier, John C.
- 2003 'The Endtime Return of Elijah and Moses at Qumran'. *DSD* 10/2:221–242.
- Popular Memory Group
- 1982 'Popular Memory: Theory, Politics, Method'. *Making Histories: Studies in History-writing and Politics*. Extracted in *The Oral History Reader*. [1998] Edited by R. Perks and A. Thomson. London and New York: Routledge, 75–86.
- Portelli, Alessandro
- 1981 'What Makes Oral History Different'. *HW* 12. Reprinted in *The Oral History Reader*. [1998] Edited by R. Perks and A. Thomson. London and New York: Routledge, 63–74.
- 1990 'Uchronic Dreams: Working-Class Memory and Possible Worlds'. *The Myths We Live By*. Edited by R. Samuel and P. Thompson. London and New York: Routledge, 143–160.
- 1997 *The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue*. Madison, WI, and London: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Porter, Stanley E.
- 2004a 'Introduction: Reading the Gospels as a Hermeneutical Issue'. *Reading the Gospels Today*. Edited by S. E. Porter. Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, xii–xvii.
- 2004b 'Reading the Gospels and the Quest for the Historical Jesus'. *Reading the Gospels Today*. Edited by S. E. Porter. Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 27–55.
- Powell, Mark Allen
- 1998 *Jesus as a Figure in History: How Modern Historians View the Man from Galilee*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press.

- Prager, Jeffrey  
1998 *Presenting the Past: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Misremembering*. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press.
- Prior, Michael  
1995 *Jesus the Liberator: Nazareth Liberation Theology (Luke 4.16–30)*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Rentería, Tamis Hoover  
1992 'A Socio-Cultural Analysis of Prophets and People in Ninth-Century B.C.E. Israel'. *Elijah and Elisha in Socioliterary Perspective*. Edited by R. B. Coote. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 75–126.
- Ricoeur, Paul  
2004 *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Trans. by K. Blamey and D. Pellauer. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Robbins, Vernon K.  
1995 'Oral, Rhetorical, and Literary Cultures: A Response'. *Orality and Textuality in Early Christian Literature*. Semeia 65. Edited by J. Dewey. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 75–92.  
2006 'Interfaces of Orality and Literature in the Gospel of Mark'. *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory, and Mark: Essays Dedicated to Werner Kelber*. Edited by R. A. Horsley, J. A. ` , and J. M. Foley. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 125–146.
- Robinson, James M.  
1964 "ΛΟΓΟΙ ΣΟΦΩΝ": Zur Gattung der Spruchquelle Q'. ET: "ΛΟΓΟΙ ΣΟΦΩΝ": On the Gattung of Q'. *Trajectories through Early Christianity*. [1971] Edited by J. M. Robinson and H. Koester. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 71–113.  
2000 'History of Q Research'. *The Critical Edition of Q: Synopsis Including the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Mark and Thomas with English, German, and French Translations of Q and Thomas*. Hermeneia. Edited by J. M. Robinson, P. Hoffmann, and J. S. Kloppenborg. Minneapolis: Fortress Press; Leuven: Peeters Publishers, xix–lxxi.
- Robinson, James M., Jon Daniels, and Lief Vaage  
1985 *Pap. Q*. Claremont: Institute for Antiquity and Christianity.
- Robinson, James M., Paul Hoffmann, and John S. Kloppenborg  
2000 *The Critical Edition of Q: Synopsis Including the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Mark and Thomas with English, German, and French Translations of Q and Thomas*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press; Leuven: Peeters Publishers.
- Robinson, James M. and Helmut Koester  
1971 *Trajectories through Early Christianity*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- Rodríguez, Rafael  
2008 review of Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*. *BTB* (forthcoming).
- Rosen, George  
1968 *Madness in Society: Chapters in the Historical Sociology of Mental Illness*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rosenberg, Bruce A.  
1986 'The Message of the American Folk Sermon'. *OT 1*. Reprinted in *Oral-Formulaic Theory: A Folklore Casebook*. [1990] Edited by J. M. Foley. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 137–168.
- Rosenzweig, Roy and David Thelen  
1998 *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Saldarini, Anthony J.  
1988 *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach*. [Second edition, 2001] BRS. Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans.
- Samuel, Raphael and Paul Thompson  
1990a 'Introduction'. *The Myths We Live By*. Edited by R. Samuel and P. Thompson. London and New York: Routledge, 1–22.



- 1990b *The Myths We Live By*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Sanders, E. P.  
 1969 *The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition*. SNTSMS 9. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
 1985 *Jesus and Judaism*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.  
 1993 *The Historical Figure of Jesus*. London and New York: Penguin Books.
- Sanders, James A.  
 1982 'Isaiah in Luke'. *Int* 36:144–155.
- Schaefer, Ursula  
 1997 'The Medial Approach: A Paradigm Shift in the Philologies'. *Written Voices, Spoken Signs: Tradition, Performance, and the Epic Text*. Edited by E. Bakker and A. Kahane. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 215–231.
- Schneider, Joseph W.  
 1985 'Social Problems Theory: The Constructionist View'. *ARS* 11:209–229.
- Schrager, Samuel  
 1983 'What is Social in Oral History'. *IJOH* 4/2. Extracted in *The Oral History Reader*. [1998] Edited by R. Perks and A. Thomson. London and New York: Routledge, 284–299.
- Schröter, Jens  
 1996 'The Historical Jesus and the Sayings Tradition: Comments on Current Research'. *Neot* 30/1:151–168.  
 1997 *Erinnerung an Jesu Worte: Studien zur Rezeption der Logienüberlieferung in Markus, Q und Thomas*. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener.  
 2006 'Jesus and the Canon: The Early Jesus Traditions in the Context of the Origins of the New Testament Canon'. *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory, and Mark: Essays Dedicated to Werner Kelber*. Edited by R. A. Horsley, J. A. Draper, and J. M. Foley. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 104–122.
- Schudson, Michael  
 1989a 'How Culture Works: Perspectives from Media Studies on the Efficacy of Symbols'. *TS* 18:153–180.  
 1989b 'The Present in the Past Versus the Past in the Present'. *Communication* 11:105–113.  
 1992 *Watergate in American Memory: How We Remember, Forget, and Reconstruct the Past*. New York: Basic Books.
- Schürmann, Heinz  
 1964 'Der "Bericht vom Anfang": Ein Rekonstruktionsversuch auf Grund von Lk. 4, 14–16'. *Papers Presented to the Second International Congress on New Testament Studies Held at Christ Church, Oxford, 1961*. Edited by F. L. Cross. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 242–258.
- Schwartz, Barry  
 1982 'The Social Context of Commemoration: A Study of Collective Memory'. *SF* 61/2:374–402.  
 1991 'Social Change and Collective Memory: The Democratization of George Washington'. *ASR* 56/2:221–236.  
 1996 'Memory as a Cultural System: Abraham Lincoln in World War II'. *ASR* 61:908–927.  
 1998a 'Frame Images: Towards a Semiotics of Collective Memory'. *Semiotica* 121:1–40.  
 1998b 'Postmodernity and Historical Reputation: Abraham Lincoln in Late Twentieth-Century American Memory'. *SF* 77/1:63–103.  
 2000 *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.  
 2005a 'Christian Origins: Historical Truth and Social Memory'. *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity*. Semeia 52. Edited by A. Kirk and T. Thatcher. Atlanta: SBL, 43–56.

- 2005b 'Jesus in First-Century Memory — A Response'. *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity*. Semeia 52. Edited by A. Kirk and T. Thatcher. Atlanta: SBL, 249–261.
- Schweitzer, Albert  
 1906 *Von Reimarus zu Wrede: eine Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*. ET: *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede* [1968]. Trans. by W. Montgomery. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co.
- Scott, Bernard Brandon  
 1989 *Hear Then the Parable: A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Sedley, David  
 1989 'Philosophical Allegiance in the Greco-Roman World'. *Philosophia Togata: Essays on Philosophy and Roman Society*. Edited by M. Griffin and J. Barnes. Oxford: Clarendon, 97–119.
- Shiner, Whitney  
 2003 *Proclaiming the Gospel: First-Century Performance of Mark*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International.
- Shirock, Robert  
 1992 'Whose Exorcists Are They? The Referents of οἱ υἱοὶ ὑμῶν at Matthew 12.27/Luke 11.19'. *J&NT* 46:41–51.
- Siker, Jeffrey S.  
 1992 "'First to the Gentiles": A Literary Analysis of Luke 4:16–30'. *JBL* 111/1:73–90.
- Silberman, Lou H.  
 1987 *Orality, Auality and Biblical Narrative*. Semeia 39. Decatur, GA: Scholars Press.
- Skarsaune, Oskar and Reidar Hvalvik  
 2007 *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- Snodgrass, Klyne  
 2005 'The Gospel of Jesus'. *The Written Gospel*. Edited by M. Bockmuehl and D. A. Hagner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 31–44.
- Stanton, Graham N.  
 1994 *A Gospel for a New People: Studies in Matthew*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press.  
 2001 'Message and Miracles'. *The Cambridge Companion to Jesus*. Edited by M. Bockmuehl. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 56–71.
- Stein, Robert H.  
 1980 'The "Criteria" for Authenticity'. *Gospel Perspectives*. Vol. 1. Edited by R. T. France and D. Wenham. Sheffield: JSOT, 225–263.
- Stemberger, Günter  
 1991 *Pharisäer, Sadduzäer, Essener*. ET: *Jewish Contemporaries of Jesus: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes*. [1995] Trans. by A. W. Mahnke. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Stock, Brian  
 1983 *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Streeter, Burnett H.  
 1924 *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins*. London: Macmillan and Co.
- Tabor, James D. and Michael O. Wise  
 1992 '4Q521 "On Resurrection" and the Synoptic Gospel Tradition: A Preliminary Study'. *JSP* 10 (1992):149–162. Reprinted in *Qumran Questions*. Edited by J. H. Charlesworth. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995:151–163.
- Talbert, Charles H.  
 1978 'Oral and Independent or Literary and Interdependent? A Response to Albert B. Lord'. *The Relationships among the Gospels: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*. Edited by W. O. Walker, Jr. San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 93–102.

- Talshir, Zipora and David Talshir  
 2000 review of Émile Puech, ed., *Qumrân Grotte 4 (XVIII): Textes Hébreux (4Q521–4Q528, 4Q576–4Q579)*. *JAOS* 120/4:650–654.
- Tannehill, Robert C.  
 1972 'The Mission of Jesus according to Luke 4:16–30'. *Jesus in Nazareth*. Edited by E. Grässer. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 51–75.  
 1996 *Luke*. ANTC. Nashville: Abingdon Press.  
 1999 'The Story of Israel within the Lukan Narrative'. *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke's Narrative Claim upon Israel's Legacy*. Vol. 1, Luke the Interpreter of Israel. Edited by D. P. Moessner. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 325–339.
- Tarrant, Harold  
 1996 'Orality and Plato's Narrative Dialogues'. *Voice into Text: Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece*. Edited by I. Worthington. Leiden and New York: E. J. Brill, 129–147.
- Taylor, Joan E.  
 1997 *The Immerser: John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism*. Studying the Historical Jesus. Edited by B. Chilton and C. A. Evans. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Taylor, Vincent  
 1933 *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*. [Second edition, 1935] London: Macmillan.
- Thatcher, Tom  
 1998 'Literacy, Textual Communities, and Josephus' *Jewish War*'. *JSJ* 29:123–142.  
 2005 'Why John Wrote a Gospel: Memory and History in an Early Christian Community'. *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity*. Semeia 52. Edited by A. Kirk and T. Thatcher. Atlanta: SBL, 79–97.  
 2006 *Why John WROTE a Gospel: Jesus — Memory — History*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox.
- Theissen, Gerd  
 1974 *Urchristliche Wundergeschichten: Ein Beitrag zur formgeschichtlichen Erforschung der synoptischen Evangelien*. ET: *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition*. [1983] Trans. by F. McDonagh. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.  
 1999 *Theorie der urchristlichen Religion*. ET: *A Theory of Primitive Christian Religion*. [1999] Trans. by J. Bowden. London: SCM Press.
- Theissen, Gerd and Annette Merz  
 1996 *Der historische Jesus. Ein Lehrbuch*. ET: *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide*. [1998] Trans. by J. Bowden. London: SCM Press.
- Theissen, Gerd and Dagmar Winter  
 1997 *Die Kriterienfrage in der Jesusforschung: Vom Differenzkriterium zum Plausibilitätskriterium*. ET: *The Quest for the Plausible Jesus: The Question of Criteria*. [2002] Trans. by M. E. Boring. Louisville, KY, and London: Westminster/John Knox Press.
- Thomas, Rosalind  
 1989 *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.  
 1990 'Ancient Greek Family Tradition and Democracy: From Oral History to Myth'. *The Myths We Live By*. Edited by R. Samuel and P. Thompson. London and New York: Routledge, 203–215.  
 1992 *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.  
 1994 'Literacy and the City-State in Archaic and Classical Greece'. *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World*. Edited by A. K. Bowman and G. Woolf. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 33–50.
- Thompson, Alistair  
 1978 *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*. [Second edition, 1988] Oxford and New York: University of Oxford Press. Extracted in *The Oral History Reader*. [1998] Edited by R. Perks and A. Thomson. London and New York: Routledge.

- Thompson, Michael B.  
 1998 'The Holy Internet: Communication Between Churches in the First Christian Generation'. *The Gospels for all Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*. Edited by R. Bauckham. Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 49–70.
- Thomson, Alistair  
 1990a 'The Anzac Legend: Exploring National Myths and Memory in Australia'. *The Myths We Live By*. Edited by R. Samuel and P. Thompson. London and New York: Routledge, 73–82.  
 1990b 'Anzac Memories: Putting Popular Memory Theory into Practice in Australia'. *OH 18/2*. Extracted in *The Oral History Reader*. [1998] Edited by R. Perks and A. Thomson. London and New York: Routledge, 300–310.
- Todorov, Tzvetan  
 1971 *Poétique de la prose: Nouvelles recherches sur le récit*. Paris: Seuil.
- Tomson, Peter J.  
 1997 'The Core of Jesus' Evangel: ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΣΑΣΘΑΙ ΠΤΟΧΟΙΣ (Isa 61)'. *The Scriptures in the Gospels*. Edited by C. M. Tuckett. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 48–65.  
 2001 'Jesus and His Judaism'. *The Cambridge Companion to Jesus*. Edited by M. Bockmuehl. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tonkin, Elizabeth  
 1982 'The Boundaries of History in Oral Performance'. *HistAfr* 9:273–284.  
 1990 'History and the Myth of Realism'. *The Myths We Live By*. Edited by R. Samuel and P. Thompson. London and New York: Routledge, 25–35.  
 1992 *Narrating Our Pasts: The Social Construction of Oral History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Torijano, Pablo A.  
 2002 *Solomon the Esoteric King: From King to Magus, Development of a Tradition*. JSJSup. Leiden and Boston: Brill.
- Trevor-Roper, Hugh  
 1983 'The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland'. *The Invention of Tradition*. Edited by E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 15–41.
- Tuckett, Christopher M.  
 1992 'Q (Gospel Source)'. *ABD* vol. 5. Edited by D. N. Freedman. New York: Doubleday, 567–572.  
 1996 *Q and the History of Early Christianity: Studies on Q*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.  
 2005 'Isaiah in Q'. *Isaiah in the New Testament*. Edited by S. Moyise and M. J. J. Menken. London and New York: T&T Clark International, 51–61.
- Twelftree, Graham H.  
 1992 'Demon, Devil, Satan'. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Edited by J. B. Green and S. McKnight. Downers Grove, IL, and Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 163–172.  
 1993 *Jesus the Exorcist: A Contribution to the Study of the Historical Jesus*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.  
 2006 'Beelzebul'. *NIDB* vol. 1. Edited by K. D. Sakenfeld. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 417–418.
- Tyson, Joseph B.  
 1985 'The Two-Source Hypothesis: A Critical Appraisal'. *The Two-Source Hypothesis: A Critical Appraisal*. Edited by A. J. Bellinzoni, Jr. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 437–452.
- Vansina, Jan  
 1985 *Oral Tradition as History*. London: James Curry, and Nairobi: Heinemann Kenya.
- Vermes, Geza  
 1987 'The Jesus Notice of Josephus Re-examined'. *JJS* 38:1–10  
 1993 *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels*. London: SCM Press.

- Wagner-Pacifci, Robin and Barry Schwartz  
 1991 'The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past'. *AJS* 97/2:376–420.
- Webb, Robert L.  
 1994 'John the Baptist and His Relationship to Jesus'. *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research*. Edited by B. Chilton and C. A. Evans. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 179–229.
- White, Hayden  
 1978 *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- White, Naomi Rush  
 1994 'Marking Absences: Holocaust Testimony and History'. *OHAAJ* 16. Reprinted in *The Oral History Reader*. [1998] Edited by R. Perks and A. Thomson. London and New York: Routledge, 172–182.
- Wise, Michael, Martin Abegg, Jr., and Edward Cook  
 1996 *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.
- Witherington, Ben, III  
 1995 *The Jesus Quest: The Third Search for the Jew of Nazareth*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Wright, N. T.  
 1992 *The New Testament and the People of God*. Vol. 1. Christian Origins and the Question of God. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.  
 1996 *Jesus and the Victory of God*. Vol. 2. Christian Origins and the Question of God. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Yassif, Eli  
 1999 *The Hebrew Folktale: History, Genre, Meaning*. Trans. by Jacqueline S. Teitelbaum. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Zelizer, Barbie  
 1995 'Reading the Past against the Grain: The Shape of Memory Studies'. *CSMC* 12:214–239.
- Zerubavel, Eviatar  
 1991 *The Fine Line: Making Distinctions in Everyday Life*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.  
 2003 *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Zerubavel, Yael  
 1995 *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Zhang, Tong and Barry Schwartz  
 1997 'Confucius and the Cultural Revolution: A Study in Collective Memory'. *IJPCS* 11/2:189–212.
- Zöckler, Thomas  
 1999 *Jesu Lehren im Thomas-evangelium*. Leiden: Brill.