

Q as a Narrative Gospel

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Introduction

In the 180-year history of the two-document hypothesis, one idea has remained relatively unchanged – that the non-Markan source for Matthew and Luke’s gospels is a collection of sayings of Jesus. I want to suggest that it is rather a narrative gospel like the canonical gospels and not a “sayings gospel” like *Thomas*. In order to demonstrate this I will first survey Q research with an eye toward how we came to conclude that Q is a sayings collection and then offer six reasons for thinking otherwise.

How Q Came to Be Seen as a Sayings Collection

Nineteenth Century

Before Weisse introduced the two-document hypothesis, two key works set the stage for Weisse. **Herbert Marsh** had recognized that many narratives in the synoptic gospels were placed in the same order in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, while many “precepts, parables, and discourses” were found in differing orders and only in Matthew and Luke. Marsh thus proposed an Aramaic Ur-gospel, א, that was a source for the narratives and a second Aramaic source, ב, that was a source for many of the teachings of Jesus.¹ After him **Friedrich Schleiermacher** considered the testimony of Papias to the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, and Schleiermacher concluded that Papias was speaking not of our canonical gospels, but of sources for Mark and Matthew. Because Papias used the word λόγια to refer to what Matthew arranged, Schleiermacher concluded that this was a reference to the source for the five lengthy discourses in Matthew.² Scholars have since recognized that in the second century λόγια was typically used to refer to Scripture or to divine oracles in general,³ whether they are narratives or sayings, but throughout the nineteenth century Schleiermacher’s definition prevailed, and Q was at that time referred to as the *Logia*, influencing scholars toward the view that Q was a collection of sayings.

A few years later Karl Lachmann would give a strong defense of Markan priority that led **Christian Weisse** to develop the two-document hypothesis: Matthew and Luke used Mark’s gospel for some of their material and the *Logia* of Matthew for the other material that they shared.⁴ Weisse recognized that Matthew and Luke shared more than just sayings, and so he explained the preaching of John as sayings of Jesus that were later attributed to John and the temptation of Jesus and the healing

¹ Herbert Marsh, *A Dissertation on the Origin and Composition of Our Three First Canonical Gospels* (London: F. & C. Rivington, 1801), quote from p. 202.

² Friedrich Schleiermacher, “Ueber die Zeugnisse des Papias von unseren ersten beiden Evangelien,” *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 5 (1832): 735-768.

³ See, e.g., Roger Gryson, “A propos du témoignage de Papias sur Matthieu: Le sens du mot ΛΟΓΙΟΝ chez les pères du second siècle,” *ETL* 41 (1965): 530-547.

⁴ Christian Hermann Weisse, *Die evangelische Geschichte: kritisch und philosophisch bearbeitet* (2 vols; Leipzig: Breitkopf und Hartel, 1838).

of the centurion's servant as parables of Jesus that were transformed into narratives.⁵ Weisse's solution did not find wide acceptance and in 1856 he transformed his solution by attributing these narrative elements to *Urmarcus* rather than to Matthew's and Luke's second source.⁶ It was this view that won over **Heinrich Holtzmann**, who gave the most compelling nineteenth century argument for the two-document hypothesis.⁷ Holtzmann writes regarding the narrative elements of the double tradition, "Rightly has Weisse himself withdrawn from his earlier position, because in this way one simply makes out of Λ [=Q] a gospel narrative of very similar character as our canonical Gospels and would need to abandon the unitary character of the second source, according to which it should contain only authentic words of Jesus."⁸ Thus Holtzmann makes the nineteenth century presuppositions clear: Q is a sayings source, and any evidence to the contrary must be explained in a way other than to attribute narrative to Q. *Urmarcus* was that solution for Weisse and Holtzmann.⁹

The author who came the closest to challenging this was **Bernhard Weiss**, who in 1886 noted that "most of [the sayings in Q] had an historical introduction however short, which in [some cases] already extends to a small narrative."¹⁰ But for Weiss, these narrative elements "were undoubtedly intended only to give the occasion on which this or that momentous saying of the Lord was spoken."¹¹ Q "was not a connected historical narrative, but was mainly intended as a collection of the Lord's sayings."¹² Weiss defended his thesis by saying that Papias' words do not mean that the work "was exclusively a collection of sayings," but that it was primarily a collection of sayings.¹³ Thus unlike Weisse and Holtzmann, Weiss is willing to place narrative elements in Q, but like them he sees Q as being what he thinks Papias says Matthew's writing is – a sayings collection.¹⁴

So we see that throughout the nineteenth century, two assumptions – no longer held today – led to the conclusion that Q was a "sayings collection": first, the identification of Q with the *Logia*

⁵ Weisse, *Evangelische Geschichte*, 2:17-26, 53-55.

⁶ Christian Hermann Weisse, *Die Evangelienfrage in ihrem gegenwärtigen Stadium* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1856).

⁷ H. J. Holtzmann, *Die Synoptische Evangelien* (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1863).

⁸ Holtzmann, *Synoptische Evangelien*, 142: "Aber mit Recht hat Weisse selbst seine frühere Aufstellung zurückgenommen, weil man ja auf diese Art aus Λ eine evangelische Erzählung von ganz ähnlichem Gepräge, wie unsere kanonischen Evangelien, machen und den einheitlichen Charakter der zweiten Quelle, wornach sie nur authentische Worte Jesu enthalten sollte, preisgeben müsste."

⁹ As John Kloppenborg would later note, "In both Weisse (of 1856) and Holtzmann the lasting influence of Schleiermacher's logia can be seen, dictating a reconstruction of the second Synoptic source in accordance with an implicit and wholly undefended notion of generic purity: the logia source can only have included sayings" (John S. Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000], 303).

¹⁰ Bernhard Weiss, *A Manual of Introduction to the New Testament* (2 vols.; New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1888), 2:222. Originally published as *Lehrbuch der Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (2 vols.; Berlin: W. Hertz, 1886).

¹¹ Weiss, *Manual*, 230.

¹² Weiss, *Manual*, 235.

¹³ Weiss, *Manual*, 230. For Weiss, Papias' words do "not apply to an evangelical history such as our first Gospel contains, which begins with a detailed account of the infancy and concludes with an uninterrupted narrative of the passion and resurrection, which pursues a didactic aim in its historical matter as in its pragmatic reflections, and plainly represents itself as an original Greek writing" (230).

¹⁴ A bigger exception to this is Alfred Resch, *Die Logia Jesu: nach dem griechischen und hebräischen Text wiederhergestellt: ein Versuch* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1898). Resch viewed Q as a Hebrew (not Aramaic) gospel that was used not only by Matthew and Luke but also by Mark. His reconstruction of the *Logia* had a clear narrative structure, beginning with John's introduction of Jesus and ending with Jesus' death and resurrection. Because his views were so different from the mainstream views, however, he did not have much of an impact on Q scholarship.

referred to by Papias and understood to be a series of sayings, and second, the *Urmarcus* theory that allowed Weisse and Holtzmann to ignore narrative elements in the double tradition. Both of these assumptions were thoroughly challenged at the end of the nineteenth century.

Early Twentieth Century

A drastic shift took place at the turn of the century. Paul Wernle's *Die synoptische Frage* put to rest the notion of *Urmarcus*,¹⁵ and Walter Lock all but buried the idea that Papias was referring to a collection of sayings when he used the word λόγια.¹⁶ Had these observations been made a few years earlier, perhaps the idea that Q is merely a collection of sayings would have come under fire, but both of these assumptions were questioned right after **the discovery of the *Gospel of Thomas*** in 1897, which was initially given the name ΛΟΓΙΑ ΙΗΣΟΥ, the name that had previously been given to Q.¹⁷ Its discoverers recognized that this was not Q, but the parallels were clear to them. In the initial publication of *P.Oxy 1*, Bernard Grenfell and Arthur Hunt wrote: "[W]e may have got for the first time a concrete example of what was meant by the Logia which Papias tells us were compiled by St. Matthew, and the λόγια κυριακά upon which Papias himself wrote a commentary."¹⁸ When Lock challenged this interpretation of Papias, a new name was given to the *Thomas* fragments: ΛΟΓΟΙ ΙΗΣΟΥ, words of Jesus. The link between Q and Matthew's *Logia* was severed, but the idea that Q was a collection of sayings was now supported by new evidence, the existence of an early collection of sayings of Jesus.¹⁹

There were a number of other reasons scholars in the early twentieth century would continue to see Q as a collection of sayings of Jesus. **First, Q began to be limited to the double tradition.** Adolf von Harnack stated, "It is *a priori* probable, indeed quite certain, that much which occurs only in St. Matthew or in St. Luke is derived from Q," but because Harnack wanted certainty about what was in Q, he placed in his reconstruction of the document only what he could "definitely assign to Q."²⁰ Harnack's minimalist approach to Q became the standard for later reconstructions of Q.²¹ But this minimalist approach means that if Matthew, in his effort to insert Q's sayings into the Markan narrative, regularly dropped narrative introductions that were present in Q, then reconstructions of Q would look less like a

¹⁵ Paul Wernle, *Die synoptische Frage* (Freiburg i. B.: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1899).

¹⁶ Walter Lock, "Interpretation of the Text," in *Two Lectures on the "Sayings of Jesus" Recently Discovered at Oxyrhynchus* (ed. Walter Lock and William Sanday; Oxford: Clarendon, 1897): 15-27; here p. 16.

¹⁷ Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt, ΛΟΓΙΑ ΙΗΣΟΥ: *Sayings of our Lord* (London: Henry Frowde for the Egypt Exploration Fund, 1897), republished as "1. ΛΟΓΙΑ ΙΗΣΟΥ" in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Part I* (Graeco-Roman Memoirs 1; London: Egyptian Exploration Fund, 1898), 1-3.

¹⁸ Grenfell and Hunt, ΛΟΓΙΑ ΙΗΣΟΥ, 18.

¹⁹ As Dieter Lührmann would later write, "The discovery of the *Oxyrhynchus Logia* again helped to cut the two-document hypothesis free from the dubious interpretation of the Papias fragments. Now it seemed to be possible, in a fashion modern for this period, to give Q a foundation from archaeological evidence" (Dieter Lührmann, "Q: Sayings of Jesus or Logia?" in *The Gospel Behind the Gospels: Current Studies on Q* [ed. Ronald A. Piper; NovTSup 75; Leiden: Brill, 1995], 97-116, here p. 114).

²⁰ Adolf von Harnack, *The Sayings of Jesus: The Second Source of St. Matthew and St. Luke* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1908), 185.

²¹ Manson was even more minimalistic than Harnack, because he attributed some double tradition material to M-L overlaps rather than to Q (T. W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus: As Recorded in the Gospels According to St. Matthew and St. Luke* [London: SCM, 1950], 21).

narrative than is warranted.²² In fact, John Hawkins argued that a number of the narrative introductions and interruptions of Jesus' discourses that are found in Luke alone came from Q.²³

Second, the role of narrative components in Q was repeatedly downplayed. The stage was set for this when Weiss justified his inclusion of narrative components in Q by arguing that Papias' words regarding Matthew's *Logia* did not require that the book was entirely sayings. Harnack found seven narratives in Q but argued that the temptation narrative "serves as a prelude" and that "in the other six narratives the story serves only as an introduction to the discourse."²⁴ Even Hawkins, who included many more narrative introductions and interruptions to Jesus' discourses, argued that "no narrative of any kind came within [the] scope [of the compiler of Q], except when it was required for the purpose of elucidating the discourses which he gives."²⁵ Other authors would argue that narratives in the double tradition come from a source other than Q since they "would be quite out of place in a collection of discourses and sayings such as [is otherwise found in Q]."²⁶

Third, it was already popular to divide the early church writings into two types: evangelistic and catechetical. The canonical gospels fit in the first category but Q was assumed to fit in the second category.²⁷ For Harnack this made Q more trustworthy than canonical Mark, which had recently been under fire by William Wrede: "In St. Mark an almost complete inability to distinguish between what is primary or secondary, between what is trustworthy or questionable, an apologetic which grasps at all within its reach, to which everything is welcome and right ...; in Q, on the other hand, a many-sidedness in reference to that which is the most important, which quite compensates us for the want of

²² For a critique of Harnack's minimalist approach to Q, see Willoughby Charles Allen, "The Book of Sayings Used by the Editor of the First Gospel," in *Studies in the Synoptic Problem* (ed. William Sanday; Oxford: Clarendon, 1911), 235-286, esp. pp. 235-239.

²³ John C. Hawkins, "Probabilities as to the So-Called Double Tradition of St. Matthew and St. Luke," in *Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, ed. William Sanday (Oxford: Clarendon, 1911), 95-138, esp. p. 124. See also Streeter's argument in the same volume that much of the unique Matthean and unique Lukan material come from Q: Burnett Hillman Streeter, "The Original Extent of Q" in *Studies in the Synoptic Problem* (ed. William Sanday; Oxford: Clarendon, 1911), 184-208. Nevertheless, reconstructions of Q continued to be minimalistic and to reinforce the impression already assumed by Alfred Loisy that Luke "readily invents the surroundings of the discourses that he repeats" (*The Gospel and the Church* [trans. Christopher Home; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912], 71).

²⁴ Harnack, *Sayings*, 228 n. 1.

²⁵ Hawkins, "Probabilities," 128-129

²⁶ Allen, "Book of Sayings," 273. Allen's focus on Matthew to the exclusion of Luke is problematic, for the same passages in Luke repeatedly have narrative settings. Allen recognizes this and assumes that Luke must then have not known Q in the same form that Matthew knew it in, but it is also quite possible, as Hawkins argued in the same volume, that Matthew knew these narratives and omitted them.

²⁷ See, for example, B. W. Bacon, "Logia," in *A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels* (2 vols.; ed. James Hastings, John A. Selbie, and John C. Lambert; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1906), 2:45-49: "The teaching of the Synagogue was divided into (1) Halacha, i.e. 'the Way,' authoritative applications of the Mosaic law, precepts of life, and (2) *Haggada*, i.e. 'tales,' unauthoritative preaching, based mainly on OT narrative. Just so in the primitive Palestinian Church we soon find two types of Gospel composition—(1) the catechetical, for the converted, generally connected with the name of Matthew. Then (2) the evangelistic, for the unconverted, similarly associated with the name of Peter" (47). Similarly Harnack argued that Q was so lacking in Christological interest that "the compilation in Q was intended solely for the Christian community and was addressed to those who did not require the assurance that their Teacher was also the Son of God" (*Sayings*, 234-235, emphasis removed). See also T. W. Manson, "The Life of Jesus: A Study of the Available Materials," in *Studies in the Gospels and Epistles* (ed. Matthew Black; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1962), 13-27: "For what source criticism gives us is two types of document: the narrative and the didactic. The classical representatives of the two types are Mark and Q" (20).

'history.'"²⁸ For Streeter this even explains why Mark contains so little of the Lord's teaching – Mark knew Q and wanted to write a supplement to it. Thus what is in Q is only what was needed for the purposes of Q.²⁹

Fourth, the absence of a passion narrative in the double tradition made it certain for many that Q must not have been a narrative. Streeter saw the lack of a passion narrative as "the fundamental difference between the gospels and Q." He writes: "The narrative of this source must therefore have been wanting in historical climax—no thread of historical continuity could have run through it, binding the end to the beginning; for what climax or what thread of continuity could have existed where the Passion, and the thoughts connected with the Passion, were left out of consideration? Thus Q in the main could only have been a compilation of sayings and discourses of varied content."³⁰

Fifth, it was widely held that during the stage of oral tradition, sayings of Jesus were repeated without a narrative context.³¹ Q was thought to have arisen in the Aramaic-speaking, Palestinian church, whereas narratives were more a feature of the Hellenistic church. This further led to the assumption that the temptation narrative and the healing of the centurion's servant were later additions to Q.³²

Sixth, it was often thought that Q was composed "without conscious art."³³ Q was not a literary accomplishment but was a collection of earlier traditions "without any clearly discernible bias, whether apologetic, didactic, ecclesiastical, national, or anti-national."³⁴ Bultmann would go so far as to see Q as self-contradictory, reflecting various streams of thought.³⁵ Thus the trees were studied without much of a concern for the forest.

Seventh, the emergence of the Proto-Luke thesis allowed many to attribute the traditional nature of the narrative elements in Luke to a source without attributing it to Q. Benjamin Bacon notes that if you compare the non-Markan material in Matthew with that of Luke you find two very different

²⁸ Harnack, *Sayings*, 250. On Mark's invention of the narrative gospel after the composition of Q, see idem, 228-229.

²⁹ Burnett Hillman Streeter, "The Literary Evolution of the Gospels," in *Studies in the Synoptic Problem* (ed. William Sanday; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), 209-227. See esp. p. 212:

The main business of the disciples being to prepare men for His coming by preaching this new righteousness, they must before long have needed a selection of the Master's teaching on the nature of this new righteousness, on its relation to that taught by the Scribes and Pharisees, and on the time and manner of His coming. It would never occur to any one to write a biography—'a Gospel' in the later sense. Did they know of biographies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the rest of the prophets? Was it the biographies, was it not rather the epigrammatic sayings of the Rabbis that were cherished in their Schools? It would be on the analogy of books like Isaiah and Jeremiah that Christians would first record the Master's work. And since among the sayings of the more important Old Testament prophets occurs an account of the moment when each received the prophetic call, we rather expect to find that Q begins with a record of this moment in our Lord's life—in His case the Baptism and Voice from Heaven.

³⁰ Harnack, *Sayings*, 170, emphasis mine. See also Martin Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel* (trans. B. L. Woolf; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), 244: "In the whole of the Q material recognizable by us there is no reference to the story of the Passion. If the tendency of one source were toward narrative, we ought surely to expect a Passion story."

³¹ See esp. Manson, *Sayings of Jesus*, 13.

³² Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1963), 328.

³³ Adolf Jülicher, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1904), 356.

³⁴ Harnack, *Sayings*, 171.

³⁵ Rudolf K. Bultmann, "Was lässt die Spruchquelle über die Urgemeinde erkennen?" *Oldenburgisches Kirchenblatt* 19 (1913): 35-44.

works: “in the former it is almost exclusively the λόγοι, arranged in groups as such; whereas in Lk. the logian material does not stand apart from narrative, but is connected with and framed into a narrative independent of Mk. and found in no other Gospel.” Bacon observes that the narrative settings do not seem to be Luke’s own composition and therefore concludes “that narrative and discourse have come down together from the earliest and most authentic sources.”³⁶ The possibility that these sources included Q, however, is not really entertained. Instead Bacon holds that it was Proto-Luke that combined Q with these narrative elements. Similar ideas were expressed in the Oxford *Studies on the Synoptic Problem* as well as in Streeter’s *Four Gospels* and in the works of Vincent Taylor.³⁷

Finally, the rise of form criticism turned attention away from Q as a literary composition toward the traditions in Q. This also led to a lull in discussions of Q that would last until the 1960s.³⁸

Late Twentieth Century

Heinz Eduard Tödt’s 1956 dissertation birthed a new excitement about Q. Tödt investigated the Son of Man sayings in the Gospels and noticed that Q had no *suffering* Son of Man sayings. This led Tödt to conclude that Q was not a supplement to the kerygma but was itself the central message of a community whose intention was “to take up again the proclamation of Jesus’ message.”³⁹ This had a profound impact on Q scholarship, which now began to turn its attention to the “Q community,” often understood to be a Christian community with no interest in the passion and resurrection of Christ. Because Q’s interest was in Jesus’ teachings, the thought that Q might be a narrative was moved farther from the attention of biblical scholarship.

At this time scholars were noticing a prevailing interest in Wisdom in Q,⁴⁰ which led **James M. Robinson** to conclude that the genre of Q was a wisdom genre, which he called λόγοι σοφῶν or “words of the wise,” of which Proverbs, *m. ’Abot.*, *Thomas*, and Q are all examples.⁴¹ **Helmut Koester** further compared Q and *Thomas* and found that *Thomas* was missing the apocalyptic expectations of Q, which he argued were a secondary development. This led Koester to conclude that *Thomas* represented “the most original gattung of the Jesus tradition” and that this genre “became acceptable to the early church only by a radical alteration, not only of the form, but also of the theological intention of this primitive gattung ... through [Matthew’s and Luke’s] imposing the Marcan narrative-kerygma frame upon the

³⁶ Bacon, “Logia,” 48.

³⁷ Streeter, “Original Extent,” 184-208; Allen, “Book of Sayings,” 281; Burnett Hillman Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins, Treating of the Manuscript Tradition, Sources, Authorship, & Dates* (London: Macmillan, 1924), 199-222; Vincent Taylor, *Behind the Third Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1926).

³⁸ I did not address here Marie-Joseph Lagrange, *Évangile selon saint Marc* (EBib; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1911), civ: “Il est clair en particulier que les Logia, tels qu’ils ont été restitués par M. Harnack, ne peuvent représenter la source primitive. Aucun livre, si ce n’est un recueil de proverbes, n’a pu être écrit de la sorte et il est impossible de supposer que presque toutes les sentences de Jésus ont été proposées sans le cadre qui explique leur origine.” Cf. Marie-Joseph Lagrange, “Les sources du troisième évangile,” *RB* 4 (1895): 5-22; idem., “Les sources du troisième évangile,” *RB* 5 (1896): 5-38.

Lagrange saw Q as an Aramaic document very similar to our canonical Matthew that was used by Mark in composing his gospel in Greek and then by the authors of Matthew and Luke in composing their Greek gospels. Thus Lagrange did see Q as a narrative gospel. His ideas, however, did not find much of a following.

³⁹ Heinz Eduard Tödt, *The Son of Man in the Synoptic Tradition* (London: SCM; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965), 268.

⁴⁰ Ulrich Wilckens, *Weisheit und Torheit: Eine exegetisch-religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu 1. Kor. 1 und 2* (BHTh 26; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1959), 163–64, 197-200.

⁴¹ James M. Robinson, “ΛΟΓΟΙ ΣΟΦΩΝ: Zur Gattung der Spruchquelle Q,” *Zeit und Geschichte: Dankesgabe an Rudolf Bultmann zum 80. Geburtstag* (ed. Erich Dinkler; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1964), 77–96; translated and revised as “LOGOI SOPHON: On the Gattung of Q,” in *Trajectories through Early Christianity* (ed. James M. Robinson and Helmut Koester; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 71–113.

sayings tradition represented by Q.”⁴² We see here that the *Gospel of Thomas* was still a major factor in conclusions regarding the genre of Q.

But there was a problem with the connection between Q and other supposed examples of the genre λόγοι σοφῶν, namely that “almost all of the examples which Robinson adduces are, from a form-critical and history-of-tradition standpoint, much more homogenous than Q.”⁴³ It was this problem that **John Kloppenborg** sought to remedy in his examination of the formation of Q. Kloppenborg noted “two major types of sayings [in Q]: on one hand, prophetic sayings (often framed as chriae) which announce the impending judgment of this generation and which evince the Deuteronomistic understanding of history; and, on the other, community-directed exhortations concerning self-definition and general comportment toward the world, discipleship and mission, and the prospect of persecution and death.”⁴⁴ Because themes from the former are sometimes embedded in sections devoted to the latter and not vice versa, Kloppenborg argues that the exhortations are older and that the apocalyptic sections and interpolations are due to a later redaction of Q.⁴⁵ Kloppenborg also holds that the temptation narrative was introduced at a third stage as a prologue, similar to those found in Ankhsheshonq and Ahikar.⁴⁶ By stratifying Q in this way, Kloppenborg has moved the narrative components of Q out of the formational layer (though he still has the *chreiai* of Q 9:57-60 in the formational layer), strengthening the case that Q was – at least initially – not written as a biography. But Kloppenborg sees Q as “moving toward a narrative or biographical cast” over the course of its formation, though in its final stage “[i]t is still primarily a speech or sayings collection.”⁴⁷

The “wisdom” designation of Robinson and, to a slightly lesser extent, the stratification of Kloppenborg have dominated research for the past generation, but some have raised problems with both conclusions. **Eugene Boring** notes that the sayings in Q are not “timeless truth[s]” but are oriented to the present/future as prophecy and that “Q is probably closer to Jeremiah than to Proverbs, related more to traditional prophetic forms than to wisdom.”⁴⁸ Boring thus sees Q as a prophetic book.⁴⁹ Others have argued for different strata of Q,⁵⁰ and some have argued that Q is too unified to have been

⁴² Helmut Koester, “GNOMAI DIAPHOROI: The Origin and Nature of Diversification in the History of Early Christianity,” in *Trajectories through Early Christianity* (ed. Helmut Koester and James M. Robinson; Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1971), 114-157, here p. 135. See also his “One Jesus and Four Primitive Gospels” in the same volume (pp. 158-204).

⁴³ John S. Kloppenborg, “The Formation of Q and Antique Instructional Genres.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 105 (1986): 443-462, here p. 446; repeated in John S. Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 30.

⁴⁴ Kloppenborg, “Formation,” 454.

⁴⁵ Kloppenborg, “Formation,” 454; cf. idem, *Formation*, 171-245.

⁴⁶ Kloppenborg, “Formation,” 462; idem, *Formation*, 246-262.

⁴⁷ Kloppenborg, *Formation*, 262.

⁴⁸ M. Eugene Boring, *Sayings of the Risen Jesus: Christian Prophecy in the Synoptic Tradition* (SNTSMS 46; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 181. Boring too sees the historical components of Q as a late development: “As sayings circulated singly or in clusters, there was a tendency for them to create a historicizing frame for themselves, whether this was some brief introductory formula, such as καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, or a miniature narrative of which the apothegmic saying was the point and generating core” (ibid., 180).

⁴⁹ Cf. Gerd Theissen, *The New Testament: A Literary History* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 40-41: “These narrative sections are indicative: we know of no wisdom books with narrative introduction (cf. Proverbs, Sirach, Pseudo-Phocylides), but we do have prophetic books with narrative texts such as the call of Isaiah (Isa 6:1-8) or Amos’s conflict in Bethel (Amos 7:10-17). And yet, in the prophetic books as in Q, there is no account of the death of the prophet. In prophetic books the narratives legitimate the prophet through his calling and describe his conflicts. ... Q is therefore a prophetic writing containing wisdom sayings.”

⁵⁰ For example, see Siegfried Schulz, *Q: Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972), 7-9; Migaku Sato, *Q und Prophetie: Studien zur Gattungs- und Traditions-geschichte der Quelle Q* (WUNT 2/29;

composed by different redactors at different times.⁵¹ **Richard A. Horsley** highlights a number of problems with the designation λόγοι σοφῶν and a number of ways in which the supposed sapiential layer is prophetic and apocalyptic. Horsley argues that the view of Q as a collection of sayings is the product of form criticism's tendency to read sayings in isolated fashion and that Q should rather be seen as "a sequence of discourses."⁵² **James D. G. Dunn** argues that Kloppenborg's earliest layer is an oral rather than a written layer.⁵³ This would be significant because it would place the narrative components back in the formational layer of Q as a written document. Nevertheless, Robinson's wisdom classification and Kloppenborg's stratification remain the majority view among Q scholars and are sometimes assumed without explanation in new works on Q. But in recent years the possibility that Q is a narrative has emerged, and so we must consider how this concept has arisen.

More Recent Prospects

In 1988 two studies were published that highlighted the narrative elements of Q. **James G. Williams** notes the tendency in Q to place parables within chreiai and argues therefore that Q "is *not* a collection of sayings of the wise, but parable-chreia collection that is well on its way toward the form of the narrative gospel."⁵⁴ Williams contends that Q "is considerably closer to the canonical narrative gospels, particularly Mark, than to the Gospel of Thomas."⁵⁵ Likewise, **F. Gerald Downing** notes that Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* consists "largely of sayings."⁵⁶ Downing sees a number of differences, but notes overall that Q looks more like the Cynic *Lives* than like the *Gospel of Thomas*. He therefore concludes that "the *Gospel of Thomas* represents a deflection of the 'natural' trajectory of 'Q.'"⁵⁷

Shortly after these studies, **John Kloppenborg** published a study of the beginning of Q. Kloppenborg recognizes an allusion to the Lot story in Q 3:2, which "helps to establish a sacred map in which the cities, especially Jerusalem, are negatively valued and the periphery—John's wilderness and Gentile regions—is represented as threatening and overthrowing the center."⁵⁸ Thus, "the beginning of Q helps to define a 'narrative world.'"⁵⁹ Kloppenborg also speaks of "plotted time" and "narrative space" within Q, but he argues that this "does not, of course, imply that Q employed a narrative framework, or that there is a plot which defines the interactions of the principal characters within space and time."⁶⁰

Tübingen: Mohr, 1988); Heinz Schürmann, "Zur Kompositionsgeschichte der Redenquelle: Beobachtungen an der lukanischen Q-Verlage," in *Der Treue Gottes trauen: Beiträge zum Werk des Lukas: Für Gerhard Schneider* (ed. C. Bussman and W. Radl; Freiburg: Herder, 1991), 325-342; Arland D. Jacobson, *The First Gospel: An Introduction to Q* (Foundations & Facets; Sonoma: Polebridge, 1992); Dale C. Allison Jr., *The Jesus Tradition in Q* (Harrisburg: Trinity, 1997), 30-33.

⁵¹ Alan Kirk, *The Composition of the Sayings Source: Genre, Synchrony, and Wisdom Redaction in Q* (Novum Testamentum Supplements 91; Leiden: Brill Academic, 1998), 399; Harry T. Fleddermann, *Q: A Reconstruction and Commentary* (Biblical Tools and Studies; Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 172-180.

⁵² Richard A. Horsley with Jonathan A. Draper, *Whoever Hears You Hears Me: Prophets, Performance, and Tradition in Q* (Harrisburg: Trinity, 1999), 61-93.

⁵³ James D. G. Dunn, "Q¹ as Oral Tradition," in *The Written Gospel*, G. N. Stanton Festschrift (ed. Marcus Bockmuehl and Donald A. Hagner; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 45-69.

⁵⁴ James G. Williams, "Parable and Chreia: From Q to Narrative Gospel," *Semeia* 43 (1988): 85-114, here p. 109.

⁵⁵ Williams, "Parable and Chreia," 110.

⁵⁶ F. Gerald Downing, "Quite Like Q: A Genre for 'Q': The 'Lives' of Cynic Philosophers," *Biblica* 69 (1988): 196-225.

⁵⁷ Downing, "Quite Like Q," 224.

⁵⁸ John S. Kloppenborg, "City and Wasteland: Narrative World and the Beginning of the Sayings Gospel (Q)," *Semeia* 52 (1990): 145-160, here p. 145.

⁵⁹ Kloppenborg, "City and Wasteland," 145.

⁶⁰ Kloppenborg, "City and Wasteland," 146.

But **Harry Fleddermann** argues that Q does not merely “have narrative features” but is itself a narrative.⁶¹ He considers J. Hillis Miller’s taxonomy of narratives according to which all narratives have three basic elements: (1) a sequence of events that leads to a change or reversal of the initial situation; (2) at least three characters – a protagonist, an antagonist, and a witness; and (3) “artistic patterning.”⁶² Fleddermann observes that all of these elements are in Q. Fleddermann further argues that the “author of Q” has created gaps and ellipses in which “the discourse stops but story-time continues to unfold,” so that the reader will naturally fill in these gaps with events from the life of Jesus that are alluded to in the speeches.⁶³ Even the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus are anticipated in the temptation narrative, which the author of Q crafted as “a symbolic, mythic flashforward.” It is this understanding of Q that leads Fleddermann in his commentary on Q to argue that “Q contains all the elements of narrative—plot, character, setting, narrative voice, theme, and tone.”⁶⁴

Fleddermann is on the right track here, but he falls into the same trap that many have fallen in since Harnack in that he limits Q to the double tradition.⁶⁵ A much stronger case for Q as a narrative gospel can be made when we consider the following six factors:

1. when Luke speaks of his sources he calls them “narratives”;
2. Q narrates events;
3. Matthew’s use of Q may have caused him to omit other narrative elements;
4. there are significant minor agreements in Markan narrative passages;
5. “Q contains all the elements of narrative”; and
6. Q is not primarily about wisdom but about the Coming One.

We will tackle each of these points in turn.

1. When Luke Speaks of His Sources He Calls Them “Narratives”

Luke begins his gospel with the comment that “many have undertaken to compile a narrative [διήγησις] of the events fulfilled among us.” Most scholars agree that Luke refers at least to Mark and Q here,⁶⁶ but this would imply that Q is a full-blown narrative. Luke elsewhere uses the cognate verb, διηγέομαι, to refer to narrating God’s mighty deeds.⁶⁷ Robert Tannehill comments: “A διήγησις is a longer narrative composed of a number of events, differing from a διήγημα, which concerns a single

⁶¹ Harry T. Fleddermann, “The Plot of Q,” *ETL* 88 (2012): 43-69, here p. 44.

⁶² Fleddermann, “Plot of Q,” 45-46, following J. Hillis Miller, “Narrative,” in *Critical Terms for Literary Study* (ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 66-79.

⁶³ Fleddermann, “Plot of Q,” 51; cf. p. 46. See also Michael Labahn, “Was ‘Lücken’ berichten: Exemplarische Beobachtungen zu narrativen ‘gaps’ in Q,” in *Metaphor, Narrative, and Parables in Q* (ed. Dieter T. Roth; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 163-188.

⁶⁴ Fleddermann, *Q*, 106.

⁶⁵ Cf. Fleddermann, *Q*, 74: “[E]ven though Q as a whole disappeared, the entire contents of Q survive because Matthew and Luke preserved all the Q material in the double tradition material of their gospels.” See my critique of this tendency in David B. Sloan, “Lost Portions of Q Found ... in the Lukan Travel Narrative” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Chicago, Ill., November 2012; online: <http://www.davidbsloan.com/lostportions.pdf>); David B. Sloan, “Matthew and Luke: Expanders or Abbreviators of Q?” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, San Diego, Calif., November 2014; online: <http://www.reconstructingQ.com/stats.php>); David B. Sloan, “The τίς ἐξ ὑμῶν Similitudes and the Extent of Q,” *JSNT* 38 (2016): forthcoming (online: <http://www.reconstructingQ.com/tis-ex-hymon.pdf>).

⁶⁶ See, for example, François Bovon, *Luke* (3 vols.; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002-2013), 1:19.

⁶⁷ Joel Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 38. διηγέομαι occurs in Luke 8:39; 9:10; Acts 8:33; 9:27; 12:17; 16:40.

event.”⁶⁸ We know that Q contains events – a healing, an exorcism, encounters with opponents, encounters with potential followers, an encounter with Satan, likely a baptism, and possibly other events that did not make it into the double tradition. Therefore it is not surprising that Luke would be speaking of Q when he says, “many have undertaken to compile a διήγησις.” Fitzmyer surveys the use of this term in Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates, the *Letter of Aristeas*, Josephus, Plutarch, Lucian, and 2 Maccabees and concludes that the term “was often used in classical and Hellenistic Greek literature of historical writing.” He notes that “[e]tymologically, it would denote a composition that ‘leads through to an end,’ a comprehensive story which aims at being something more than a mere collection of notes or a compilation of anecdotes.”⁶⁹ This is indeed what we see in Q, which not only contains narratives but also follows a narrative sequence, as will be shown below.

2. Q Narrates Events

Q begins by narrating John’s ministry in “all the region of the Jordan.” There was likely an account of Jesus’ baptism after this,⁷⁰ followed by the temptation narrative and a reference to Jesus being in Nazareth. We then have the Sermon on the Mount/Plain. In both Matthew and Luke Jesus goes up on a mountain (Matt 5:1; Luke 6:12) and calls his disciples (Matt 5:1; Luke 6:13-16), though Luke adds that Jesus then came down to a level place to deliver the sermon (perhaps influenced by Mark 3:7-10 here, where Jesus goes down to the sea).⁷¹ Matthew and Luke also agree that the sermon takes place after Jesus heals the multitudes that are coming to him (Matt 4:23-25//Luke 6:17-19). These details are often not included in reconstructions of Q because the wording is different, but the same events transpire, suggesting that Q has narrated this. After the sermon Matthew and Luke agree that Jesus heals the centurion’s servant. While Harnack is correct that the point of this narrative is Jesus’ words at the end (“I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith”),⁷² we cannot ignore the fact that these words are set in a narrative context. Then John sends his disciples to Jesus to ask if Jesus is the one who was to come, alluding back to the event of John’s initial preaching at the beginning of Q. Q also includes two or three encounters Jesus has with potential followers and at least one exorcism. Q 3-9 leaves no reason to doubt that Q is a narrative. It is the final 70% of Q that gives the impression that Q is just a collection of sayings and discourses. Here we find only one narrated event in the double

⁶⁸ Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation* (2 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1991-1994), 1:10.

⁶⁹ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* (2 vols.; Anchor Bible 28AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1981-1985), 1:292.

⁷⁰ So Harnack, *Sayings*, 310-314; Bernhard Weiss, *Die Quellen des Lukasevangeliums* (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta, 1907), 191; Streeter, *Four Gospels*, 188; A. M. Hunter, *The Work and Words of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1950), 132; Heinz Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium* (HTKNT 3/1; Freiburg: Herder & Herder, 1969), 197, 218; Paul Hoffmann, *Studien zur Theologie der Logienquelle* (NTAbh NF 8; 2d ed.; Münster: Aschendorff, 1975), 4; Arland Dean Jacobson, “Wisdom Christology in Q” (Ph.D. diss., Claremont Graduate School, 1978), 35; Petros Vassiliadis, “The Nature and Extent of the Q Document,” *NovT* 20 (1978): 49-73; John Dominic Crossan, *In Fragments: The Aphorisms of Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 342; Walter Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (THKNT 3; 10th ed.; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1984), 106-107; Dieter Zeller, *Kommentar zur Logienquelle* (Stuttgarter kleiner Kommentar, Neues Testament 21; Stuttgart: KBW, 1984), 23; etc.

⁷¹ John Kloppenborg interestingly notes that “while Q 6.20 directs the Sermon to disciples, Q never indicates how Jesus had acquired those disciples (or those sent out in Q 10.3)” (Kloppenborg, “On Dispensing with Q? Goodacre on the Relation of Luke to Matthew,” *New Testament Studies* 49 (2003): 210-236, here p. 234). Of course, Q does not need to mention this, but if Luke 6:12-16 reflects something from Q that Matthew has omitted since it is later in Mark, then this slight problem disappears.

⁷² Harnack, *Sayings*, 228 n. 1.

tradition, but this may be more an effect of Matthew's use of Q than a reflection on the nature of Q itself (see below). The first 30% of Q consistently narrates events.

3. Matthew's Use of Q May Have Caused Him to Omit Other Narrative Elements

An analysis of the *Critical Edition of Q* reveals that in Chapters 3-9, 955 of the 1,152 words (83%) are words of Jesus or of another character.⁷³ In Chapters 10-22, 2,566 out of 2,618 words (98%) are words of Jesus or of another character. At one point there are 1,654 words of Jesus in a row (Q 11.29-17.6) – almost four times the length of the Sermon on the Plain! It is unlikely that the nature of Q shifts between Chapter 9 and Chapter 10. Perhaps a better explanation is that *the Critical Edition of Q* does not reflect the original text of Q as well after Q 9:60. A reason for this immediately suggests itself – the majority of passages after Q 9:60 get placed by Matthew in the lengthier speeches of Jesus, where the narrative introductions do not belong.⁷⁴ Every saying of Jesus in Q has a narrative context in Luke. Is it possible that Luke does not, to use the words of Loisy, “readily invent[] the surroundings of the discourses that he repeats,”⁷⁵ but that he actually preserves these from Q? Two points would suggest that this is the case: (1) this would make Q 10-22 look more like Q 3-9 in form; and (2) this would explain the presence of Q-like, non-Lukan style in these verses.

(1) Each of the Q passages in Luke 10-22 is placed in a narrative context. We have already noted that 83% of the words in *CritEd* 3-9 are direct discourse, but 98% of the words in *CritEd* 10-22 are direct discourse. Had the *Critical Edition of Q* included Luke's narrative settings for all of the Q passages in Luke 10-22, the latter percentage would drop to 84%. The disparity in the concentration of words of Jesus would be entirely removed! This suggests that Luke may have actually preserved Q's introduction to these sayings (with slight modifications to the wording).

(2) This is further suggested by a consideration of the style and vocabulary of these narrative settings. Joachim Jeremias repeatedly notes unlukan features in these sections. Space permits us to address only two of the passages – the woes against the Pharisees and lawyers in Luke 11:37-54 and Jesus' dining in the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees in Luke 14:1-35.

⁷³ Cf. James M. Robinson, Paul Hoffmann, and John S. Kloppenborg, *The Critical Edition of Q: Synopsis Including the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Mark and Thomas with English, German, and French* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000).

⁷⁴ There are nine exceptions to this, but in five of these exceptions (Q 12:10, 54-56; 13:28-30; 14:16-24; 16:16) the saying is attached in Q to another saying that is placed in one of Matthew's larger discourses, and so Matthew has already removed the saying from its context because of his creation of larger discourses. Two of the other four exceptions actually retain their narrative settings in Matthew (Q 11:15, 17-23; Q 11:16, 29-30). Matthew places the saying from Q 17:6 in Mark's narrative of the boy with the unclean spirit to highlight the disciples' "little faith" (Matt 17:20). This may suggest Matthew's knowledge of the disciples' request to increase their faith, which precedes this Q saying in Luke (Luke 17:5). Thus, though Matthew has not preserved the narrative introduction that Luke preserves, he seems to know it. The final exception is Q 22:28, 30. Matthew places this in the narrative of the rich man who asks about eternal life, immediately after Peter points out that the disciples have left everything to follow Jesus (Matt 19:27-30). Q 22:28, 30 is the most profound statement regarding the role of the twelve in the kingdom, and so it provides a fitting response to Peter's concern. In Luke these verses are found in the Last Supper, where Luke seems to follow a source other than Mark, though Matthew follows Mark pretty closely. It is possible that we have a Mark-Q overlap here and that Matthew had planned on following Mark rather than trying to harmonize the two, and so he placed this extra saying from Q in a different appropriate context, but this is of course uncertain. This is the only exception where it can be said that Matthew's reason for losing the setting of the saying is not immediately clear.

⁷⁵ Loisy, *Gospel and the Church*, 71.

The *Critical Edition of Q* includes 11:39-44, 46b-52 in Q but not verses 37-38 and 45-46a. It is acknowledged that there was likely some introduction to the pericope (verse 39a is given with question marks around it in the *Critical Edition of Q*), but it is thought that we cannot have much confidence what that introduction was, and so an ellipsis is given in verse 39a. But by doing this it is not as clear in the *Critical Edition* that narration happens here, reinforcing the false impression that Q is merely a collection of words of Jesus. In Luke's version of the pericope we have a Pharisee ask Jesus to dine with him and then become astonished when Jesus does not wash his hands. This is a fitting introduction to Q 11:39-41 in which Jesus criticizes the Pharisees for washing the outside of dish but not the inside. Did Luke *invent* this introduction or was it already present in Q? We should note that the structure is similar to Q 9:57-60, where one person speaks (or in this case is merely astonished), Jesus answers, and then another person responds, and Jesus gives an answer to him. In fact, in Q 9:57-60 the format is as follows:

A καὶ εἶπέν τις αὐτῷ· ... [Q 9:57 (*CritEd*)]
 B καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ... [Q 9:58 (*CritEd*)]
 A' ἕτερος δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ... [Q 9:59 (*CritEd*)]
 B' εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ·... [Q 9:60 (*CritEd*)]

Luke does not give speech of the Pharisee (A) at 11:38 but says that he was astonished. But then we have:

B εἶπεν δὲ ὁ κύριος πρὸς αὐτόν· ... [Luke 11:39a]
 A' Ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ τις τῶν νομικῶν λέγει αὐτῷ· ... [Luke 11:45]
 B' ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· ... [Luke 11:46a]

Luke regularly changes καὶ εἶπέν αὐτῷ to εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτόν as well as ὁ Ἰησοῦς to ὁ κύριος. Thus Luke's source for 11:39a may have been identical to the wording in Q 9:58.⁷⁶ Furthermore, Luke's actual wording betrays stylistic decisions that Luke is unlikely to have made but that reflect Q.⁷⁷ Jeremias notes five unlukan elements in verses 37-39a, 45-46a. First, Luke does not like the historical present. He eliminates 92 of Mark's 93 historical present-tense verbs. Therefore the present tense ἐρωτᾷ in verse 37 has more likely come from Luke's source than from his own mind. Second, the use of ὅπως after ἐρωτάω is likewise unlukan. Third, in verbs related to table fellowship, Luke often changes Mark's ἀνα-composites to κατα-composites, so it is hardly likely that in creating his own introduction to this Q pericope he would use the word ἀναπίπτω. Fourth, the verb ἀριστάω (Luke 11:37) and the noun ἄριστον (11:38) appear nowhere in Acts or in Luke's redaction of Mark; Luke uses different words to refer to a meal. Ἄριστον occurs in the NT only in Matt 22:4 (= Q 14:7); Luke 14:12 (likely also from Q); and here. Finally, Luke elsewhere constructs the intransitive θαυμάζω either absolutely or with ἐπί + dative; nowhere else does Luke use θαυμάζω + ὅτι. Therefore it is hard to hold that Luke created verses 37-39a to introduce Q 11:39b-44 and verses 45-46a to introduce Q 11:46b-52; they were likely already present in Q. The conclusion in verses 53-54 much more closely reflects Luke's style and interests and may be redactional, but the sayings in Q 11:39b-44, 46b-52 were not isolated sayings in a collection; they were likely part of a narrative of Jesus' experience at the house of a Pharisee.

The same can be seen in Luke 14:1-35. Jeremias notes a series of unlukan features in Luke 14:1-6, the narrative the sets up the sayings in Q 14:5, 11, 16-21, 23. First, clauses are connected by the word καὶ nine times in these six verses and by the word δέ only once (14:4), going against Luke's own practice

⁷⁶ Luke does not make this change in Luke 9:58, but countless other examples can be found of Luke making these changes, both to Mark and to Q. See Joachim Jeremias, *Die Sprache des Lukasevangeliums. Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 33.

⁷⁷ Jeremias, *Sprache*, 205-206.

of connecting clauses with δέ rather than καί.⁷⁸ Such a feature is characteristic of Q.⁷⁹ Second, Luke uncharacteristically uses the Hebraism ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ in 14:2, which is repeatedly found in Q (7:27; 10:21; 11:52; 12:8 [2x]; 12:9 [2x]; 15:10).⁸⁰ Third, Luke uses ἄνθρωπος like an indefinite pronoun as he does in 14:2 only when he is following his source, as he does with Q 6:48, 49; 7:25; 13:19.⁸¹ Fourth, ἀποκριθεὶς with a verb of diction is unlukan. This expression occurs repeatedly in Q, often with εἶπεν as the main verb, as in Luke 14:2 (cf. Q 4:4, 8, 12; 7:6, 22; 11:29; 13:25; 17:20). Fifth, Luke gets the designation of Jesus' opponents as νομικοὶ from tradition. I have argued elsewhere that Q is the source of every reference to νομικοὶ in the Gospels.⁸² Four of the other five uses in Luke are in Q passages (Q 7:30; 11:45, 46, 52) and the fifth is in a passage that should be included in Q based on minor agreements, including the agreement with Matthew on the use of this word (Luke 10:25//Matt 22:35).⁸³ Sixth, the double question in Luke 14:3 is not something Luke would write on his own. This too is a regular feature of Q.⁸⁴ Thus the six unlukan features Jeremias notes in these verses are standard features of Q. To be sure, there are also Lukanisms in these verses, but this is to be expected if Luke is redacting his source. Known Q texts combine Lukanisms and unlukan elements in a similar way to this passage.

The same is true of the transition from the teaching of Jesus in verses 12-14 to the teaching of Jesus in verses 16-24.⁸⁵ The reference in verse 15 to "those who reclined with him" assumes the narrative in Luke 14:1-6. Jeremias notes that when Luke is redacting his source or writing his own account, he uses the κατα- prefix with words referring to reclining, whereas when he is following his source he uses the ἀνα- prefix as he does in the word συνανακειμένων.⁸⁶ Jeremias also argues that the writing of a beatitude without a form of εἶναι is unlukan.⁸⁷ Notably, beatitudes are constructed like this in Q 6:20, 21 (2x); [11:27-28]; 12:43. Furthermore, in the final transition of the chapter (Luke 14:25), which connects Q 14:16-24 to Q 14:26-27, Luke uses the word στραφεῖς. Jeremias notes that Luke uses the word ἐπιστρέψας in his own compositions (Acts 9:40; 16:18) and so the use of στραφεῖς here reflects Luke's use of a tradition.⁸⁸ If Luke is not composing the transition between Q 14:16-24 and Q 14:26-27, then Luke must be getting the transition also from Q. Notably Luke has the same expression in another Q passage, Luke 7:9. Thus it appears that it is not just Luke 14:5, 11, 16-22, 24, 26-27, 33-35 that is from Q but also the narrative components that bind these sayings together.⁸⁹

We know that the narrative settings of the sayings in Luke 11:14-36 were taken from Q (so *CritEd*). The other sayings in Luke 10-22 are found in a narrative context, and we have demonstrated

⁷⁸ Jeremias, *Sprache*, 235-236.

⁷⁹ Fleddermann, *Q*, 99.

⁸⁰ Luke's dislike of the expression is so great that he removes it in 11:52; 15:10; and twice in 12:9. The *Critical Edition of Q* rightly retains it in each of these places.

⁸¹ Jeremias, *Sprache*, 92-93. He also gets this at times from Mark (Luke 4:33; 6:6; 9:25; 20:9; 22:10) and from the source for his infancy narrative (Luke 2:25).

⁸² Sloan, "Lost Portions."

⁸³ There is a textual variant in Matthew on this word, but the external evidence strongly supports the inclusion of this word in Matthew.

⁸⁴ Fleddermann, *Q*, 97.

⁸⁵ The first of these is not typically thought to be in Q, but the second is. There are many parallels between the first of these passages and known Q passages. For example, Luke 14:12 is reminiscent of Q 6:34-35, and "the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind" in Luke 14:13 are the same groups that are mentioned in Q 7:22 and 14:21 ("crippled" appears only in the latter).

⁸⁶ Jeremias, *Sprache*, 167.

⁸⁷ Jeremias, *Sprache*, 59.

⁸⁸ Jeremias, *Sprache*, 155.

⁸⁹ I have argued elsewhere that Luke 14:28-32 is from Q (Sloan, "τίς ἐξ ὑμῶν Similitudes").

that in two of these cases Luke has most likely gotten the narrative settings from Q. Matthew omits these settings because he places the sayings of Jesus in larger discourses. This suggests that Q 10-22, like Q 3-9, is a series of narratives. These narratives have a heavy concentration of words of Jesus (over 80%), but they are still narratives.

4. There Are Significant Minor Agreements in Markan Narrative Passages

One of the biggest objections to the Q thesis has been the presence of minor agreements between Matthew and Luke against Mark. To be sure, the majority of minor agreements are insignificant. Mark regularly begins sentences with *καί*; Matthew and Luke often replace *καί* with *δέ*. Sometimes Matthew makes this improvement when Luke doesn't; sometimes Luke makes this improvement when Matthew doesn't, and inevitably sometimes they both make this improvement.⁹⁰ But some of the minor agreements are more significant, especially in the following pericopes:

1. the healing of the leper (Matt 8:1-4//Mark 1:40-45//Luke 5:12-16);
2. the calming of the storm (Matthew 8:18-27//Mark 4:35-41//Luke 8:22-25);
3. the feeding of the five thousand (Matt 14:13-14//Luke 9:11; cf. Mark 6:33-34); and
4. the passion narrative

There are numerous minor agreements in the healing of the leper (Matt 8:1-4//Mark 1:40-45//Luke 5:12-16). Both Matthew and Luke add the interjection *ἰδοῦ* and the vocative *κύριε*. Depending on a textual variant in Mark, Matthew may be adding that the leper is "coming to worship him" while Luke is adding that the leper is "falling on his face."⁹¹ Both Matthew and Luke have *ἤψατο αὐτοῦ λέγων* where Mark has *αὐτοῦ ἤψατο καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ*. Matthew and Luke agree in omitting the word *σπλαγχνισθεῖς* and in changing the spelling of *εὐθύς* to *εὐθέως*. Some of these changes would be insignificant on their own, but the number of agreements is striking. Notably Matthew has this passage sandwiched between two Q passages (and not where it would be in his order of following Mark!). Shortly after these Q passages Jesus gives as evidence to the disciples of John that he heals lepers. It may be that this passage was here in Q but overlapped Mark enough that since Luke had already copied the story from Mark in Luke 5:12-16 he skipped it after the Sermon on the Plain, but the Q version affected the way he wrote the story in Luke 5:12-16.

In the calming of the storm (Matthew 8:18-27//Mark 4:35-41//Luke 8:22-25) we see a number of minor agreements. Matthew 8:24 adds *ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ* where Luke 8:23 adds *εἰς τὴν λίμνην*. Matthew 8:25 agrees with Luke 8:24 in adding the word *προσελθόντες*. Both Matthew and Luke change Mark's *διδάσκαλε*, one to *κύριε* and the other to its synonym, *ἐπιστάτα*. Both omit the words of Jesus in Mark, *σιῶπα, πεφίμωσο*. And both add the word *ἐθαύμασαν* to the response of the disciples. Matthew and Luke may both be influenced by another account of this miracle.

In the feeding of the five thousand (Matthew 14:13-21//Mark 6:30-44//Luke 9:10-17) Matthew adds the word *ἀνεχώρησεν* where Luke adds the word *ὑπεχώρησεν*. Both omit Mark 6:31b-32. Both have *οἱ ὄχλοι ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ* where Mark has *καὶ εἶδον αὐτοὺς ὑπάγοντας καὶ ἐπέγνωσαν πολλοὶ καὶ πεζῆ ἀπὸ πασῶν τῶν πόλεων συνέδραμον ἐκεῖ καὶ προῆλθον αὐτούς*. Both Matthew and Luke omit that the people were "like sheep without a shepherd." And both Matthew and Luke say Jesus healed the people, where Mark only says he taught them. This story is paralleled in the Gospel of John, so if Q

⁹⁰ For an examination of every minor agreement, see Frans Neiryck, *The Minor Agreements in a Horizontal-Line Synopsis* (Studiorum Novi Testamenti Auxilia 15; Leuven: Peeters, 1991).

⁹¹ Mark has him "kneeling" in $\kappa \text{ L } \Theta \text{ f } 565 \text{ a1}$, but the phrase is entirely absent in B D W al .

is a narrative gospel it would not be surprising if there was a version of this story in Q as well. It is a standard component of the gospel proclamation.

Minor agreements are especially frequent in the passion narrative. At the arrest of Jesus, Matthew and Luke both add the interjection ἰδοῦ (Matt 26:47=Luke 22:47; diff. Mark 14:43). Both choose to use the word πατάσσω instead of Mark's παίω to refer to the striking of the servant of the high priest (Matt 26:51=Luke 22:50; diff. Mark 14:47). Matthew and Luke both add that Jesus spoke out against what Peter did. At the trial, Matthew and Luke both have Peter sit, and both use the same form of the same word, ἐκάθητο (Matt 26:58=Luke 22:55; diff. Mark 14:54). Then when Jesus is struck and commanded to prophesy, both Matthew and Luke add the exact same expression with the exact same word order: τίς ἐστιν ὁ παῖσας σε; Matthew and Luke both add the words “from now on” to Jesus’ words in Mark 14:62. Both also have Jesus say, “You say / you have said,” when Jesus is asked by the Sanhedrin if he is the Christ. Mark has something similar before Pilate, but not before the Sanhedrin. Then when Peter is convicted of denying Christ, both Matthew and Luke have καὶ ἐξελθὼν ἔξω ἔκλαυσεν πικρῶς (exact same five words; exact same word order) where Mark has καὶ ἐπιβαλὼν ἔκλαιεν. In the crucifixion account, Matthew and Luke both add a conditional phrase to Mark 15:30. In Matthew it is εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ, which is clearly intended to echo the words of Satan in the temptation narrative from Q, and in Luke it is εἰ σὺ εἶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων, which obviously has the same meaning and may be Luke’s redaction of the Matthean phrase to match the words that were placed above the cross. Matthew also adds Matt 27:43 after Mark 15:32. Luke 23:35 combines this Matthean addition with the Markan wording as if Luke is trying to conflate the two sources where Matthew places them one after another. Both Matthew and Luke specify that the inscription was “above” Jesus, and both add the word “this [is]” to the inscription. Finally, in Matt 27:54 and Luke 23:47 we find the words τὰ γενόμενα ἐφοβήθησαν / τὸ γενόμενον ἐδόξαζεν added to the Markan account. Some of these agreements may be mere coincidence but there are so many that it suggests the presence of a passion narrative in Q. I have argued this more fully in another paper.⁹²

Thus in four narrative pericopes we see evidence that Matthew and Luke are influenced by a shared non-Markan source. It is likely that this narrative source is the same source we know of from the rest of the double tradition, namely, Q.

5. “Q Contains All the Elements of Narrative”

We have already discussed Harry Fleddermann’s claim that “Q contains all the elements of narrative—plot, character, setting, narrative voice, theme, and tone.”⁹³ Here it is important only to add that Q not only contains narratives but also has a narrative sequence. Q begins in the same way as the early Christian kerygma according to Acts 10:37; 13:24-25, with the ministry of John the Baptist. After this are accounts of the baptism and temptation of Jesus.⁹⁴ Then Q discusses Jesus’ ministry (rejection?) in Nazareth,⁹⁵ his call of the disciples (Q 6:12-20),⁹⁶ and his relocation to Capernaum. Next Q reports some of Jesus’ healings and the discussion over whether or not Jesus is the one who was to come (Q 7:1-35). Jesus then addresses potential followers (Q 9:57-62) and sends his disciples out to heal the sick

⁹² David B. Sloan, “A Passion Narrative in Q? Evidence that the So-Called Q Community Had an Easter Faith” (paper presented at the Midwest regional meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Chicago, Ill., April 2015).

⁹³ Fleddermann, *Q*, 106.

⁹⁴ On the baptism of Jesus in Q, see footnote 70 above.

⁹⁵ The *Critical Edition* includes here a reference to “Nazara” based on Matthew’s and Luke’s mention of the city (using a spelling that is found only here) immediately after the temptation narrative. Christopher Tuckett has made a compelling case that the entire Nazareth sermon in Luke 4:16-30 is from Q (Christopher M. Tuckett, *Q and the History of Early Christianity: Studies on Q* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996], 221-234).

⁹⁶ See Section 2 above.

and proclaim the kingdom throughout Israel. Jesus' growing influence leads to opposition by the Pharisees (Q 11:15) and the lawyers (Q 10:25),⁹⁷ which leads Jesus to declare woes over them. Then after a series of conflicts between Jesus and the Pharisees, Jesus announces the coming revelation of the Son of Man (Q 17:20-37) and urges the disciples to be faithful until his return (Q 19:11-27). This may be followed by an account of the Last Supper and the passion of Jesus and perhaps also an account of Jesus' ascension/assumption into heaven.⁹⁸ Thus there is a clear narrative sequence of events in Q. Minimalist reconstructions of Q have prevented this from being obvious, but even in the *Critical Edition of Q* a movement can be seen that begins with John's ministry and continues with Jesus' ministry until it ends with eschatological discourses that result from Jesus' rejection. This supports Fleddermann's claim that Q is a narrative with its own plot. We have thus seen five reasons to think of Q as a narrative:

1. when Luke speaks of his sources he calls them "narratives";
2. Q narrates events;
3. Matthew's use of Q may have caused him to omit other narrative elements;
4. there are significant minor agreements in Markan narrative passages; and
5. "Q contains all the elements of narrative."

One more reason can be mentioned.

6. Q Is Not Primarily about Wisdom but about the Coming One

There is a prevailing wisdom Christology in Q, and there is a concentration on the words of Jesus. But unlike *Thomas* or Proverbs, Q is more about the messenger than about the message. Q begins with John announcing that "the one to come after me is more powerful than I" (Q 3:16). Later in Q John's disciples will seek confirmation of this: "Are you the one who is to come or are we to expect another?" (Q 7:18-19). Jesus' answer is a display, not of his wisdom, but of his power (Q 7:22). Q repeatedly highlights Jesus as the new Moses, the presence of the kingdom as the new exodus, and those who reject the kingdom as the new "crooked and twisted generation" (Deut 32:5; cf. Num 32:13; Deut 1:35; 2:14; 32:20; Q 7:31; 11:29-32, 50-51).⁹⁹ Even the Sermon on the Mount/Plain gives not gnomic wisdom but a proclamation of eschatological reversal: blessed are the poor, the hungry, those mourning, and the persecuted (Q 6:20-23). Good news is preached to the poor, but judgment comes upon the rich, not merely because they have rejected the wisdom of "one greater than Solomon" but also because they have not repented, even though "one greater than Jonah" is here (Q 11:29-32). All the murders of the prophets will be visited on this generation not because of their lack of wisdom, but because of their rejection of the one who was to come (Q 11:49-51). Jerusalem's house is forsaken until they say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord" (Q 13:35). Jesus is the true "Son of God" who does not succumb to the temptations in the wilderness that Israel had succumbed to (Q 4:1-13). In the mission discourse, Jesus is not sending the disciples to proclaim wisdom but to "heal the sick and [to] say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you'" (Q 10:9). Jesus casts out demons not by wisdom, but "by the finger of God" (Q 11:20; another allusion to the exodus narrative). Countless other examples could be given to demonstrate that Q is not about wisdom but about the coming one. Thus we would not expect Q to be a collection of sayings, but rather a biography – a complete narrative gospel. The evidence we have given in this paper demonstrates that to be the case.

⁹⁷ On the inclusion of Q 10:25-37, see Sloan, "Lost Portions."

⁹⁸ Sloan, "Passion Narrative."

⁹⁹ Dale C. Allison Jr., "Q's New Exodus and the Historical Jesus," in *The Sayings Source Q and the Historical Jesus* (ed. Andreas Lindemann; Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 395-428.

Conclusion and Implications

For the first 150 years of Q research there were a number of faulty presuppositions that prevented scholars from seeing Q as a narrative. Many of these presuppositions have fallen out of popularity, and some scholars are beginning to see reasons for thinking Q is a narrative. I have offered six additional reasons. The implications of this are great. No longer is Q evidence that *Thomas* is the most primitive form of the gospel genre, and no longer is *Thomas* evidence that Q focused on the teachings of Jesus over against his deeds. Instead the interest expressed in Q is an interest in the one who was to come, Jesus of Nazareth. His teachings are important because they reveal the significance of his coming. Recent historical Jesus research has seen in Q evidence that the earliest Christians focused on wisdom rather than on a dying and rising messiah.¹⁰⁰ The possibility that Q was not a collection of sayings but a narrative gospel will also have implications for this argument.

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, Burton L. Mack, *The Lost Gospel: The Book of Q & Christian Origins* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993), or, more recently, Stephen J. Patterson, *The Lost Way: How Two Forgotten Gospels Are Rewriting the Story of Christian Origins* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2014).

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