BUILT ON ROCK OR SAND?

Q STUDIES: RETROSPECTS, INTROSPECTS AND PROSPECTS

EDITED BY

CHRISTOPH HEIL, GERTRAUD HARB AND
DANIEL A. SMITH

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART VI: Q AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

PART VII: NEW APPROACHES TO THE Q HYPOTHESIS AND
THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM

****

ORAL AND LITERATE CONTEXTS FOR
THE SAYINGS GOSPEL Q

In the last twenty years, awareness of the importance of oral/aural contexts of communication in the ancient world has increasingly served to complicate our understanding of the production, transmission, and reception of ancient documents. Nowhere has this had more impact than in the study of the Sayings Gospel Q. This paper attempts to integrate some of the recent insights from the realm of orality studies into earlier approaches to Q with a view to developing a more sophisticated approach to this document.

It is a fair appraisal of the history of scholarship that up to the 1990s, scholarship on Q had adopted a largely or exclusively literary model to understand its production (and therefore reconstruction), transmission and use. This model can be traced back at least as far as Harnack's important reconstruction of Q in *Sprüche und Reden Jesu: Die zweite Quelle des Matthäus und Lukas*[1], which, like most reconstructions that would follow, reconstituted Q by identifying – on largely literary grounds – which of the Synoptic evangelists likely changed the wording or sequence of Q, and which had preserved "the original". Although many of Harnack's individual conclusions about Q would soon be rejected and adjusted by a series of partial or full constructions by B. Weiss[2], W. Haupt[3], and, much later, by

---

1. A. v. HARNACK, *Sprüche und Reden Jesu: Die zweite Quelle des Matthäus und Lukas* (Beiträge zur Einleitung in das Neue Testament, 2) Leipzig, J.C. Hinrichs, 1907; ET *The Sayings of Jesus: The Second Source of St. Matthew and St. Luke*, trans. J.R. WILKINSON (New Testament Studies, 2), London, Williams & Norgate – New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1908.

2. B. WEISS, *Die Quellen des Lukasevangeliums*, Stuttgart – Berlin, J.G. Cotta, 1907, pp. 1-96. In 1886 H.H. WENDT proposed a reconstruction (without actually providing a Greek text) of the "Matthäuslogia", in which he included not only the double tradition but much special Matthaean and Lukan material (*Die Lehre Jesu*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1886 [2. Aufl. 1901], pp. 23-33). A. RESCH (*Die Logia Jesu nach dem griechischen und hebräischen Text wiederhergestellt*, Leipzig, J.C. Hinrichs, 1898) actually attempted a reconstruction of "the Logia" (דברי ישוע) in both Greek and Hebrew (!). His "reconstruction", however, was indiscriminate and idiosyncratic, and included the double tradition (sometimes broken up and rearranged), supplemented by selected Markan narratives, special Matthaean and Lukan materials, and scattered sayings and stories from the *agrapha*. Neither Wendt's nor Resch's "reconstructions" found any real following.

3. W. HAUPT, *Worte Jesu und Gemeindeüberlieferung: Eine Untersuchung zur Quellengeschichte der Synopse* (UNT, 3), Leipzig, J.C. Hinrichs, 1913, pp. 7–87.

S. Schulz[4], and A. Polag[5], the principles of reconstruction remained predominantly literary. The International Q Project represents the apogee of this model, accepting the *sensus communis* that Q was a document, and conceiving of its reconstruction on the model of textual criticism of the New Testament, where Matthew-Luke disagreements are treated as variation points, and, instead of citing manuscripts attesting variant readings, constructing an apparatus consisting of opinions on the reconstruction of Q since 1838[6].

I. ORAL, IN WHAT WAYS?

There are, of course, dissenters from this purely literary model of Q. At least three distinct approaches have been taken to defending an oral 'Q': some that denied that Q was ever a written source; others, while admitting that parts of Q might have been reduced to writing, insist that significant portions of what Harnack and others had attributed to a document were in fact oral materials used independently by both Matthew and Luke; and others still, while conceding that Q was a text, minimize the literary character of Q in favour of its oral-performative character. Each of these approaches attends to important evidence, but each also has significant problems and weaknesses.

1. Q as Purely Oral

In 1900 W.C. Allen raised three issues: (a) there is no independent attestation of a document like Q (his term was "the Logia"); (b) sayings that Matthew and Luke have in common are connected with Mark in very different ways; and (c) the differences in wording, for example, between that Matthean and the Lukan makarisms precluded, he thought, their use of a common written source. Allen's alternative was that

> nothing is more probable than that sayings of Christ should be preserved in the oral teaching in a fixed form, – fixed in the sense that any well-instructed member of the Society would probably be able to repeat them in a form which

---

4. S. SCHULZ, *Q: Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten*, Zürich, Theologischer Verlag, 1972.

5. A. POLAG, *Fragmenta Q: Textheft zur Logienquelle*, Neukirchen, Neukirchener Verlag, 1979.

6. J.M. ROBINSON – P. HOFFMANN – J.S. KLOPPENBORG (eds.), *The Critical Edition of Q: A Synopsis, Including the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Mark and Thomas, with English, German and French Translations of Q and Thomas* (Hermeneia Supplements), Leuven, Peeters – Minneapolis, MN, Fortress, 2000 and J.M. ROBINSON et al. (eds.), *Documenta Q: Reconstructions of Q through Two Centuries of Gospel Research*, Leuven, Peeters, 1996ff.

with slight variations was familiar to everybody. Or are we to suppose that, e.g., the discourse about the Baptist (Mt 11²⁻¹⁹ = Lk 7¹⁸⁻³⁵) had never been the subject of teaching in the Christian assemblies, was unfamiliar, and accessible only in a single Greek writing, to which Mt and Lk had to have recourse when they wished to insert it in their Gospels[7].

Several of these points were addressed immediately by A. Wright, who had no difficulty in acknowledging that at an early stage the Jesus-tradition was oral. But Wright argued that it was the *disagreements* of Matthew and Luke in the relative sequence of Q material that in fact spoke in favour of its written nature. For he argued that while oral transmission can preserve faithfully disparate units even in the same sequence, the *rearrangement* of those units by either Matthew or Luke (or both) is a literary operation that requires access to a document.

> The result is startling to one who realizes it for the first time, and certainly demands explanation. ... I think it would be almost impossible [in oral trans-mission] to sort [the sayings in Q] according to their subject-matter, arrange them into orderly discourse, and weld them into conflations, as has actually been done[8].

Wright's tacit assumptions about the ability of oral transmission, untu-tored by a written text, to preserve faithfully non-narrative materials in sequence reflects a romantic and now indefensible view. His key point, however, is that recitation is qualitatively different from editorial manipula-tion. The two represent different mental processes: recitation relies on a series of semantic triggers to prompt the reciter to advance to the next mate-rial in sequence. That does not, of course, mean that recitation faithfully renders predecessor versions: abbreviation, expansion, substitutions, and even omission of entire episodes can occur. But this is very different from what is seen in Matthew's and Luke's treatments of Q, where materials are re-located, re-sequenced, and deployed for entirely different rhetorical ends. Such manipulation does not arise in recitation, even skilled recitation, but is an editorial practice requiring a text.

Famously, J. Jeremias in 1930[9] argued from the facts that sayings in the double tradition are often connected by catchwords, and that in Matthew and Luke sometimes have different catchword connections with their respec-tive contexts that Q was oral rather than written. This conclusion of course

---

7. W.C. ALLEN, *Did St Matthew and St Luke Use the Logia?*, in *ET* 11, no. 9 (1899-1900) 424-426, p. 426.

8. A. WRIGHT, *Oral Teaching*, in *ET* 11, no. 10 (1899-1900) 473-474, p. 474.

9. J. JEREMIAS, *Zur Hypothese einer schriftlichen Logienquelle Q*, in *ZNW* 29 (1930) 147-149.

in no way followed. It assumed wrongly that catchword association is a strictly oral rather than a literary phenomenon (and hence, differing catchword associations implies differing oral contexts). As an analysis of ancient sayings collections reveals[10], catchword association is a regular compositional technique in written documents, especially in sayings-related documents. And the fact that Matthew, for example, has a different catchword association from Luke may only mean that Matthew moved a saying to a new context because he saw the opportunity presented by a new catchword. It indicates nothing as to whether Q was originally oral or written.

The "oral-only" hypothesis shows itself to be fatally flawed. Pericopae where Matthew-Luke agreement was better than 85% are impossible to account for in any other way than Matthew and Luke using a written source – pericopae such as Matt 6,24 ‖ Luke 16,13 (98%)[11], Matt 12,43-45 ‖ Luke 11,24-26 (93%), Matt 11,20-24 ‖ Luke 10,13-15 (90%), Matt 3,12 ‖ Luke 3,17 (88%), Matt 12,27-32 ‖ Luke 11,19-23 (88%), Matt 23,37-39 ‖ Luke 13,34-35 (85%), and Matt 3,7-10 ‖ Luke 3,7-9 (85%). Recent ethnographic and psychological studies of the transmission of materials in a purely oral environment indicate that lengthy verbatim recall is in fact rare, as I. Hunter observes:

> L(enghty) V(erbatim) R(ecall) occurs only in cultures where text exists and is used. ... When LVR occurs on a large scale, the social and biographical setting is one which places value on textual materials as a subject matter in its own right. e.g., sacred scripture, socially-valued literature, textual scholarship ... [W]here text is unknown or unimportant in its own right, LVR does not occur. The units of language which do recur verbatim are short (e.g. set phrase, proverbial expressions) and, as in everyday speech, these short units are not bonded together in LVR[12].

A recent cross-cultural study of memory indicates that, contrary to the older view which reported fantastic feats of memory in preliterate cultures, illiterate persons are in fact *worse* at various aspects of semantic memory:

> Illiterates generally perform more poorly than schooled literates on conventional neuropsychological memory measures such as wordlist learning and recall ..., story learning and recall ..., verbal paired associates, digits backwards,

---

10. J.S. KLOPPENBORG, *The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections* (Studies in Antiquity and Christianity), Philadelphia, PA, Fortress, 1987, chap. 7.

11. The figures are based on the number of common words divided by the total number of Lukan words. Slightly different percentages would obtain if the Matthaean word total were used.

12. I.M.L. HUNTER, *Lengthy Verbatim Recall: The Role of Text*, in A.W. ELLIS (ed.), *Progress in the Psychology of Language*, London, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1985, 207-236, p. 210.

number-months ..., and complex figure drawing. ... However, the performance of illiterates seems to approach that of literates on object memory[13].

It is the introduction of literate technologies into a culture that creates the value of verbatim repetition:

> Learning to read reinforces certain fundamental abilities, such as verbal and visual memory, phonological awareness, executive functioning, and visuospatial and visuomotor skills[14].

Memory transmission of course occurs in both oral and literate cultures, in many cases assisted by mnemonic devices. But the nature of recall differs. "Accurate memory" may mean the preservation of "gist information" in the case of purely oral (non-literate) transmission; verbatim recall, however, is more likely a matter of memory that has been schooled in a setting where literate technologies are present and where verbatim repetition is possible[15]. The obvious implication for the study of Q is that high-verbatim agreement pericopae can only be explained by recourse to a written text used by Matthew and Luke.

2. Variation in Verbal Agreement

In 1960 T. Rosché analyzed the extent of agreement among the Synoptics, comparing the Matthew-Mark, the Mark-Luke and the Matthew-Luke agreements in Markan sections with Matthew-Luke agreements in the double traditions[16]. Instead of tabulating the Matt-Luke agreements in Markan sections as a percentage of the total number of words in each Matthaean and Lukan pericope, Rosché identified the *Markan* words preserved in Matthew (thus ignoring Matthew's alterations of Mark) and then tabulated how many of these words appear in Luke. This, of course, inflated the supposed Matt-Luke agreements in Markan sections, since it bracketed the Matthew-Luke

---

13. A. ARDILA et al., *Illiteracy: The Neuropsychology of Cognition without Reading*, in *Archives of Clinical Neuropsychology* 25 (2010) 689-712, p. 700.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 692.

15. W.J. ONG, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, London – New York, Methuen, 1982, pp. 57-58; E. MINCHIN, *The Performance of Lists and Catalogues in the Homeric Epics*, in I. WORTHINGTON (ed.), *Voice Into Text: Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece* (Mnemosyne Supplements, 157), Leiden – New York – Köln, Brill, 1996, 3-20, pp. 8-9. See now a response to R. BAUCKHAM's *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2006 by J.C. REDMAN, *How Accurate Are Eyewitnesses? Bauckham and the Eyewitnesses in the Light of Psychological Research*, in *JBL* 129 (2011) 177-197 which makes good use of recent psychological studies of memory storage and reproduction.

16. T.R. ROSCHÉ, *The Words of Jesus and the Future of the 'Q' Hypothesis*, in *JBL* 79 (1960) 210-220.

disagreements with Mark. When he came to the Q material, however, he compared Matthew and Luke directly. This kind of comparison led him to report a lower degree of verbatim agreement between Matthew and Luke in the Q material than he reported for the Markan material. This, in turn, led Rosché to conclude that Q was probably not written, but oral.

As should be obvious, this procedure is badly flawed, as Carlston and Norlin pointed out[17]. Rosché should have compared Matthew and Luke in Markan sections, but note the extent of agreement with Mark only *after* this direct comparison. When Carlston and Norlin made this comparison, they discovered that on average, Matthew and Luke display a slightly *higher* degree of verbal agreement in the double tradition than they do in the triple (Markan) tradition[18]. This suggests that Matthew and Luke were slightly more conservative in reproducing Q than they were when using Mark[19].

17. C.E. CARLSTON – D. NORLIN, *Once More – Statistics and Q*, in *HTR* 64 (1971) 59-78.
18. CARLSTON – NORLIN (*ibid.*, p. 71) distinguish between narrative, words of Jesus, and other words. Their findings (expressed as a percentage of the total word count) are:

	Triple	Matt	Luke	Avg.	Double	Matt	Luke	Avg.
Narrative		50.2	46.9	48.5		55.7	51.8	53.7
Words of Jesus		63.5	68.3	65.8		69.5	73.6	71.5
Misc. words		56.7	60.6	58.5		87.5	80.9	84.1
Average		56.0	56.0	56.0		69.8	72.2	71.0

19. The method employed by CARLSTON and NORLIN has been analysed by S.L. MATTILA (*A Problem Still Clouded: Yet Again – Statistics and Q*, in *NT* 36 [1994] 313-329), who notes (a) the small and uneven distribution of sayings in Carlston and Norlin's "miscellaneous words" category, (b) the sizable differential between the double and triple traditions in the number of words of Jesus and (c) their elimination of unparalleled (single-tradition) materials and redactional framing and the inclusion of synonyms as agreements in both the double and triple traditions. This accounts for a rather wide disagreement between their statistics and those of A.M. HONORÉ, *A Statistical Study of the Synoptic Problem*, in *NT* 10 (1968) 95-147, whose criterion for registering agreements required not only lexical but grammatical identity; hence Honoré arrived at very low figures for both the triple and the double tradition. My own statistical results (which do not include the triple tradition and do not distinguish types of materials within Q) are lower than those of Carlston and Norlin: 54.08% agreement (2414/4464) in Matthaean Q pericopae and 51.59% (2400/4652) in Luke Q pericopae (J.S. KLOPPENBORG, *Q Parallels: Synopsis, Critical Notes, & Concordance* [Foundations and Facets: New Testament], Sonoma, CA, Polebridge, 1988, p. 209). The higher overall word count and the lower percentage agreement for Luke result from the fact that more Lukan than Matthaean Sondergut is included as "probably in Q". On the other hand, I have not counted synonyms as agreements, but have excluded some redactional introductions from both Matthew and Luke. Interestingly, Mattila's analysis of Honoré's statistics still confirms that Matthew's and Luke's agreement in the double tradition is significantly higher than their agreement in the triple tradition (39.1% compared with 30.7%) (*Problem Still Clouded*, p. 319). A new study of the problem is desirable but preliminary examinations indicate that while the statistics would change, the overall result would not. See now Carlston's answer to Mattila (C.E. CARLSTON – D. NORLIN, *Statistics and Q – Some Further Observations*, in *NT* 41 [1999] 108-123).

A permutation of Rosché's approach is seen in the works of J.D.G. Dunn and T. Mournet, who argue that while those pericopae that display a high degree of verbatim agreement between Matthew and Luke come from a written document (Q), those with lower agreement represent oral tradition variously incorporated into Matthew and Luke (q)[20]. This thesis, as I have pointed out elsewhere, rests on an assumption that Matthew and Luke each adopted an essentially uniform policy in reproducing Q[21]. The assumption can be tested empirically, both by looking at the ways Matthew and Luke have reproduced sayings material in Mark and by examining the ways in which other writers employed their source material. Matthew's agreement with Markan wording ranges from 100% to 7%; Luke's agreement with Mark ranges from 89% to 4%[22]. That is, both Matthew and Luke are capable of varying the extent of Markan words that they take over into their versions. This also means that the resulting verbatim agreement between Matthew and Luke in Markan materials varies considerably: it is 80 percent in Mark 8,34-37; 70 percent in Mark 13,28-32 and 32 percent in Mark 12,1-11, but barely 12 percent in Mark 15,33-39 – to take only pericopae containing a large proportion of speech material.

The assumption employed by Dunn and Mournet can also be tested by examining authors whose sources we have[23]. One of Diodoros' sources, Ephoros, is extant in the form of *P.Oxy.* XIII 1610[24]. In three separate passages, Diodoros takes over, respectively, 19/41 or 46% of Ephoros' words (*FGrH* 70 F 191 fr. 3-5 = D.S.11.59.3), 32/47 or 68% (*FGrH* 70 F 191 fr. 8-10 = D.S.11.60.4-5, 6) and 1/23 or 4% (*FGrH* 70 F 191 fr. 6 = D.S.11.60.1-2)[25]. In other words, Diodoros was perfectly capable of varying the extent to which he used his sources, in some places taking over a substantial portion of its words, and in other places paraphrasing extensively.

20. J.D.G. DUNN, *Altering the Default Setting: Re-Envisaging the Early Transmission of the Jesus' Tradition*, in *NTS* 49 (2003) 139-175; T.C. MOURNET, *Oral Tradition and Literary Dependency: Variability and Stability in the Synoptic Tradition and Q* (WUNT, 2/195), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2005.

21. J.S. KLOPPENBORG, *Variation in the Reproduction of the Double Tradition and an Oral Q?*, in *ETL* 83 (2007) 49-79.

22. R. MORGENTHALER, *Statistische Synopse*, Zürich – Stuttgart, Gotthelf, 1971, pp. 239-243.

23. In what follows, I am indebted to the work of R.A. DERRENBACKER, *Ancient Compositional Practices and the Synoptic Problem* (BETL, 186), Leuven – Paris – Dudley, MA, Leuven University Press – Peeters, 2005, pp. 90-91.

24. B.P. GRENFELL – A.S. HUNT, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Part XIII,* London, Egypt Exploration Fund, 1919, p. 106 concluded that *P.Oxy.* XIII 1610 (=*FGrH* 70 F 191) was a copy of the work of Ephoros.

25. KLOPPENBORG, *Variation* (n. 21), pp. 63-67.

This datum renders highly problematic the entire procedure of Dunn and Mournet, who must suppose a uniform copying policy on the part of Matthew and Luke.

This, of course, does not prove that all of Q was written: it only indicates that the assumption that Dunn and Mournet invoke to argue for a partly-oral Q ('q' in Dunn's terms) is flawed. If Matthew and Luke were capable of varying the degree to which they adopted the wording of their sources, then we should *expect* Matthew-Luke verbatim agreement in both Markan and non-Markan sections to vary significantly. After all, it only takes one of the two Synoptists to depart from the wording of Q to create a Matt-Luke disagreement.

Virtually every reconstruction of Q has admitted the possibility that some of the very low-agreement sayings (e.g., Matt 12,11-12 ‖ Luke 14,5) are not from Q, especially when they are found in Matthew and Luke in very different contexts[26]. There is certainly a possibility of either interference from oral versions of Q sayings, and indeed some of the low-agreement pericopae may reflect not Q but two independent oral sayings[27]. Most would admit the possibility that Matthew and Luke have both omitted parts of Q (just as they have jointly omitted a few Markan pericopae), thus rendering some of Q irrecoverable. But none of these possibilities can be translated into a

---

26. See, e.g., KLOPPENBORG, *Q Parallels* (n. 19), pp. 160-161 (on Matt 12,11-12 ‖ Luke 14,5). Dunn concludes, "For if much of the shared Matthew/Luke material attests *oral* dependency rather than *literary* dependency, then *the attempt to define the complete scope and limits of Q is doomed to failure*" (*Default Setting* [n. 20], p. 172, emphasis original). But Dunn has not demonstrated that *much* of the double tradition exhibits the characteristics of orality: he mentions only four pericope where Matt-Luke agreement is relatively low: Luke 6,29-30 par.; 12,51-53 par.; 14,26-27 par.; and 17,3-4 par. In offering a reconstruction of Q, the International Q Project was perfectly aware of the possibilities of 'false' agreements – of Matthew and Luke agreeing in minor details and creating the illusion of a Q text – and the possibility that some double tradition sayings were transmitted orally rather than in written form. For this reason, a large number of double tradition pericopae have a 'zero variant', i.e., a judgment whether the saying or story in question belongs to Q in the first place. See ROBINSON – HOFFMANN – KLOPPENBORG, *Critical Edition of Q* (n. 6), e.g., on Q 4,1-13.16; 6,24-26.32.33.35a-b.39.40.46; 7,1a.10.20-21.29-30; 9,61-62; 10,7a.25-28; 11,1-4.5-8.21-22.27-28 etc. and including 17,3-4. Moreover, Dunn misunderstands the goal of the IQP. It is hardly to define "the complete scope and limits of Q"; the IQP is prepared both to acknowledge that some of Q might be irretrievably lost, because both Matthew and Luke have omitted some sayings, that some of the Matt-Luke agreements do not derive from written tradition, and that some *Sondergut* might in fact come from a written text. Dunn has also reduced the options to oral or written (notwithstanding his mantra that it is exceedingly difficult to distinguish the two). He does not seriously entertain the possibility – indeed, likelihood – that a text of Q existed *alongside* oral performances of Q which exerted an influence on the writers Matthew and Luke and accounted for differences in their reproduction of the text.

27. See the principles of reconstruction enunciated by P. VASSILIADIS, *The Nature and Extent of the Q Document*, in *NT* 20 (1978) 49-73, which takes oral tradition into account.

view that Q was wholly or substantially oral. For it is not only the high-agreement pericopae such as those listed above[28] that indicate that Matthew and Luke had recourse to a written document, but also two facts, elaborated elsewhere[29]: First, the Q material not only exhibits thematic and formal coherence, but also contains sayings and organizational features that expressly attempt to lend to the collection unity and structure. No one of course would claim that Q (or any other early Christian document for that matter) is perfectly homogeneous or that all parts fit equally well. That is not the point. It is rather that in spite of Q's varied contents, there are signs of unity and of attempts to negotiate its variety. In the face of these unities – unities that extend over large sections of the double tradition – it becomes difficult to argue that the double tradition in fact represents either two or more smaller, independent collections or that some of Q was written, and other parts were oral. On the contrary, it is preferable to assume that it represents a single document.

Second, it can be observed that despite the fact that after Mark 1,13 Matthew and Luke fail to agree in placing the Q material in the same position *relative to Mark*, they exhibit an impressive agreement in the sequence of Q material *relative to one other* (27/67 pericopae, or 40%)[30]. This is precisely what one ought to expect if Matthew and Luke were using a common document, using it independently of one another, and sometimes shifting sayings to new locations. Some of the skeleton of the original document would be preserved, as indeed it has been.

3. Q in an Oral Culture

One of the important advances in the last fifteen years or so is the recognition that literacy in Jewish Palestine was highly restricted and that, accordingly, most communication was oral/aural[31]. This does not mean that there were no texts, or that Q was not a written text: it only means that

> most persons would know the contents of documents only through their oral
> recitation by readers who were capable of "performing" them. Reading itself

---

28. Above, p. 52.

29. J.S. KLOPPENBORG, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel*, Minneapolis, MN, Fortress – Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 2000, pp. 66-72.

30. *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

31. On literacy rates of about 3%, see M. BAR-ILAN, *Illiteracy in the Land of Israel in the First Centuries C.E.*, in S. FISHBANE – S. SCHOENFELD (eds.), *Essays in the Social Scientific Study of Judaism and Jewish Society. Volume II*, Hoboken, NJ, Ktav, 1992, 46-61; C. HEZSER, *Jewish Literacy and the Use of Writing in Late Roman Palestine*, in R. KALMAN – S. SCHWARTZ (eds.), *Jewish Culture and Society Under the Christian Roman Empire* (Interdisciplinary Studies

was an act of interpretation insofar as the reader prepared in advance for performance, deciding how to break the continuous string of letters into words and sentences, where to place "paragraph breaks", and which portions to emphasize. This implies that the written text was never a separate and discrete entity but always existed in the context of oral performance, functioning more like a musical script than a modern book. The literary inscription of Q accounts for the elements of relative fixity that have been noted above. This fixity, however, could never be absolute. Each oral performance of Q could be varied, depending on the occasion. Subsequent copying of Q could not be isolated from the influence of such performances[32].

In a series of essays R. Horsley has stressed the almost exclusively oral context for Q. Although he does not deny that Q at some point was a text, he minimizes its cheirographic aspects: "Even if a text such as Q existed in writing, it was recited orally in a group setting"[33]. This continues his earlier views of Q in 1999 to the effect that Q is an "oral-derived text" and that, accordingly, the inscription of Q as a text is effectively incidental[34]. This approach then sponsors the division of Q into cola and stanzas, apparently to underwrite its supposed "oral patterning". Q represents the "little tradition", borrowing the term of J.C. Scott[35], and since Horsley maps a scribal/oral-prophetic dichotomy onto the "great tradition"/"little tradition" binary, he can conclude that there is little or nothing scribal about Q[36]. Citing Hezser, he believes that there was in general a lack of scribes in towns and village[37]. Thus

in Ancient Culture and Religion, 3), Leuven, Peeters, 2003, 149-195; ID., *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (TSAJ, 81), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2001.

32. KLOPPENBORG, *Excavating Q* (n. 29), p. 60. On the nature of the relationship between oral performance and written text, see H.Y. GAMBLE, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts*, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1995 and V.K. ROBBINS, *Social-Scientific Criticism and Literary Studies: Prospects for Cooperation in Biblical Interpretation*, in P.F. ESLER (ed.), *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in Its Context*, London – New York, Routledge, 1995, 274-289.

33. R.A. HORSLEY, *Jesus in Context: Power, People & Performance*, Minneapolis, MN, Fortress, 2008, p. 62. See also R.A. HORSLEY, *Performance and Tradition: The Covenant Renewal Speech in Q*, in ID. (ed.), *Oral Performance, Popular Tradition, and Hidden Transcript in Q* (Semeia Studies, 60), Atlanta, GA, Society of Biblical Literature, 2006, 43-70.

34. R.A. HORSLEY – J.A. DRAPER, *Whoever Hears You Hears Me: Prophets, Performance, and Tradition in Q*, Harrisburg, PA, Trinity Press International, 1999, p. 145: "Since most literature from antiquity originated and continued in oral performance, and since literacy was so limited, particularly among ordinary people, then Q also must have originated and continued in oral performance".

35. J.C. SCOTT, *Protest and Profanation: Agrarian Revolt and the Little Tradition*, in *Theory and Society* 4 (1977) 1-38, 211-246.

36. HORSLEY – DRAPER, *Whoever Hears You Hears Me* (n. 34), chap. 5.

37. HORSLEY, *Jesus in Context* (n. 33), p. 58 citing HEZSER, *Jewish Literacy* (n. 31), pp. 118-126. Hezser thinks that most scribes in the second Temple period were found in Jerusalem, although she acknowledges Josephus' reference to village scribes (κωμῶν γραμματεῖς, *Bell.* 1.24.3) and thinks that after 70 CE "scribes will have become more available at least in major

he minimizes, both historically and hermeneutically, the significance of literate technologies:

> The resulting picture of the limited function of literacy, documents, and local scribes in Galilee corresponds to what Harris and others found in the Roman empire generally, what Thomas found earlier in Greece, and what Clanchy and others found later in mediaeval Europe ... Peasants and artisans ... had little use for writing, conducting most of their dealings orally, face to face. Little in Roman times had changed since classical Greece, where even most legal practice was conducted orally[38].

This assessment, not of the level of literacy, but the use of literate technologies is far too pessimistic. Horsley appears to imagine a setting for the production, transmission and use of Q in which literate technologies were remote and that the culture of Jewish peasantry approached the state of persons in entirely preliterate cultures.

This is hardly the case. Despite low levels of literacy, the majority of the population was thoroughly familiar with literate modes of communication and data storage, as A. Bowman has observed. Populations in the cities routinely encountered public inscriptions, epitaphs, public notices, inscriptions on statue bases, graffiti, books and book sellers, libraries and other literate modes[39]. In the countryside there was a steady need to interact with bureaucracies on issues

---

towns" (p. 120). It is unclear how Hezser thinks that legal and fiscal administration would have operated in the absence of town scribes prior to 70 CE. Hezser also cites M. BAR-ILAN (*Writing in Ancient Israel and Early Judaism, Part Two: Scribes and Books in the Late Second Commonwealth and Rabbinic Period*, in M.J. MULDER [ed.], *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* [CRI, 2/1], Philadelphia, PA, Fortress, 1988, p. 22), who argues that in second Temple times "a process of secularization and diminishing status overtook the scribal profession, and among the people many scribes arose without any connection to an official position, the priesthood or the Temple".

38. HORSLEY, *Jesus in Context* (n. 33), p. 59, citing W.V. HARRIS, *Ancient Literacy*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1989, pp. 198-200; R. THOMAS, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens* (Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture, 18), Cambridge – New York, Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp. 68-72; M. CLANCHY, *From Memory to Written Record, England 1066–1307*, Oxford, Blackwell, ²1993, p. 232. Horsley's appeal to Thomas is a puzzling, since Thomas is discussing the use of *archives* in Athens (not the countryside, peasants or artisans) and expressly contrasts the lack of evidence for the arrangement and organization of the Metroön (the temple of the Great Mother and state "archives") in Athens, and the later use of documents in the Seleucid Empire and Ptolemaic Egypt, where archives are well attested. The extent to which archives in Egypt were routinely consulted is unknown, but it is perfectly clear from the wealth of legal and administrative papyri from towns and villages in Egypt that the use of documents was extensive in record-keeping, correspondence, loans and leases.

39. G. WOOLF, *Literacy*, in A.K. BOWMAN – P. GARNSEY – D. RATHBONE (eds.), *The High Empire, A.D. 70–192* (Cambridge Ancient History, 11), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, 875-897, p. 876 notes that Pliny was surprised to find his books available in Lyons (*Ep.* 9.11), that lines from Virgil are found in graffiti in Britain, and that thousands of literary papyri are available at Oxyrhynchus.

of tax declarations, census records, leases, loans, marriage and divorce docu-
ments, wills, and other declarations, effected largely through local scribes. The
rural population also encountered milestones and various inscriptions[40]. Bow-
man says,

> The argument is, then, that a large proportion of the 80%+ illiterate popula-
> tion was thoroughly familiar with literate modes. Egypt, of course, may be
> exceptional and the argument that it was accustomed to a higher level of
> bureaucracy than other parts of the ancient world is duly put forward. But so
> may anything or everything else; regional differences need to be and are
> weighed carefully. But this is hardly compatible with the belief that literacy in
> Latin and Greek is in some sense a single phenomenon, sustained by a con-
> tinuous cultural tradition, and that a line can be drawn between the literate
> and the illiterate population[41].

The Babatha archive provides a salient example of an illiterate person in
routine contact with literary technologies[42]. Likewise, the Salome Komaise
archive contains documents clearly written by scribes working on behalf of
the principals, some of whom were illiterate[43]. The level of illiteracy
remained high, but few persons in the Empire could be oblivious to the
reality and ubiquity of literate communication. Literate technologies were
widespread among a population that was largely illiterate.

It is not simply that large sectors of the population knew about written com-
munication. Recent studies of literacy in the Roman world suggest that litera-
cies, although admittedly restricted numerically, were not segregated into dis-
crete sectors by language, function and social register[44]. On the contrary, various
levels of literacy below full scribal literacy are attested. G. Woolf observes:

> [B]ecause financial records, even if often compiled by slaves, ex-slaves, and free
> *institores*, have to be potentially auditable and comprehensible to landowners,

---

40. E.g., the so-called Nazareth inscription: L. CERFAUX, *L'inscription funéraire de Nazareth
à la lumière de l'histoire religieuse*, in *RIDA* 5, 3e série (1958) 347-363.

41. A.K. BOWMAN, *Literacy in the Roman Empire: Mass and Mode*, in J. HUMPHREY (ed.),
Literacy in the Roman World (Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series, 3), Ann
Arbor, MI, Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1991, 119-131, p. 122.

42. See N. LEWIS, *The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters. Greek
Papyri*, with Y. YADIN and J.C. GREENFIELD (Judean Desert Studies, 2), Jerusalem, Israel
Exploration Society and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1989.

43. *Xḥev/Ṣe* Gr. 5 = *P.Hever* 61.3-4 (Rabbath Moab, 25 Apr 127 CE): ἐ[γράφη διὰ] |
χειροχρήστου Οναινου Σααδαλλου, "written by the scribe Onainos Saʿadallos". See H. COT-
TON, *The Archive of Salome Komaise, Daughter of Levi: Another Archive from the 'Cave of Letters'*,
in *ZPE* 105 (1995) 171-208.

44. See B.V. STREET, *Literacy in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge Studies in Oral and
Literate Culture, 9), Cambridge – New York, Cambridge University Press, 1984, who is
critical of Goody's treatment of literacy as 'autonomous' (J. GOODY – I. WATT, *The Conse-
quence of Literacy*, in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 5 [1963] 304-345).

this is not really scribal literacy. Likewise, because these documents linked the richest men in the community with their slaves and agents, this is not an example of commercial literacy or craftsman's literacy. Roman landowners had good reason not to permit the development of segregated literacies ... Literacy approached the status of a generalized skill that it has in our societies. As a result those who learned to read in the army might make use of the skill in commerce and the *literati* could read—and might be astonished by – religious tracts emerging from unfamiliar sources ... [T]he power of this generalized literacy was most widely felt beyond the narrow realm of administration[45].

It is a fundamental mistake to assume that Jewish Palestine was an island of purely oral interaction, as Horsley does. The climate of the Galilee does not permit the preservation of documents as it does in Egypt, but that is no reason to assume that "most legal practice was conducted orally". We have loan and lease agreements from the 'Arava, the only climate zone in Israel that does permit such preservation. And where we are in a position to compare lease and loan documents and other legal instruments from Palestine with the rich papyrological finds from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, and where we can compare later rabbinic descriptions of leasing and loan arrangements in, for example, *m. Baba Meṣiʿa*, the practices of Jewish Palestine mirror exactly those of Egypt[46]. This is only reasonable. Palestine came under

---

45. G. WOOLF, *Literacy or Literacies in Rome?*, in W.A. JOHNSON – H.N. PARKER (eds.), *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome* (Studies in Book and Print Culture), Oxford – New York, Oxford University Press, 2009, 46-68, pp. 52, 53.

46. *P.Yadin* 42, 44-46 (132-35 CE) attest leases of orchards and vegetable plots made by Yoḥanan, an administrator for Shimʿon bar Kosiba (Y. YADIN – J.C. GREENFIELD – A. YARDENI – B. LEVINE, *The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters [Hebrew, Aramaic and Nabataean Document]* (Judean Desert Studies, 3), Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2002, pp. 39-70, 142-149). Each of these leases shares features well known in leases from Graeco-Roman Egypt: *P.Yadin* 42 (=*5/6Hev* 42 [132 CE]) is a first person declaration of two agents of Shimʿon bar Kosiba, agreeing to lease a plot of land previously leased by another member of the family for a term of three years and for the amount of 650 denarii (*zuzîm*) per annum, to be paid in three installments. In the Mishnaic taxonomy of leases, this is an instance of *ḥakirût*, since the rent is specified in terms of a fixed payment. The verb 'to lease' is missing in a lacuna in *P.Yadin* 42, but *P.Yadin* 43 (132 CE), an Aramaic receipt issued to Eliʿezer that corresponds to the date (in Elul) stipulated by *P.Yadin* 42 for the payment of an installment, uses the phrase סלק מן חכרה די חכר מן שמעון], 'he discharged from the lease payment (*ḥakrah*) (of the land) he leased (*ḥakar*) from Shimʿon' (43.5-6). Moreover, a similar lease, also two years later, *P.Yadin* 45.6-7 (134 CE), as well as *P.Yadin* 44.6, 18 (134 CE) and *P.Yadin* 46.3 (134 CE), used the verb *lǝḥakir*.

The formulae of the fragmentary lease in *P.Yadin* 42 (מודין אנחנה לך) and the more complete *P.Yadin* 45 are first-person declarations by the lessor: מודא אני... שהחכתי/שהחכרנו לך תגנה שלנו, 'I acknowledge that I/we have leased to you the garden belonging to us' (45.6-7). This formulary is well-known from Egyptian leases, which use variations of the form NN ὁμολογῶ μεμισθωκέναι σοι τὰς ὑπαρχούσας μοι ἀρούρας X, 'I, NN, acknowledge that I have leased to you the X arouras belonging to me ...'. E.g., *P.Tebt.* I 107.1-2 (112 BCE); *O.Bodl.* I 257.203 (II BCE); *PSI* X 1097.2-3 (54-53 BCE); *BGU* II 636.26 (20 CE); *P.Fouad* 40.26 (35 CE);

Ptolemaic control after Alexander, and the evidence from the Zenon papyri indicate that Ptolemaic administrative apparatus had been imposed on the region, with a 'village renter' (κωμομισθωτής) responsible for rentals or taxes

P.Mich. IX 561.4-5 (119 CE); *P.Mil.Vogl.* II 78.22-23 (138–39 CE). On the *homologein* form of the lease, see J. HERRMANN, *Studien zur Bodenpacht im Recht der graeco-ägyptischen Papyri* (MBPF, 41), München, C.H. Beck, 1958, p. 18. *P.Yadin* 44.6 uses a third person declaration, מן יהנתן שחכרו, '(that) they have leased from Yonathan', equivalent to the 'objective protocol' often found in Greek and Graeco-Egyptian leases: ἐμίσθωσαν ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δεῖνι (Attic leases use the formula (κατὰ τάδε) ἐμίσθωσαν τὸ χωρίον: e.g., *IG* II² 1241.4 (300/299 BCE); 2496 (after mid-IV BCE); 2497.2 (after mid-IV BCE); 2499.2 (306/5 BCE); 2501.2 (late IV BCE); *SEG* 24.203 (333/32 BCE), etc. For Graeco-Egyptian leases, see HERRMANN, *Studien*, p. 17), while *P.Yadin* 46.3 is a variant of the ὁμολογεῖν form where the declaration is the lessee's rather than the lessor's: מודא אני לכם היום שחכרי מכם, 'I acknowledge to you today that I have leased from you...'. This is equivalent to the common Graeco-Egyptian form, ὁμολογῶ μεμισθῶσθαι παρὰ NN (E.g. *BGU* VI 1271.17 [180–145 BCE]; *P.Tebt.* I 105.53 [103 BCE]; *P.Ryl.* IV 600.10 [8 BCE]; *P.Oxy.* XXXIX 3911.6 [199 CE]. For the use of ὁμολογεῖν in contracts from the Babathra archives, see LEWIS, *Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period I* [n. 42], p. 159, s.v. ὁμολογέω. See also H. COTTON – A. YARDENI, *Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek Documentary Texts from Nahal Hever and Other Sites. With an Appendix Containing Alleged Qumran Texts [the Seiyâl Collection II]* [DJD, 27], Oxford, Clarendon, 1997, p. 372, s.v. ὁμολογέω).

Each of the leases in *P.Yadin* 42, 44-46 calls for payment as a fixed sum of silver denarii and *P.Yadin* 44-46 also state an equivalence in wheat at the rate of 4 denarii/se'ah. *P.Yadin* 42 adds that the rental of an orchard must be paid 'whether it produces fruit or does not produce' (42.4-5) and assigns to the lessor the right of execution on the lessee's house and chattels in the case of default (42.9). The latter provision is well-known from agricultural leases from Ptolemaic Egypt.

Another set of farm leases were discovered among the documents from the Wadi Murabba'ât, dating from the same time as the Nahal Ḥever leases and also involving Shim'on bar Kosiba (P. BENOIT [ed.], *Les grottes de Murabba'ât* [DJD, 2], Oxford, Clarendon, 1961, pp. 122-134). These concern the leasing of grain-producing land. *P.Mur.* 24A-K (133 CE) represents an abstract of at least eleven farm leases, similar to διαστρώματα attested in Egypt (e.g., *P.Harr.* I 137 [II CE], which extracts the details of three vineyard leases). Each of the leases in *P.Mur.* 24 is framed as a first-person declaration, חכרתי המך, 'I have leased from you', also comparable to Egyptian lease forms, μεμίσθωμαι παρά σου.... (E.g., *P.Ryl.* II 168.2 (120 CE): μεμίσθωμαι παρὰ σοῦ...; *P.Petr.* III 73.3 (III BCE): μεμίσθωμαι παρὰ NN; *P.Soter.* 2.40 (71 CE): μεμίσθωμαι τὸν ἀμπελῶνα, etc.) Consistent with the leases from Nahal Ḥever and later Mishnaic ḥakirût, the rent is stated as a fixed quantity of wheat.

While the documents from Nahal Ḥever and Wadi Murabba'ât are the earliest leases extant from Jewish Palestine, it should also be noted that the parable of the Tenants (Mark 12,1-9 and the *Gospel of Thomas* 65) from sixty years earlier also employs the technical vocabulary of extant leases. Mark 12,1.9 describes the owner as 'giving out' (ἐκ)διδόναι his vineyard, equivalent to the usage in *P.Lond.* VII 1980.10 (252 BCE), ἐγδοῦναι ἡμῖν τὴν γῆν τοῖς γεωργοῖς, where ἐγδοῦναι effectively means 'to lease'. The *Gospel of Thomas* uses ⲁϥⲧⲁⲁϥⲛ- (= ἔδωκεν) (See also *P.Lond.* VII 1981.9 [252 BCE]; 2188.49, 57, 178, 183, 282 [148 BCE]; *BGU* IV 1125.1 [13 BCE]: ὁμολ[ο]γῶ ἐγδεδόσθαι σοι τὸν δοῦλόν μου). This type of lease, which the Mishnah calls *'arisût*, is completely consistent with the nature of viticultural leases in Egypt, where the dominant pattern is crop-share rather than a fixed rent. See further, J.S. KLOPPENBORG, *The Tenants in the Vineyard: Ideology, Economics, and Agrarian Conflict in Jewish Palestine* (WUNT, 195), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2006, pp. 294, 581 and the papyri cited there.

and a senior official responsible for a number of estates in one region with the authority to appropriate harvests as he saw fit[47]. There is no reason to assume that the Seleucids abandoned the administrative system created by the Ptolemies, still less that Herod and his successors returned to a state where all contracts were oral. This would be to romanticize Jewish Palestine and to render unintelligible what we know about Herodian practices regarding tax extraction, control of the land, lending and borrowing, marriage and divorces, wills, and other fiscal and administrative practices, which necessarily involved the production of legal instruments. Indeed we have sparse evidence of local (village) scribes – *a fortiori*, because *no* administrative documents have survived Galilee's climate. It would be absurd, however, to imagine that Galileans who needed loan documents, or tax receipts or divorce document, routinely travelled to Jerusalem to obtain these, any more than that peasants, artisans and tenants in the Fayum or the Oxyrhynchite nome travelled to Alexandria each time they needed a loan!

The development of writing practices was not autochthonic in rural areas but was the result of the power that the city exerted on the countryside[48]. This power created the need for financial reporting and record-keeping, which in turn created the need for a scribal sector which could accommodate those needs. The common refrain in Graeco-Egyptian legal instruments, "*x* wrote this because *y* is illiterate"[49], is testimony to the presence in

47. See *PSI* VI 554 (258 BCE) where tenant farmers complain about rent which, they claim, had been unfairly levied. Melas, a Ptolemaic official, had confiscated the grape pressings for his workers in the city.

48. WOOLF, *Literacy* (n. 45), p. 877: "Where writing was used in the countryside, whether on votive offerings at the temple of Clitumnus described by Pliny, or as tally lists for the pottery kilns at Graufesenque in southern France, or simply as milestones, along the Roman roads, it was the product of the power of the classical city and of the Roman empire over the rural hinterland. No separate writing practices can be attested for the early Roman Empire and writing always remained a component of either the urban or the military versions of Roman civilization". HORSLEY (*Jesus in Context* [n. 33], p. 59) quotes this as evidence of the *lack* of the use of writing in rural areas. But this is to quote Woolf *contra sensum auctoris*, whose point is not that writing was absent in the countryside, but that its role has to do with the power of the city. "More significant [than literary texts] for the contact that most town-dwellers had with writing were the stone-cutters, who carved epitaphs on tombstones, and the professional scribes, who drew up contracts and wrote letters, even for those who could sign them themselves. Most mundane and familiar of all the uses of writing were, perhaps, the painted labels on amphorae describing their contents, the stamps impressed in the bases of ceramic tableware and the legends on coins" (p. 876); "… every member of Roman society must have been conscious of the power of writing to signal and generate change even if, like us, they were quickly inured to the inscriptions on old buildings. But even the meaning of ancient inscriptions remained latent, ready to be evoked in a new context, as when Caesar's opponents daubed graffiti on the statue of the first Brutus, inciting the Brutus of the day to overthrow the new monarchy" (pp. 877-878).

49. H.C. YOUTIE, *Because They Do Not Know Letters*, in *ZPE* 19 (1975) 101-108.

towns and villages of such scribes. These scribes are to be distinguished from the κωμογραμματεύς, who was a village official responsible to the toparchy or nome for record keeping, disbursing seed grain from the village granary (e.g., *BGU* XVI 2650), and reporting on tax liabilities and other fiscal matters (e.g., *P.Iand*. III 31)[50]. The scribes whose existence we must posit to render our data intelligible are other literate (or semi-literate) persons, perhaps one or two in a village, who could be approached to prepare tax, loan, and lease documents, for a small charge[51]. Archival copies of these documents could then be filed with the κωμογραμματεύς. The situation that we posit for Jewish Palestine is not much different from many settings in Latin and South America, Africa, India and other developing nations, where people who need to interact with bureaucracies or even to write (and receive) letters use local scribes as an intermediary.

II. ORAL-SCRIBAL INTERFACE

Rather than a situation of purely oral exchange, as Horsley imagines for the Galilee, it is far more likely that the "joined-up" nature of literacy – to use G. Woolf's term – intruded on village and town life in various ways. Literate technologies were visibly present in the countryside in a variety of forms and, more importantly, interfaces between oral and literate communication were mediated by administrative, professional and semi-professional scribes present at least in town and, if Egypt is a guide, in some villages. In the case of Q, the fact, upon which virtually all agree, that Q was composed in Greek, is a reflection of the fact that the administrative language of the Galilee was predominantly Greek and that the scribes of Q would naturally use that language[52].

Scribal values and practices appear in other ways in Q's repertoire of sayings. Because the foundation of ancient literate education is the copying, then adaptation, of 'canonical' texts such as Homer and, one supposes in the case of Judaean scribes, biblical literature, and because the scribe

50. See J. MANNING, *Land and Power in Ptolemaic Egypt: The Structure of Land Tenure*, Cambridge – New York, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 121. A famous example of an illiterate village scribe is found in H.C. YOUTIE, *Pétaus, fils de Pétaus, ou le scribe qui ne savait pas écrire*, in *Chronique d'Égypte* 41 (1966) 127-143.

51. E.g., *P.Princ*. III 125 (Theadelphia, 146 CE), a receipt for the payment of a garden tax, including a charge for preparing the receipt.

52. For a study of the use of multiple languages, and therefore multiple legal systems, in Palestine, see J.G. OUDSHOORN, *The Relationship between Roman and Local Law in the Babatha and Salome Komaise Archive* (StTDJ, 69), Leiden – Boston, MA, Brill, 2007.

participates in a social sector that was intentional about education, scribal products regularly contain reflections on the nature of the educative process itself. Human learning is valorized, the process of handing on tradition is celebrated, and there are reflections on the origin, nature and means by which wisdom is acquired. Even a superficial reading of Proverbs 1–9 will show quickly that alongside admonitions advising or dissuading certain behaviors are numerous sayings that describe the *process* of learning itself, underscoring its importance, and meditating on its heavenly origins. These meta-reflections on the process as well as the content of instruction embody the self-interests of those responsible for the genre: scribes who transmit learning but who also reflect on its warrants and functions.

Q₁ provides a good example of instructional literature, offering topically organized instructions on several themes. Like instructions, Q also contains sayings reflecting on various key parts of the instructional process: on the relationship of teachers and students (6,40.46-49; 10,16; 14,26-27); and on the importance of good guidance (6,40.41-42), good speech (6,43-45), and good examples (17,1-2). God and Jesus are held up as mimetic ideals (6,35.36; 9,58; 11,13; 12,3; 14,26-27). Q 12,2 (on the revelation of things hidden) is not only a wisdom saying, but reflects a characteristic sapiential interest in what is hidden as an object of research; it conceives the process of disclosure to be grounded in the relationship of God to the world (cf. Sir 39,1-11).

The interfacial aspects of orality and scribalism affected Q in other ways as well, however.

1. Scribal Formulae Reformulated

As G.B. Bazzana has recently argued, the βασιλεία language of Q, in particular in Q 6,20; 10,9; 11,2; 12,31 and 13,18.20, all of which concern issues of subsistence,

> gesture[s] toward a complex theological and political construct, in which the sovereign plays a determinant role as broker of divine benefits to his or her human subjects and as a guarantor of natural, as well as social order[53].

---

53. G.B. Bazzana, *BASILEIA — The Q Concept of Kingship in Light of Documentary Papyri*, in P. Arzt-Grabner – C.M. Kreinecker (eds.), *Light from the East: Papyrologische Kommentare zum Neuen Testament* (Philippika. Marburger Altertumskundliche Abhandlungen, 39), Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010, 153-168, p. 155.

Bazzana draws an explicit connection between Q's language and its producers:

> I think that a conscious use of the political concept of βασιλεία such as that found in the Q passages reviewed above would fit perfectly the cultural profile and the ideological interests of village scribes[54].

That is, the very choice and formulation of Q's kingship language should be seen in the context of the interfacial relations between oral Jesus materials, however they may have been formulated, and the scribal interests and orientation of those persons who, among other things, were engaged in the mediation of royal decrees and, more subtly, imperial ideology. The framers of Q, who as local scribes would have routinely employed formulae that celebrated the benefactions and clemency of the king or emperor, turned those formulae around to epitomize the benefactions and clemency of the divine King and adapted royal and imperial ideologies to a new discursive situation.

A similar instance of scribal-oral interface has been articulated by Alan Kirk, who argued a propos of the Lord's Prayer in Q, that oral communication (the formulation of Q's prayer) mimics scribal formulae[55].

> The *form* of the Our Father conforms to the administrative genre of the *petition*. The poor made petitions to officials, seeking relief from some intolerable burden that has created a subsistence emergency. The conventional form of petitions was as follows: (1) salutation to the ruler, governor, or official, frequently with an honorific epithet attached; (2) request for relief from some financial imposition such as taxes, or for food which is one's due; (3) sometimes concluded by a hopeful reference to the benevolence of the ruler. The Our Father opens with laudatory address and then, also like conventional petitions, requests subsistence relief. In short, the Prayer conforms to the administrative form of the petition[56].

A third instance of oral communication mimicking scribal formula is found in the measure-for-measure saying which, as I have argued elsewhere[57], imitates the technical formulae used in loan documents. The standard form

---

54. BAZZANA, *BASILEIA* (n. 53), p. 166.

55. A. Kirk observes that "... writing practices, as a projection of elite power into illiterate population groups, exert effects upon oral practices. More precisely, the experience of imperial domination, and the written genres associated with that domination, will have a signal effect upon the content and forms of oral tradition that originates among illiterate villagers" (*Administrative Writing, Oral Tradition, and Q*, Paper read at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Q Section, 2004).

56. *Ibid.*, cited in manuscript form.

57. J.S. KLOPPENBORG, *Agrarian Discourse in the Sayings of Jesus*, in B. LONGENECKER – K. LIEBENGOOD (eds.), *Engaging Economics: New Testament Scenarios and Early Christian Interpretation*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2010, 104-128.

of loan agreement is framed as a first- or third person *homologia* of the borrower in the form, "I NN have had measured out (to me) by you (ὁμολογῶ μεμετρῆσθαι παρὰ σοῦ) ... and I will measure back to you by the same (or your) measuring vessel (σοι μετρήσω μέτρῳ σῷ) in the month of NN". Q 6,38 inverts this formulae, addressing not the borrower but the lender, and conveys the notion that the principle of equivalence in exchange can redound also to the lender's benefit not only in the realm of agricultural economics, but in various social relationships and can create an upward spiral of benefaction. Here the interface between scribalism and oral performance allows for the playful transformation of scribal formulae to create new forms of discourse.

2. Reoralization and Reception

Despite his neglect of the role of literate technologies in Jewish Palestine and their impact on the composition of Q, Horsley is surely correct in his insistence on the oral-performative character of Q. But how, concretely, was Q intended to be employed and how was it reoralized?

We have few guides from antiquity to help us imagine more concretely how Q was used. Much later, Justin Martyr, representing practices in Rome, states:

> And on the day called for the sun, there is a common gathering of all who live in cities or in the country, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time allows. Next, after the reader (ὁ ἀναγινώσκων) has stopped, the president admonishes and encourages with a speech to imitate these good things. Then we all rise together and pray and, as we before said, after we have finished praying, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen[58].

Justin appears to describe a non-élite replication of the reading practices described by Pliny: the reading of texts in connection with a meal, followed by some form of erudite interpretation or discussion. But a century before Justin, and in a rural rather than urban environment, we cannot assume that

---

58. Justin, *Apol.* 67,3-5, my translation. Text: καὶ τῇ τοῦ ἡλίου λεγομένῃ ἡμέρᾳ πάντων κατὰ πόλεις ἢ ἀγροὺς μενόντων ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ συνέλευσις γίνεται, καὶ τὰ ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἀποστόλων ἢ τὰ συγγράμματα τῶν προφητῶν ἀναγινώσκεται, μέχρις ἐγχωρεῖ. (4) εἶτα παυσαμένου τοῦ ἀναγινώσκοντος ὁ προεστὼς διὰ λόγου τὴν νουθεσίαν καὶ πρόκλησιν τῆς τῶν καλῶν τούτων μιμήσεως ποιεῖται. (5) ἔπειτα ἀνιστάμεθα κοινῇ πάντες καὶ εὐχὰς πέμπομεν· καί, ὡς προέφημεν, παυσαμένων ἡμῶν τῆς εὐχῆς ἄρτος προσφέρεται καὶ οἶνος καὶ ὕδωρ, καὶ ὁ προεστὼς εὐχὰς ὁμοίως καὶ εὐχαριστίας, ὅση δύναμις αὐτῷ, ἀναπέμπει, καὶ ὁ λαὸς ἐπευφημεῖ λέγων τὸ Ἀμήν.

Q functioned in this way. For one thing, it is hard to imagine that Q had already become a text comparable to the elite literary products read and discussed by Pliny and his friends. Q does not even appear to qualify as ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἀποστόλων, although it might form the basis of the *paraklesis* of which Justin speaks.

We would probably not be far wrong to think of Q as a script or an aide mémoire, encapsulating the substance of what the Q people thought most salient about the kingdom of God. As I have suggested elsewhere, it was perhaps intended to function as a resource for rhetorical emulation rather than as a 'source' for replication[59]. That is, Q, or at least its hortatory portions in Q_1[60], was meant to be re-performed and emulated in a manner analogous to the ways in which Homer and moralizing chriae, which formed the basic resources for education and moral exhortation, were variously paraphrased, expanded, abbreviated, elaborated into arguments and proofs, and used to admonish and persuade audiences. In this sense, the Q sayings that are found paraphrased and redeployed in James may indeed be the way in which Q was intended to be used[61]. We might even account for some of the verbal variation that is observed between Matthew and Luke, as well as expansions such as the extra Matthaean makarisms or *Sondergut* materials which appear in Q contexts, as the results of diverse oral performances of Q.

3. Q on the Road to a Literary Text

The editorial history of Q, interestingly, reveals a growing series of appeals to literate media and what might anachronistically been regarded as a kind of canonization. Q_1, the earliest layer of Q, although no doubt a scribal product, shows only a slight engagement with written media. To be sure, Q_1 invokes the traditions of Israel in various ways from Isaianic expectations of a golden age (Q 6,20-21), to the Holiness Code (Q 6,31), to beliefs in God's surveillance of the faithful. But there are no marked citations of scripture; to follow the arguments and thread of Q_1 one does not

---

59. J.S. KLOPPENBORG, *Emulation of the Jesus Tradition in James*, in R.L. WEBB – J.S. KLOPPENBORG (eds.), *Reading James with New Eyes* (LNTS, 342), London – New York, T&T Clark, 2007, 121-150.

60. On theories of stratification of Q and the delineation of Q_1, Q_2 and Q_3, see KLOPPENBORG, *Excavating Q* (n. 29), chap. 3.

61. On James' use of Q, see P.J. HARTIN, *James and the "Q" Sayings of Jesus* (SupplJSNT, 47), Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1991. On James' use of Q 6,20b, see W.H. WACHOB, *The Voice of Jesus in the Social Rhetoric of James* (SNTS MS, 106), Cambridge – New York, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

need to know about a written Torah and one certainly does not need to consult it for proofs.

It is only in Q_2 that one first encounters a γέγραπται formula (7,27). The significance of this lies not simply in its reference to the traditions of Israel, in this case about expectations of an eschatological messenger, but in the fact that Q_2 here grounds its assertions about John the Baptist (Q 7,18-28.31-35) in an appeal to another *text* – a text that was inaccessible to most of Q's auditors *qua* text, but which was accessible to Q's literate composers and editors. An even more dramatic appeal to literate technologies is found in Q_3, the final redactional stage, which represents Jesus as one who has sufficient facility with the *text* of the Torah to be able to quote pericopae in his debate with the devil, using the formula γέγραπται (4,4.8.10). It is only a short step to Luke's representation of Jesus in Luke 4 as someone who can actually *read* a text in public, locating the text he seeks within a bookroll which lacks running headers, or other paralinguistic marks – an accomplishment that reflects the skill of a trained lector[62]. Moreover, Q 16,17, also from the final redaction of Q[63], describes the impossibility of a *yûd* or a serif *falling* from the Law (ἢ ἰῶτα ἓν ⟦ἢ⟧ μία⟦ν⟧ κεραία⟦ν⟧ τοῦ νόμου ⟦πεσεῖν⟧)[64]. This imagines the Torah not merely as a body of law but as *letters on a page* which can (or cannot) be damaged or lost. The scroll or bookroll – the medium of the literate scribe – is here in view.

Ironically, although Q might initially have been conceived as a *resource* for re-oralization and performance, Matthew and Luke employed it as a *source* to be copied. As I have noted elsewhere with some surprise, Matthew and Luke's reproduction of Q is rather wooden, taking over more than fifty percent of Q's words[65]. While this is a great boon to those who reconstruct Q, this style of text-reproduction is in sharp contrast to the way in which other source texts were typically reproduced. It has been noted above that Diodoros reproduces at best 67% of Ephoros' words. André Pelletier's study of Josephus' use of Ps-Aristeas shows that he rarely copied verbatim from with his source; the few agreements that exist with Ps-Aristeas are mainly limited to four or five words in a row, with two sequences reaching twelve

---

62. See P.F. CRAFFERT – P.J. BOTHA, *Why Jesus Could Walk on the Sea but He Could Not Read and Write: Reflections on Historicity and Interpretation in Historical Jesus Research*, in *Neot.* 39 (2005) 5-38.

63. J.S. KLOPPENBORG, *Nomos and Ethos in Q*, in J.E. GOEHRING – J.T. SANDERS – C.W. HEDRICK (eds.), *Gospel Origins and Christian Beginnings: In Honor of J.M. Robinson*, Sonoma, CA, Polebridge, 1990, 35-48.

64. Reconstruction: ROBINSON – HOFFMANN – KLOPPENBORG, *Critical Edition of Q* (n. 6), p. 468.

65. KLOPPENBORG, *Variation* (n. 21).

and thirteen words[66]. Josephus' procedure in using the Septuagint is similar: he engaged in very generous paraphrase and rhetorical emulation, so much so that in his rendition of the Ten Words in *Ant.* 3.91-92, Josephus' eighty-two words repeat only four of the words of Exodus or Deuteronomy. In this context, Matthew and Luke's reproduction of Q is striking, and comes closer to the kinds of copying seen in the transmission of technical texts and manuals, where extensive paraphrase is not a viable practice[67]. The point in the context of this paper is that Q, irrespective of how it was intended to be used, eventually became part of the *literary* deposit of the Jesus movement and was employed by Matthew and Luke as texts to be copied and edited.

Conclusion

Several conclusions can be drawn. First, the consensus view that Q was a written text can be sustained. The "oral-only" view (Allen; Jeremias) is not only inattentive to much of the evidence, but is founded on a romantic and indefensible view of oral communication. The "partly-oral" view (Dunn; Mournet) is founded on a faulty premise and, while one may certainly debate whether particular sayings that are sometimes attributed to Q in fact came from a written text, the attempt to partition into written and oral parts lacks cogency and fails to address the internal unities that are seen in Q.

Second, Horsley's approach rightly recognizes the importance of oral communication in antiquity, and the fact that in a situation where literacy was very low, texts were "performed" rather than read in the way that modern literate readers approach texts. Nevertheless, Horsley is mistaken about the ways in which literate technologies and values connected with literacy had penetrated into rural areas. The view that Galilee was a haven of oral communication and contract-making is both anachronistic and romantic, and ignores recent studies of literacy in the Roman world.

Third, the "joined-up" (Woolf) nature of literacy in the ancient world allowed for various interfaces between scribal and oral technologies. In Q the interfacial nature of oral/literate communication is seen both in the choice of Greek as the language with which to inscribe Q, in aspects of the contents of Q, and in Q's imitation of scribal formulae.

---

66. A. PELLETIER, *Flavius Josèphe, adaptateur de la Lettre d'Aristée: Une réaction atticisante contre la Koinè* (Études et Commentaires, 45), Paris, C. Klincksieck, 1962, p. 221.

67. KLOPPENBORG, *Variation* (n. 21).

Finally, and ironically, although Q was probably intended not as a "text" to be read (that is, performed in a salon) – like Livy's history or the poems of Catullus – but rather as an aide mémoire for rhetorical emulation, the redaction history of Q indicates that it became, over the course of its editing and transmission, a text to be quoted and edited.

Supplementary Note

Since the conference in 2011, the following publications have appeared which pursue relevant aspects of the topic but which could not be incorporated.

G.B. Bazzana, *Galilean Village Scribes as the Authors of the Sayings Gospel Q*, in M. Tiwald (ed.), *Q in Context II: Social Setting and Archaeological Background of the Sayings Source* (BBB, 173), Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015, 136-148.

Id., *Kingdom of Bureaucracy: The Political Theology of Village Scribes in the Sayings Gospel Q* (BETL, 274), Leuven – Paris – Bristol, CT, Peeters, 2015.

P.J.J. Botha, *Orality and Literacy in Early Christianity* (Biblical Performance Criticism, 5), Eugene, OR, Cascade Books, 2012.

S.D. Charlesworth, *Recognizing Greek Literacy in Early Roman Documents from the Judaean Desert*, in *BASP* 51 (2014) 161-189.

L.W. Hurtado, *Oral Fixation and New Testament Studies? 'Orality', 'Performance' and Reading Texts in Early Christianity*, in *NTS* 60 (2014) 360-378.

A.J. Kirk, *Memory, Scribal Media, and the Synoptic Problem*, in P. Foster – A. Gregory – J.S . Kloppenborg – J. Verheyden (eds.), *New Studies in the Synoptic Problem. Oxford Conference, April 2008. Essays in Honour of Christopher M. Tuckett* (BETL, 239), Leuven – Paris – Walpole, MA, Peeters, 2011, 459-482.

Id., *Orality, Writing, and Phantom Sources: Appeals to Ancient Media in Some Recent Challenges to the Two Document Hypothesis*, in *NTS* 58 (2012) 1-22.

J.S. Kloppenborg, *Memory, Performance, and the Sayings of Jesus*, in *JSHJ* 10 (2012) 97-132.

Id., *Literate Media in Early Christ Groups: The Creation of a Christian Book Culture*, in *JECS* 22 (2014) 21-59.

Id., *Synoptic Problems: Collected Essays* (WUNT, 329), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2014.

Id., *Memory, Performance and the Sayings of Jesus*, in K. Galinsky (ed.), *Memory in Ancient Rome and Early Christianity*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016, 286-322.

J.A. Loubser, *Oral and Manuscript Culture in the Bible: Studies on the Media Texture of the New Testament – Exploitative Hermeneutics* (Biblical Performance Criticism, 7), Eugene, OR, Cascade Books, 2013.

E. MINCHIN (ed.), *Orality, Literacy and Performance in the Ancient World* (Orality and Literacy in the Ancient World, 9 = Mnemosyne Supplements, 335), Leiden – Boston, MA, Brill, 2012.

A. WEISSENRIEDER – R.B. COOTE (eds.), *The Interface of Orality and Writing: Speaking, Seeing, Writing in the Shaping of New Genres* (WUNT, 260), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2010.

University of Toronto   John S. KLOPPENBORG
Department for the Study of Religion
University of Toronto
Trinity College, Larkin 311
6 Hoskin Avenue
Toronto ON M5S 1H8
john.kloppenborg@utoronto.ca