

Chapter 4

TOO GOOD TO BE Q: HIGH VERBATIM AGREEMENT IN THE DOUBLE TRADITION

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It is a fact seldom acknowledged that the double tradition material in Matthew and Luke shows a remarkably high degree of verbatim agreement. It is a fact still more rarely acknowledged that the high verbatim agreement makes best sense if Luke is copying from Matthew. The issue is surprisingly straightforward, and yet it is almost always missed in discussions of the Synoptic Problem. Where two documents show very close agreement in wording in parallel passages, the best explanation is that one is copying directly from the other, not that both are copying from a hypothetical third document. Where two documents are copying from a third, we should not expect to see the kind of high verbatim agreement that we often see in the double tradition. The evidence suggests that Luke had direct contact with Matthew, and this entails dispensing with Q.

High Verbatim Agreement and an Oral Q

The issue of high verbatim agreement in the double tradition does have a place in the discussion of the Synoptic Problem, but its place is generally found in the exploration of whether or not Q is a written document, rather than in exploring the issue of its very existence. This is in large part because the idea of an oral Q is often thought to be the greatest threat to the hypothesis that the Q document was a source for Matthew and Luke. In an important article on ‘Variation in the Reproduction of the Double Tradition and an Oral Q?’,¹ John Kloppenborg develops

1. John Kloppenborg, ‘Variation in the Reproduction of the Double Tradition and an Oral Q?’, *ETL* 83 (2007), pp. 53–80.

suggestions earlier made in *Excavating Q*² that the high degree of verbatim agreement in the double tradition material provides a decisive indicator of Matthew's and Luke's dependence on a written document Q rather than a body of oral tradition. The claim is made in critical engagement with recent studies by James D. G. Dunn³ and Terence Mournet,⁴ which explore the possibility that a substantial proportion of the double tradition is derived from oral tradition and not from a written document Q.⁵

Kloppenborg pays special attention to the verbatim agreement at Mt. 3.7-10 // Lk. 3.7-9 (John's Preaching) and argues rightly that 'this type of agreement', that is, one that 'extends to the inflection of words, word order, and the use of particles', is of the kind that cannot be explained by theories of dependence on oral tradition.⁶ The point is easy to appreciate, and the Synopsis confirms and illustrates it:

Mt. 3.7-10

γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, τίς ὑπέδειξεν
 ὑμῖν φυγεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς;
 8. ποιήσατε οὖν καρπὸν ἄξιον τῆς
 μετανοίας 9. καὶ μὴ δοῦναι λέγειν ἐν
 ἑαυτοῖς· πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ.
 λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι δύναται ὁ θεὸς ἐκ
 τῶν λίθων τούτων ἐγείρει τέκνα τῷ
 Ἀβραάμ. 10. ἤδη δὲ ἡ
 ἀξίνη πρὸς τὴν ρίζαν τῶν δένδρων
 κεῖται· πᾶν οὖν δένδρον μὴ ποιοῦν
 καρπὸν καλὸν ἐκκόπτεται καὶ εἰς πῦρ
 βάλλεται.

Lk. 3.7-9

γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, τίς ὑπέδειξεν
 ὑμῖν φυγεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς;
 8. ποιήσατε οὖν καρποὺς ἀξίους τῆς
 μετανοίας καὶ μὴ ἄρξῃσθε λέγειν ἐν
 ἑαυτοῖς· πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ.
 λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι δύναται ὁ θεὸς ἐκ
 τῶν λίθων τούτων ἐγείρει τέκνα τῷ
 Ἀβραάμ. 9. ἤδη δὲ καὶ ἡ
 ἀξίνη πρὸς τὴν ρίζαν τῶν δένδρων
 κεῖται· πᾶν οὖν δένδρον μὴ ποιοῦν
 καρπὸν καλὸν ἐκκόπτεται καὶ εἰς πῦρ
 βάλλεται.

2. John S. Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), pp. 56–72.

3. James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* (Christianity in the Making, 1; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

4. Terence C. Mournet, *Oral Tradition and Literary Dependency: Variability and Stability in the Synoptic Tradition and Q* (WUNT, 2/195; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2005).

5. There are other potential targets too, like Richard Horsley and Jonathan Draper, *Whoever Hears You Hears Me: Prophets, Performance, and Tradition in Q* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999), which does not take seriously the problem of verbatim agreement in the double tradition. Horsley and Draper are also mentioned by Kloppenborg, 'Variation', p. 53, though he focuses attention on Dunn and Mournet.

6. Kloppenborg, *Excavating*, p. 57.

Offspring of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8. Bear fruit therefore worthy of repentance 9. and do not presume to say in yourselves, 'We have Abraham as father'; for I say to you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. 10. Already the axe is laid at the root of the trees; for every tree not producing good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire.

Offspring of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8. Bear fruits therefore worthy of repentance 9. and do not begin to say in yourselves, 'We have Abraham as father'; for I say to you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. 10. Already the axe is laid at the root of the trees; for every tree not producing good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire.

The agreement is so close that it would be easier to draw attention to the disagreements than to the agreements. Where Matthew has δόξητε ('presume'), Luke has ἄρξῃσθε ('begin'); where Matthew has the singular καρπὸν ἄξιον ('fruit worthy'), Luke has the plural καρποὺς ἀξίους (fruits worthy). Luke has an additional καί ('also, even', 3.9). Otherwise, the passages are identical.⁷

The phenomenon of high verbatim agreement of this kind is common among double tradition pericopae. If one were to express the agreements by means of percentages, there are passages with agreements between Matthew and Luke of 98% (Mt. 6.24 // Lk. 16.13), 93% (Mt. 12.43-45 // Lk. 11.24-26), 90% (Mt. 11.20-24 // Lk. 10.13-15), 88% (Mt. 3.12 // Lk. 3.17), 88% (Mt. 12.27-32 // Lk. 11.19-23) and 85% (Mt. 23.37-39 // Lk. 13.34-35).⁸

One might add to these figures and quantify the agreement in another way, by noting the lengths of sequential agreements. In the example above, Mt. 3.9-10 // Lk. 3.7b-9, there are uninterrupted strings of 12, 12.5, 20 and 24 words in sequential agreement. These sequences are striking, and they are not unique.⁹ Mt. 6.24 // Lk. 16.13 provides the following example:

7. Cf. Kloppenborg, 'Variation', p. 53: 'Matthew has 76 words in Greek, 61 or 80% of which are identical with Luke in lexical form and inflection. This would rise to 63 or 83% if καρπὸν and ἄξιον are included as agreements. Luke's version has 72 words in Greek, 61 or 85% are identical with Matthew, 63 or 87.5% if καρπούς and ἀξίους are counted as agreements.'

8. These figures 'are based on the number of common words divided by the total number of Lukan words' (Kloppenborg, 'Variation', p. 53 n. 1, and *Excavating*, p. 56). The figures come from Robert Morgenthaler, *Statistische Synopse* (Zurich/Stuttgart: Gotthelf-Verlag, 1971), pp. 258-61.

9. See John C. Poirier, 'Memory, Written Sources, and the Synoptic Problem: A Response to Robert K. McIver and Marie Carroll', *JBL* 123 (2004), pp. 315-22, in response to Robert McIver and Marie Carroll, 'Experiments to Develop Criteria for

Mt. 6.24

*Οὐδείς δύναται δυσὶ κυρίοις
δουλεύειν. ἢ γὰρ τὸν ἓνα μισήσει καὶ
τὸν ἕτερον ἀγαπήσει, ἢ ἑνὸς
ἀνθέξεται καὶ τοῦ ἑτέρου
καταφρονήσει. οὐ δύνασθε θεῷ
δουλεύειν καὶ μαμωνᾷ.*

*No one can serve two masters; for a
slave will either hate the one and love
the other, or be devoted to the one and
despise the other. You cannot serve
God and mammon.*

Lk. 16.13

*Οὐδείς οἰκέτης δύναται δυσὶ κυρίοις
δουλεύειν. ἢ γὰρ τὸν ἓνα μισήσει καὶ
τὸν ἕτερον ἀγαπήσει, ἢ ἑνὸς
ἀνθέξεται καὶ τοῦ ἑτέρου
καταφρονήσει. οὐ δύνασθε θεῷ
δουλεύειν καὶ μαμωνᾷ.*

*No slave can serve two masters; for a
slave will either hate the one and love
the other, or be devoted to the one and
despise the other. You cannot serve
God and mammon.¹⁰*

The agreement is again very close. The only disagreement is the presence of οἰκέτης ('slave, servant') in Luke. Subsequent to that word, the verbatim string is 26 words. Similarly high is the following verse, where Matthew and Luke are identical across a string of 24 words:

Mt. 12.41

*ἄνδρες Νινευῖται ἀναστήσονται ἐν τῇ
κρίσει μετὰ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης καὶ
κατὰκρινοῦσιν αὐτήν. ὅτι
μετενόησαν εἰς τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰωνᾶ, καὶ
ἰδοὺ πλεῖον Ἰωνᾶ ὧδε.*

*The people of Nineveh will rise up at
the judgement with this generation and
condemn it, because they repented at
the proclamation of Jonah, and see,
something greater than Jonah is here!*

Lk. 11.32

*ἄνδρες Νινευῖται ἀναστήσονται ἐν τῇ
κρίσει μετὰ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης καὶ
κατὰκρινοῦσιν αὐτήν. ὅτι
μετενόησαν εἰς τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰωνᾶ, καὶ
ἰδοὺ πλεῖον Ἰωνᾶ ὧδε.*

*The people of Nineveh will rise up at
the judgement with this generation
and condemn it, because they repented
at the proclamation of Jonah, and see,
something greater than Jonah is here!*

Even this is not the longest verbatim string in the double tradition. The longest verbatim string in the double tradition is a remarkable 27 words:

Determining the Existence of Written Sources, and Their Potential Implications for the Synoptic Problem', *JBL* 121 (2002), pp. 667–87, for a helpful discussion and tabulation of examples of high sequential agreements. Poirier rightly uses the term sequential order to describe words in 'conjoined sequence', in contrast to Robert Morgenthaler, *Statistische*, who includes sequences with interrupting words.

10. NRSV, slightly adjusted.

Mt. 11.25-27

Ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ
 Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν·
 ἔξομολογοῦμαί σοι, πάτερ, κύριε τοῦ
 οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς, ὅτι ἔκρυψας
 ταῦτα ἀπὸ σοφῶν καὶ συνετῶν, καὶ
 ἀπεκάλυψας αὐτὰ νηπίοις· 26 ναὶ ὁ
 πατήρ, ὅτι οὕτως εὐδοκία ἐγένετο
 ἔμπροσθέν σου. 27 Πάντα μοι
 παρεδόθη ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς μου, καὶ
 οὐδεὶς ἐπιγινώσκει τὸν υἱὸν εἰ μὴ
 ὁ πατήρ, οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα τις
 ἐπιγινώσκει εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱὸς καὶ ὃ ἔαν
 βούληται ὁ υἱὸς ἀποκαλύψαι.

At that time Jesus
 said, 'I thank you,
 Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
 because you have hidden *these things*
from the wise and the intelligent and
have revealed them to infants; 26. yes,
Father, for such was your gracious will.
 27. *All things have been handed over*
to me by my Father; and no one knows
 the Son except the Father, and
 no one knows the Father except the Son
 and anyone to whom the Son chooses
 to reveal him.

Lk. 10.21-22

Ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἡγαλλιάσατο ἐν
 τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ καὶ εἶπεν·
 ἔξομολογοῦμαί σοι, πάτερ, κύριε τοῦ
 οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς, ὅτι ἀπέκρυψας
 ταῦτα ἀπὸ σοφῶν καὶ συνετῶν, καὶ
 ἀπεκάλυψας αὐτὰ νηπίοις· ναὶ ὁ
 πατήρ, ὅτι οὕτως εὐδοκία ἐγένετο¹¹
 ἔμπροσθέν σου. 22 Πάντα μοι
 παρεδόθη ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς μου, καὶ
 οὐδεὶς γινώσκει τίς ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς εἰ μὴ
 ὁ πατήρ, καὶ τίς ἐστὶν ὁ πατήρ
 εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱὸς καὶ ὃ ἔαν
 βούληται ὁ υἱὸς ἀποκαλύψαι.

At that same hour Jesus rejoiced in the
 Holy Spirit and said, 'I thank you,
 Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
 because you have hidden *these things*
from the wise and the intelligent and
have revealed them to infants; yes,
Father, for such was your gracious will.
 22. *All things have been handed over*
to me by my Father; and no one knows
 who the Son is except the Father, or
 who the Father is except the Son
 and anyone to whom the Son chooses
 to reveal him.'

Indeed, the string is only broken at each end by the presence of ἔκρυψας
 // ἀπέκρυψας and ἐπιγινώσκει // γινώσκει.

Although the majority of examples of really high verbatim agreement
 occur in passages featuring the words of Jesus, some occur in other
 passages.¹² John the Baptist's preaching (Mt. 3.7-10 // Lk. 3.7-9,

11. The verbatim string of agreement is broken at this point if one instead reads
 ἐγένετο εὐδοκία with Greeven in Lk. 10.21.

12. The suggestion that high verbatim agreement occurs in such passages
 because they feature words of Jesus is appealing in the abstract but breaks down on
 closer inspection, not only because of high verbatim agreement in words of char-
 acters other than Jesus, but also because many of the low-verbatim agreement
 pericopae in the Synoptics are in words of Jesus, and especially parables, e.g. Mt.
 25.14-30 // Lk. 19.11-27 (Parable of the Talents / Pounds) and Mt. 22.1-14 // Lk.
 14.15-24 (Wedding Banquet / Great Supper). The variation in agreement may
 therefore have more to do with form than content. Broadly speaking, the evangelists,

discussed above) is a case in point, and another passage with high verbatim agreement is Mt. 8.5-13 // Lk. 7.1-10, especially the anonymous centurion's words:

Mt. 8.9-10

καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπός εἰμι ὑπὸ
ἐξουσίαν, ἔχων ὑπ'
ἐμαυτὸν στρατιώτας, καὶ λέγω
τούτῳ, Πορεύθητι, καὶ πορεύεται, καὶ
ἄλλῳ, Ἔρχου, καὶ ἔρχεται, καὶ τῷ
δούλῳ μου, Ποίησον τοῦτο, καὶ ποιεῖ.
10 ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς
ἐθαύμασεν καὶ εἶπεν τοῖς
ἀκολουθοῦσιν, Ἀμὴν
λέγω ὑμῖν, παρ' οὐδενὶ
τοσαύτην πίστιν ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ εὗρον.

*'For I also am a man under
authority, with soldiers under me; and
I say to one, "Go", and he goes, and to
another, "Come", and he comes, and
to my slave, "Do this", and the slave
does it'. 10. When Jesus heard him, he
was amazed and said to those who
followed him, 'Truly I tell you, in no
one in Israel have I found such faith'.*

Lk. 7.8-9

καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπός εἰμι ὑπὸ
ἐξουσίαν τασσόμενος, ἔχων ὑπ'
ἐμαυτὸν στρατιώτας, καὶ λέγω
τούτῳ, Πορεύθητι, καὶ πορεύεται, καὶ
ἄλλῳ, Ἔρχου, καὶ ἔρχεται, καὶ τῷ
δούλῳ μου, Ποίησον τοῦτο, καὶ ποιεῖ.
9 ἀκούσας δὲ ταῦτα ὁ Ἰησοῦς
ἐθαύμασεν αὐτόν, καὶ στραφεὶς τῷ
ἄκολουθοῦντι αὐτῷ ὄχλῳ εἶπεν,
Λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐδὲ
ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ τοσαύτην πίστιν εὗρον.

*'For I also am a man set under
authority, with soldiers under me; and
I say to one, "Go", and he goes, and
to another, "Come", and he comes,
and to my slave, "Do this", and the
slave does it'. 9. When Jesus heard
this he was amazed at him, and
turning to the crowd that followed
him, he said, 'I tell you, not even in
Israel have I found such faith',*

This example of high verbatim agreement, featuring an uninterrupted string of 25 words (from ἔχων to ἀκούσας δέ) is particularly interesting as it occurs in one of James D. G. Dunn's choice examples of pericopae that might be explained by mutual dependence on oral tradition.¹³

especially Luke, show greater variation in narrative material than in non-narrative material, whether that narrative is attributed to Jesus or to the narrator, and whether the sayings are attributed to Jesus or to others.

13. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 214–16, esp. 214, 'a fine example of oral traditioning, or, if it is preferred, of Evangelists writing the story in oral mode'. The latter idea, however, of the evangelists writing 'in oral mode', is quite different from evidence of mutual dependence on oral tradition, and sounds like a concession to the case for literary dependence. It is, in fact, difficult to imagine a weaker example for Dunn's thesis than this one. Not only does it feature an example of the highest verbatim agreement anywhere in the Synoptics, which elsewhere Dunn would regard as a sign of literary dependence, but also Matthew and Luke agree in order, with only the Leper (Mt. 8.1-4) intervening. Dunn, 'Altering the Default Setting: Re-

Passages like these point in the same direction. Whether one is looking at agreement as percentages of the total number of words, or whether one is looking at verbatim strings of agreement, the conclusion is the same. These double tradition passages feature a remarkably high degree of verbatim agreement and those who have applied their attention to them agree that theories of oral mediation of such material are all but impossible.¹⁴ If passages like are not related on the literary level, then it would be impossible to demonstrate a literary link between any two or three works.¹⁵

High Verbatim Agreement and a Written Q

If it is clear that the double tradition features many examples of high verbatim agreement, it is important to ask about the implications of this situation not only for the narrower question of the nature of Q, but also for the Synoptic Problem more broadly. When Kloppenborg and others

envisaging the Early Transmission of the Jesus Tradition', *NTS* 49 (2003), pp. 139–75 (174), counters that the sequence could have been held in oral tradition, but this misses the point that Matthew (7.28) and Luke (7.1a) provide a narrative segue with a distinctly Matthaean literary flavor; see my *The Case against Q: Studies in Markan Priority and the Synoptic Problem* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2002), pp. 172 n. 6, 175, 181–2. In defense of the literary nature of the copying in Mt. 7.28; 8.5–13 // Lk. 7.1–10, it is also worth noting that Luke shows editorial fatigue in the steady increase of agreement with Matthew as the pericope progresses, cf. my 'Fatigue in the Synoptics', *NTS* 44 (1998), pp. 45–58, especially 56. Cf. also Mournet, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 226–31 and 284, for some critique of Dunn's attribution of this pericope to mutual dependence on oral tradition.

14. Dunn might at first appear to be an exception here, given his advocacy of the Centurion's Servant as an orally derived pericope (see previous note), but with this exception, he spends time making clear that he sees pericopae with high verbatim agreement as pointing to a literary solution to the Synoptic Problem; see, especially, Dunn, 'Default', pp. 158–60. Note, however, that Dunn tends to make the unfortunate equation between 'the two-document hypothesis' and 'literary interdependence between the Synoptic Gospels', e.g. 'I remain convinced of the essential correctness of the two-document hypothesis. That is to say, the evidence continues to persuade me that Mark was the earliest of the Synoptic Gospels, and that there was a further document behind Matthew and Luke on which both drew (Q). The primary evidence is as it has always been: the closeness of verbal parallels between two or three of the three documents...' (p. 158; cf. also pp. 159–60).

15. It may be worth adding that evidence of a direct link does not in itself say anything about the mode of the link, whether through direct copying by sight, direct copying through dictation, or through memory of the text, or combinations of these. It is important not to confuse memory of literary text, for example, with memory of oral tradition.

draw attention to the high degree of verbatim agreement in double tradition passages, they are doing so in order to establish the literary nature of Q. It is a written document, and not an amorphous set of oral traditions. In the context of discussions about the nature of Q, this straightforward but significant point is worth making as clearly as possible – high verbatim agreement in double tradition points to the existence of written text. Given the extent to which many scholars continue to flirt with an oral Q,¹⁶ or oral Qs,¹⁷ it is necessary to underline this evidence.

However, the same evidence that is telling in arguments against an oral Q is also relevant to the argument against a written Q. High verbatim agreement in the double tradition actually helps to focus the question of the very existence of Q. The basic problem is that the level of agreement is very high for two authors who are independently redacting a shared document. It is the kind of agreement that is more likely to point to direct copying by one evangelist of another's work. John Poirier explains the phenomenon of direct copying over against mutual dependence on a third document like this:

One should always expect a lower rate of agreement between the two pendant writings within a fork model of transmission than between either of those writings and its source, because the agreements in the former case are mediated by a third writing while those in the latter case are unmediated.¹⁸

Since this point is rarely made in studies of the Synoptic Problem,¹⁹ it will be worth taking a moment to spell out the issues.

16. This is endemic in popular scholarly opinion and teaching, in spite of the high verbatim agreement in the double tradition; see, e.g., John Riches, *The Bible: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 22, 'Similarly, the material ascribed to Q (broadly the sayings which Matthew and Luke have in common) may also have been in oral, not written, form'. Examples of this could be multiplied.

17. In this context, I will leave open the issue of a single documentary Q vs. several smaller collections, but in a broader discussion, it would also be necessary to draw attention to the parallels in order in the double tradition (like the Centurion's Servant in Q 7.1-10 following the Sermon in Q 6.20-49, with the neat segue in Q 7.1).

18. Poirier, 'Memory, Written Sources', p. 317.

19. But see John C. Poirier, 'Statistical Studies of the Verbal Agreements and their Impact on the Synoptic Problem', *Currents in Biblical Research* 7 (2008), pp. 68–123 (80): 'For readers who do not concede the **2ST**, Carlston and Norlin's contention that the DT shows a higher rate of agreement than the **TT** might actually be a statistical demonstration that the Matthew–Luke agreements *result from direct borrowing between Matthew and Luke*, rather than from their independent use of a

According to the Two-Document hypothesis (= 2DH), Matthew and Luke are both independently copying Mark and Q. We have access to Mark, so we have an idea what Matthew and Luke look like when they are working from a shared source. We know the degree of verbatim agreement to expect. The question, then, is whether the degree of verbatim agreement is similar when they are using Q. It has been clear, at least since A. M. Honoré's pioneering study,²⁰ that the degree of verbatim agreement between Matthew and Luke is higher in the double tradition material that they share with one another than it is in the triple tradition material that they share with one another but also with Mark. Honoré compares pairs of Gospels first in material that is shared only by two Gospels ('Double tradition',²¹ below) and then in material that is shared by all three ('Triple tradition', below). Honoré calculates the number of verbal agreements between the pairs of Gospels in each type of material, and expresses the number of agreements as a percentage of the number of words in that material. (See Table 1, opposite.)

The key figures here are those on lines 3-4 of each section, for the double tradition in Matthew and Luke and the triple tradition in Matthew and Luke. What is noticeable is that the degree of verbatim agreement between Matthew and Luke in double tradition is much higher than the degree of verbatim agreement between Matthew and Luke in triple tradition. In Matthew and Luke's double tradition, the verbal agreements make up 39.21% of Matthew's double tradition and 39.08% of Luke's double tradition. This contrasts with the figures for the triple tradition, where 29.86% of Matthew's triple tradition features verbal agreements with Luke and 31.57% of Luke's triple tradition features verbal agreements with Matthew.

In other words, Matthew and Luke are much closer to one another in double tradition than they are in triple tradition. This is a surprising result on the 2DH, according to which triple tradition and double tradition are the result of similar phenomena, Matthew's and Luke's independent use

common source. Higher agreement between Matthew and Luke in the **DT** is precisely what we should expect if Matthew knew Luke, or Luke knew Matthew' (emphasis original).

20. A. M. Honoré, 'A Statistical Study of the Synoptic Problem', *NovT* 10 (1968), pp. 95–147.

21. The term 'double tradition' is normally used as a technical term for the material shared by Matthew and Luke that is not present in Mark. However, here 'double tradition' has its more literal meaning of material appearing in *any* two Gospels. For the difficulties with describing this data, and some suggestions of how to bring clarity, see further my *The Synoptic Problem: A Way through the Maze* (The Biblical Seminar, 80; London: Sheffield Academic, 2001), pp. 48–50.

of a third source, Mark for triple tradition, Q for double tradition. On the other hand, the result is expected on the Farrer hypothesis (= FH), according to which double tradition and triple tradition are different. Double tradition is the result of Luke's direct copying of Matthew whereas triple tradition is largely the result of material mediated to both via Mark.

Table 1. *Comparison of Double and Triple Traditions*²²

<i>1</i> <i>Gospels</i>	<i>2</i> <i>Total</i> <i>words</i>	<i>3</i> <i>Length as</i> <i>percentage of</i> <i>other member</i>	<i>4</i> <i>Verbal</i> <i>agreements</i>	<i>5</i> <i>Agreements</i> <i>as percentage</i> <i>of member</i>
<i>Double tradition</i>				
Matthew	1764 (Mt)	86.73	827	46.88 (Mt)
& Mark	2034 (Mk)	115.31		40.66 (Mk)
Matthew	4461 (Mt)	99.66	1749	39.21 (Mt)
& Luke	4476 (Lk)	100.34		39.08 (Lk)
Mark	357 (Mk)	130.29	126	35.29 (Mk)
& Luke	274 (Lk)	76.75		45.99 (Lk)
<i>Triple tradition</i>				
Matthew	8336 (Mt)	96.59	3760	45.11 (22.89)
& Mark	8630 (Mk)	103.53	(1908)	43.56 (22.11)
Matthew	8336 (Mt)	105.73	2489 (637)	29.86 (7.64)
& Luke	7884 (Lk)	94.58		31.57 (8.08)
Mark	8630 (Mk)	109.46	2891	33.49 (12.03)
& Luke	7884 (Lk)	91.36	(1039)	36.66 (13.17)

Honoré himself did not draw these conclusions from his data and the point has gone largely unnoticed in discussions of the Synoptic Problem, at least in part because the more pressing question has appeared to be the literary nature of Q.²³ The same is true in Carlston and Norlin's

22. Honoré, 'Statistical Study', p. 112 (where this is table 10). The only adjustment I have made is to bring the term '*Double tradition*' down into the body of the table, rather than leaving it floating under the title of the table as it is in Honoré, and adding underlining to draw attention to the key percentages. Like Carlston and Norlin (see below), Honoré does not remark on the relevance of these figures for the question of the existence of Q.

23. Honoré underestimated the extent to which his figures supported the FH because of a misunderstanding. Honoré assumes that if Matthew used Mark and Luke used both, Luke would have made greater use of the more recent Gospel, Matthew (see esp. p. 118). However, Honoré appears to have been unfamiliar with

subsequent statistical study,²⁴ which effectively corroborates and further elucidates Honoré's data. Carlston and Norlin break down the triple tradition and double tradition figures by forms – narrative, words of Jesus and miscellaneous words. In tabular form, it looks like this:

Table 2. *The Degree of Correspondence between Matthew and Luke*²⁵

Triple Tradition:

<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Luke</i>	<i>Average</i>
1. Narrative Material		667+670
667/1327 = 50.2%	670/1429 = 46.9%	1327+1429 = 48.5%
2. Words of Jesus		631+654
631/995 = 63.5%	654/957 = 68.3%	995+957 = 65.8%
3. Miscellaneous sayings- material		190+167
190/335 = 56.7%	167/277 = 60.3%	335+227 = 58.5%
4. Total		
1488/2657 = 56.0%	1491/2663 = 56.0%	2967/5320 = 56.0%

Double Tradition:

<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Luke</i>	<i>Average</i>
1. Narrative Material		127+127
127/228 = 55.7%	127/245 = 51.8%	228+245 = 53.7%
2. Words of Jesus		1538+1543
1538/2212 = 69.5%	1543/2096 = 73.6%	2212+2096 = 71.5%
3. Miscellaneous sayings- material		189+182
189/216 = 87.5%	182/225 = 80.9%	216+225 = 84.1%
4. Total		
1854/2656 = 69.8%	1853/2566 = 72.2%	3707/5222 = 71.0% ²⁶

A. M. Farrer, 'On Dispensing with Q', in D. E. Nineham (ed.), *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), pp. 55–88, which proposes that Luke made Mark, the older Gospel, the structural basis for his own, supplementing with Matthew's newer material. Charles E. Carlston and Dennis Norlin, 'Once More – Statistics and Q', *HTR* 64 (1971), pp. 59–78, make the same mistake in ignorance of Farrer (pp. 73–74).

24. Carlston and Norlin, 'Once More'.

25. This table is adapted from Carlston and Norlin, 'Once More', p. 71. It is also reproduced in Sharon L. Mattila, 'A Problem Still Clouded: Yet Again: Statistics and "Q"', *NovT* 36 (1994), pp. 313–29 (315). See also the summary version in Kloppenborg, 'Variation', p. 55. However, Kloppenborg's use of only the percentages and not the word counts masks the fact that several of the sets of data may be too small to be statistically significant (especially miscellaneous sayings in both double and triple tradition).

26. Carlston and Norlin's figures are considerably higher than Honoré's because they are much more liberal than he about what counts as a verbal agreement, includ-

For those who find figures off-putting, this table can be expressed fairly simply in words. Matthew and Luke show consistently higher degrees of verbatim agreement in double tradition than they do in triple tradition,²⁷ and this is the case across each of several categories, narrative material, sayings of Jesus, and sayings of others.²⁸ Although the sample sizes for narrative material and miscellaneous sayings are relatively small,²⁹ it is worth noting that in every case, the same pattern obtains, including the important and reasonably sized category of sayings of Jesus. Carlston and Norlin sum this up by noting that ‘the use of ‘Q’ is even more conservative than the use of Mark, possibly something like 27 per cent more conservative’.³⁰

The issues raised by Carlston and Norlin’s study are the same as those raised above with respect to Honoré’s study. Why should Matthew and Luke apparently be so much more conservative in their use of Q’s wording than they are in their use of Mark’s wording, even when one compares the words of Jesus in both sets of material? The point of interest is that the statistics make sense if Luke is borrowing directly from Matthew in the double tradition material. They cohere with a scenario in which the double tradition is due to direct borrowing, rather than mutual use of a shared source. The data encourage us to take Luke’s use of Matthew seriously, and this means dispensing with Q.

It might be said in response that too much emphasis should not be placed on Honoré’s or Carlston and Norlin’s data. After all, there are question marks over the size of several of the data samples. The category ‘miscellaneous sayings material’ in the double tradition, for example, is a mere 216 words in Matthew and 225 words in Luke. This is hardly enough for a meaningful comparison.³¹ Further, it is worth pointing out

ing even synonyms (‘Once More’, pp. 63–4). For a criticism of this liberal counting approach, see Mattila, ‘A Problem Still Clouded’, pp. 320–1. For a response, see Charles E. Carlston and Dennis Norlin, ‘Statistics and Q – Some Further Observations’, *NovT* 41 (1999), pp. 108–23 (119–21).

27. Carlston and Norlin summarize it in this way, ‘Matthew and Luke are substantially closer to one another in the Double Tradition than in the Triple Tradition materials’ (‘Statistics and Q’, p. 118).

28. See, however, Mattila, ‘A Problem Still Clouded’, pp. 316–19, for the problem of placing too much emphasis on statistics with small sample sizes, and see Carlston and Norlin, ‘Statistics and Q’, 114–15, for a response. Mattila, ‘Negotiating the Clouds Around Statistics and “Q”’, *NovT* 46 (2004), pp. 105–31 (117–19), returns to the issue again.

29. See the previous note.

30. Carlston and Norlin, ‘Once More’, p. 77.

31. See above, n. 25.

that since the double tradition material is relatively rich in sayings, the figures for the double tradition may be higher than the figures for triple tradition simply because of this. In other words, the contrast between the two data sets may be explained as much by form as by source.³²

However, these points are not enough to gainsay the impact made by the high verbatim agreement in the double tradition. Although some of the data samples are small, they do point in the same direction – they do not provide contrary evidence. Moreover, the issue of form helps to focus the issue. In the category of Jesus' sayings, Carlston and Norlin's figures show a higher degree of agreement between Matthew and Luke in double tradition than in the triple tradition (65.8% over against 71.5%).³³ In so far as the figures provide some guidance, they point to the greater degree of closeness between Matthew and Luke in the double tradition than in the triple tradition.³⁴ Nevertheless, these statistics can only be suggestive. They may point to the plausibility of a particular theory, but they do not establish or demonstrate it. We are dealing with human authors in human communities in particular places in particular times, with all the quirks, anomalies and unexpected outcomes that this brings about.

32. This is one of Mattila's key points, and perhaps the strongest point in her critique. See especially 'Negotiating the Clouds', p. 118, 'I find their [Carlston and Norlin's] main argument misleading because the Double tradition is overwhelmingly sayings material, and thus would only be expected to be more conservative than the Triple tradition, which contains a large proportion of narrative material'.

33. It is arguable also that Carlston and Norlin should not have separated out Jesus' sayings from other sayings. The data set 'sayings' is a (very broadly conceived) form whereas 'Jesus', 'John' and 'others' are the named speakers. A careful look at the data suggests that form is more important than the identity of the speaker. There are often great disparities between parallel narrative parables, for example, which may suggest that the form (narrative) is more important than the speaker (Jesus).

34. Mattila attempts to refute Carlston and Norlin's figures by producing her own independent statistical analysis in 'Negotiating the Clouds', pp. 120–7. There are, however, several difficulties with her analysis, including but not limited to (1) the claim to avoid sayings that quote Scripture (Mt. 10.34–36 // Lk. 12.51–53 quotes Mic 7.6; Mt. 21.13 // Lk. 19.46 is a famous composite quotation of Isa 56.7 and Jer 7.11); (2) the listing of Mark/Q overlap passages among triple-tradition pericopae, which in the context of this study transfers material that belongs in one table to another (Mt. 10.19–20 // Lk. 12.11–12; Mt. 13.31b–32 // Lk. 13.18b–19; Mt. 16.6b // Lk. 12.1b; and Mt. 18.6–7 // Lk. 17.1b–3a); (3) the inclusion of the Lucan woes (Lk. 6.24–26) in the double tradition in spite of the fact that it is unparalleled in Matthew; and (4) the exclusion from consideration of speech from characters other than Jesus (John the Baptist, the Centurion), which is a matter of speaker rather than form, and which certainly skews the figures.

Therefore, while the statistics are suggestive, the key factor to consider is the presence of multiple cases of high verbatim agreement in the double tradition. The more examples there are of high verbatim agreement, the more difficult it becomes to attribute these to Matthew's and Luke's independent use of Q, regardless of the overall figures. The difficulty with the statistics is that passages featuring relatively low verbatim agreement have an impact on the overall numbers in a way that might end up being misleading. It is an issue that is focused when we remember that the high verbatim agreement in one place that is suggestive of direct contact is not negated by low verbatim agreement in another place that is less clearly diagnostic of direct contact. Or, to put it another way, parallel passages with high verbatim agreement are always going to be more helpful in diagnosing the use of a source than passages with low verbatim agreement.³⁵

The issue can be illustrated by looking at how many of the best examples of high verbatim agreement occur in double tradition material. John Poirier provides a chart of the best examples of sequential agreements in the Synoptic Gospels.³⁶ Of the thirty-eight examples that he lists, sixteen of them occur in Matthew // Mark pairs,³⁷ four occur in Mark // Luke pairs and eighteen of them occur in Matthew // Luke pairs. Of these, sixteen are in the Matthew–Luke double tradition (and the only two found in the Matthew–Luke triple tradition are there by virtue of minor

35. This is related to the issue of what I call the 'plagiarist's charter', where the lack of use of a source in one place does not negate the use of the source in another place in the same work; cf. my *Thomas and the Gospels: The Case for Thomas's Familiarity with the Synoptics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), pp. 54–6.

36. Poirier, 'Memory, Written Sources', p. 320. His chart provides a substantially corrected and updated version of the one provided in McIver and Carroll, 'Experiments to Develop', p. 681. Nevertheless, the same conclusions could also be drawn from the truncated table provided by McIver and Carroll, which lists twenty-three passages that feature high verbatim agreement (sixteen or more words in conjoined sequence), nine in Matthew // Mark material, three in Mark // Luke material, nine in Matthew // Luke double tradition, and two in Matthew // Luke triple tradition with minor agreements. McIver and Carroll's threshold of sixteen words as a criterion for finding copying is based on a flaw in applying their experimental data with contemporary English-speaking students to ancient texts written in Greek. They are comparing results from experiments using a non-inflected language (English) with an inflected language (Greek), and they do not consider the fact that it takes many words to say something in contemporary English than it takes to say the same thing in Koine Greek.

37. The majority of these are Matthew // Mark parallels in triple tradition pericopae, though examples like Mt. 15.8-9 // Mk 7.6-7 occur in material paralleled only in Matthew and Mark.

agreements against Mark).³⁸ The data sets here paint a strong picture and it is worth serious reflection. Where there are lengthy sequential agreements between pairs of Gospels, these occur overwhelmingly in places where the FH sees direct copying, Matthew's use of Mark, Luke's use of Mark, Luke's use of Matthew. On the 2DH, there is a striking disparity between the data sets. On the one hand, there are sequential agreements, as one would expect, in pairs of Gospels that are directly linked – Matthew's use of Mark, Luke's use of Mark – but on the other hand, there are many sequential agreements in Gospels that are only indirectly linked via Q. The latter might not be a problem if it were not for the absence of sequential agreements in this chart between Matthew and Luke in triple tradition.³⁹

Double Tradition and Triple Agreements

In order to make sure that the point is made with maximum clarity, it will be worth a final reflection on the nature of the comparison between triple tradition and double tradition in Matthew and Luke. The fact that most scholars do not notice the importance of the high verbatim agreement in the double tradition may result from overfamiliarity with the labels we use and from the way that we look at the Synopsis. The comparison of Matthew and Luke in 'triple tradition' material instantly alerts us to the nature of the comparison, that Matthew and Luke are copying from a third source. Where there is an agreement in this material, we call it 'triple agreement' and the greater the triple agreement, the more impressive it appears. But when it comes to 'double tradition', we speak instead of 'double agreement' and on the 2DH we may not always make the necessary mental adjustment that here too we are talking about *triple* agreement, agreement between Matthew, Q and Luke.

To illustrate the point, let us take a look again at the Synopsis. The preaching of John is a good example of a double tradition pericope with high verbatim agreement. On the 2DH, these 'double agreements' in the Synopsis are actually triple agreements between Matthew, Q and Luke. With the Q column here added, and the agreement underlined, one has a clear view of the extent of this triple tradition across the three works:

38. On these two examples, see further below.

39. Once again, this is with the exception of the two examples of Matthew and Luke agreeing in triple tradition with minor agreements, a phenomenon that is hardly congenial to the 2DH. See further below.

Mt. 3.7-10

γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, τίς
ὕπέδειξεν ὑμῖν φυγεῖν
ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς;

8 ποιήσατε οὖν καρπὸν
ἄξιον τῆς μετανοίας 9 καὶ
μὴ δόξητε λέγειν ἐν
ἑαυτοῖς· πατέρα ἔχομεν
τὸν Ἀβραάμ. λέγω γὰρ
ὑμῖν ὅτι δύναται ὁ θεὸς ἐκ
τῶν λίθων τούτων ἐγεῖραι
τέκνα τῷ Ἀβραάμ.
10 ἤδη δὲ ἡ
ἀξίνη πρὸς τὴν
ρίζαν τῶν δένδρων
κεῖται· πᾶν οὖν δένδρον
μὴ ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλὸν
ἐκκόπτεται καὶ εἰς πῦρ
βάλλεται.

*Offspring of vipers!
Who warned you to flee
from the
coming wrath? Bear fruit
therefore worthy of
repentance and do not
presume to say in
yourselves, 'We have
Abraham as father'; for I
say to you that God is
able
from these stones to raise
up children to Abraham.*

*And already the axe is
laid at the root of the
trees;
for every tree not
producing good fruit is
cut down and cast into
the fire.*

Q 3.7-9

γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, τίς
ὕπέδειξεν ὑμῖν φυγεῖν
ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης
ὀργῆς;

8 ποιήσατε οὖν καρπὸν(ν)
ἄξιον(ν) τῆς μετανοίας καὶ
μὴ (δό)ξη(τε) λέγειν ἐν
ἑαυτοῖς· πατέρα ἔχομεν
τὸν Ἀβραάμ. λέγω γὰρ
ὑμῖν ὅτι δύναται ὁ θεὸς
ἐκ
τῶν λίθων τούτων ἐγεῖραι
τέκνα τῷ Ἀβραάμ. 9 ἤδη
δὲ [] ἡ ἀξίνη πρὸς τὴν
ρίζαν τῶν δένδρων
κεῖται· πᾶν οὖν δένδρον
μὴ ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλὸν
ἐκκόπτεται καὶ εἰς πῦρ
βάλλεται.

*Offspring of vipers!
Who warned you to flee
from the
coming wrath? Bear
fruit therefore worthy of
repentance and do not
presume to say in
yourselves, 'We have
Abraham as father'; for
I say to you that God is
able
from these stones to
raise up children to
Abraham.*

*And already the axe is
laid at the root of the
trees;
for every tree not
producing good fruit is
cut down and cast into
the fire.*

Lk. 3.7-9

γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, τίς
ὕπέδειξεν ὑμῖν φυγεῖν
ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς;

8 ποιήσατε οὖν καρποὺς
ἄξιους τῆς μετανοίας καὶ
μὴ ἄρξησθε λέγειν ἐν
ἑαυτοῖς· πατέρα ἔχομεν
τὸν Ἀβραάμ. λέγω γὰρ
ὑμῖν ὅτι δύναται ὁ θεὸς ἐκ
τῶν λίθων τούτων ἐγεῖραι
τέκνα τῷ Ἀβραάμ.
9 ἤδη δὲ καὶ ἡ ἀξίνη πρὸς
τὴν
ρίζαν τῶν δένδρων
κεῖται· πᾶν οὖν δένδρον
μὴ ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλὸν
ἐκκόπτεται καὶ εἰς πῦρ
βάλλεται.

*Offspring of vipers!
Who warned you to flee
from the
coming wrath? Bear
fruits therefore worthy of
repentance and do not
begin to say in
yourselves, 'We have
Abraham as father'; for I
say to you that God is
able
from these stones to raise
up children to Abraham.*

*And already also the axe
is laid at the root of the
trees;
for every tree not
producing good fruit is
cut down and cast into
the fire.*

What this means is that both Matthew and Luke are agreeing with Q throughout almost the entire pericope. On the 2DH, Matthew and Luke agree with Q independently of one another to a remarkable degree. And,

as we have seen, the phenomenon is widespread in the double tradition but rare in the triple tradition. The more often that this happens, the less plausible it becomes that the phenomenon is one of independent copying of a hypothetical third source. By contrast, this kind of agreement is highly congenial to the FH, according to which Luke has direct contact with Matthew. On this theory, there is no requirement for these two evangelists to be independently copying a third, unknown source. Instead, one is simply copying directly from the other.⁴⁰

A Complicating Factor

The attentive reader will by this point have spotted a factor that does complicate the discussion, though it does not complicate the conclusion. On the FH, Luke has contact with Matthew not only in the double tradition but also in the triple tradition. While Luke knows and depends on Mark for the triple tradition material, he also often shows his knowledge of Matthew.⁴¹ It is therefore not quite so straightforward to compare Luke's double tradition with Luke's triple tradition on the FH as it is on the 2DH. On the 2DH, there is symmetry – the triple tradition is the result of Matthew's and Luke's independent use of Mark and the double tradition is the result of Matthew's and Luke's independent use of *Q*. On the FH, the material is configured differently. The double tradition is the result of Luke's direct use of Matthew's non-Marcan material whereas the triple tradition is the result of Luke's primary use of Mark, with secondary influence from Matthew.⁴²

The picture here painted by the FH is corroborated by the data. Since the FH suggests that Luke has access to Matthew as well as Mark, we ought to expect occasions where Luke's contact with Matthew results in close verbatim agreement with Matthew, notwithstanding Luke's more

40. The term 'copying' is used for convenience. It need not imply that Luke's scribe has eye-contact with *Matthew's gospel*. It is just as likely that the author is holding a scroll of *Matthew's Gospel* while he dictates to his scribe. For a discussion of the mechanics of Gospel composition, see Robert A. Derrenbacker Jr., *Ancient Compositional Practices and the Synoptic Problem* (BETL, 186; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), and John C. Poirier, 'The Roll, the Codex, the Wax Tablet and the Synoptic Problem', *JSNT* 35 (2012), pp. 3–30, and literature cited there.

41. For some suggestions about how this works out, see my *Case Against Q*, pp. 88–90.

42. This too is an oversimplification in that Luke sometimes uses Matthew as his primary source in triple tradition material, a factor that results in pericopae that feature major agreements between Matthew and Luke against Mark, the so-called Mark–*Q* overlaps. See further my *Case against Q*, pp. 49–54 and 163–5.

normal dependence on Mark. This is indeed what we find. Usually in triple tradition, Matthew and Luke are close, but not as close as they are in double tradition. These are occasions where Luke is primarily dependent on Mark. However, there are places where Luke's knowledge of Matthew results in close verbatim agreement of the kind more normally seen in the double tradition, as here in the Leper pericope:

Mt. 8.2-4	Mk 1.40-42	Lk. 5.12-13
καὶ ἰδοὺ λεπρὸς προσελθὼν προσεκύνει αὐτῷ <i>λέγων, Κύριε, ἐὰν θέλῃς δύνασαί με καθαρίσαι. 3. καὶ ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα ἥψατο αὐτοῦ λέγων, Θέλω, καθαρίσθῃτι· καὶ εὐθέως ἐκαθαρίσθη αὐτοῦ ἡ λέπρα.</i>	καὶ ἔρχεται πρὸς αὐτὸν λεπρὸς παρακαλῶν αὐτὸν [καὶ γονυπετῶν] καὶ λέγων αὐτῷ ὅτι Ἐὰν θέλῃς δύνασαί με καθαρίσαι. 41. καὶ σπλαγχνισθεὶς ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ ἥψατο καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ, Θέλω, καθαρίσθῃτι: 42. καὶ εὐθὺς ἀπῆλθεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἡ λέπρα, καὶ ἐκαθαρίσθη.	καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄνθρωπος πλήρης λέπρας: ἰδὼν δὲ τὸν Ἰησοῦν πεσὼν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον ἐδεήθη αὐτοῦ <i>λέγων, Κύριε, ἐὰν θέλῃς δύνασαί με καθαρίσαι. 13. καὶ ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα ἥψατο αὐτοῦ λέγων, Θέλω, καθαρίσθῃτι· καὶ εὐθέως ἡ λέπρα ἀπῆλθεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ.</i>
And behold a leper came and worshipped him <i>saying, 'Lord, if you will, you are able to cleanse me'. 3. And he stretched out his hand and touched him saying, 'I will. Be cleansed.' And immediately the leprosy was cleansed from him.</i>	And a leper came to him and beseeched him [and he bent his knee] and said to him, 'If you will, you are able to cleanse me'. 41. And he felt compassion and stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, 'I will. Be cleansed.' 42. And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed.	And behold a man full of leprosy saw Jesus and fell down on his face and begged him <i>saying, 'Lord, if you will, you are able to cleanse me'. 13. And he stretched out his hand and touched him saying, 'I will. Be cleansed.' And immediately the leprosy left him.</i>

There are eighteen words in sequential agreement here between Matthew and Luke.⁴³ It is one of the only really high verbatim passages like this to

43. McIver and Carroll, 'Experiments to Develop', p. 681, miscount this as seventeen words in sequential agreement. Although they rightly see this is strong evidence of copying (p. 682), they tentatively attribute the agreement to Q, '(perhaps Q?)' (p. 683), which would be an unusual suggestion for a triple-tradition pericope like this.

occur between Matthew and Luke in the triple tradition. The other, Mt. 16.25 // Lk. 9.24 (16 words), is also there by virtue of a minor agreement between Matthew and Luke against Mark.⁴⁴ Passages like this appear to illustrate that while it is the norm for Luke to be dependent on Mark in triple-tradition material, there are occasions where his direct dependence on Matthew results in the kind of high verbatim agreement more normally seen in the double tradition.

Conclusion

One of the appealing facets of the architecture of the 2DH is its symmetry. Matthew and Luke both independently work from the same two shared sources, Mark and Q. It is one of the things that makes it so pedagogically useful – the 2DH is straightforward to diagram, straightforward to teach and straightforward to understand. The neatness of the theory's architecture, however, draws attention to one of its problems. There are far more examples of high verbatim agreement in Matthew and Luke's double tradition than there are in their triple tradition, and the disparity between the two types of material may be telling. Many Q theorists are aware of the phenomenon and use it to point out that Q is far more likely to be written than oral. The same data, though, is also problematic for a written Q, in that passages featuring high verbatim agreement are, on balance, far more likely to be derived from direct copying than from mutual knowledge of a third source. The kind of high verbatim agreement in evidence in Matthew and Luke's double tradition finds a close analogy in the high verbatim agreement found in Matthew–Mark parallels and Mark–Luke parallels, in passages agreed to be the result of direct copying by one evangelist of the other. The evidence makes better sense, therefore, if Matthew knows Mark and Luke knows them both. The difficulty, in other words, is that the high verbatim agreement in the double tradition is just too good to be Q.

44. Matthew and Luke's ἀπολέσῃ against Mark's ἀπολέσει (Mk 8.35). See Poirier, 'Memory, Written Sources', pp. 319–20. This is also in McIver and Carroll's table ('Experiments to Develop', p. 681) though it is subsequently given as a triple agreement (p. 682).