

The Four Gospels and their (Literary) Relationship

The Contribution of Source Criticism

What is the 'Synoptic Problem'?

Synoptic - *syn* (together) + *opsis* (look at)

Some material is common to Mark, Matthew and Luke ('triple tradition')

Some material is common only to Matthew and Luke ('double tradition')

Some material is only found in one gospel.

Triple Tradition

Almost all of Mark's Gospel is found in both Matthew and Luke (apart from ca. 50 verses). They generally follow the Markan order of events.

Striking similarity in language and arrangement of phrases (particularly in the presentation of Jesus' teaching).

Triple Tradition

‘The possibility that three authors, writing at different times and in geographically diverse settings around the Roman Empire, would use the same language in the same order in account after account is minute’ (Achtemeier, Green and Thompson, p. 70).

Triple Tradition

Matthew 8:2 And behold, a leper having approached Jesus worshipped him, saying ‘Lord, if you will, you are able to cleanse me’.	Mark 1:40 And a leper Came to him, beseeching him and bending his knee, saying to him, ‘If you will, you are able to cleanse me’.	Luke 5:12 And behold, a man full of leprosy; And having seen Jesus, he fell before his face saying, Lord, if you will, you are able to cleanse me’.

The Two-Document Hypothesis

Mark's Gospel was the first to be written (ca. 70 CE) and was used by both Mathew and Luke (independently of each other).

Arguments for Markan priority:

A) either Mark or Luke always agree with Mark's order; Mathew and Luke never depart from Mark's order at the same time.

B) Mark's less polished Greek is improved by Mathew and Luke.

The Two-Document Hypothesis: The 'Q' Source

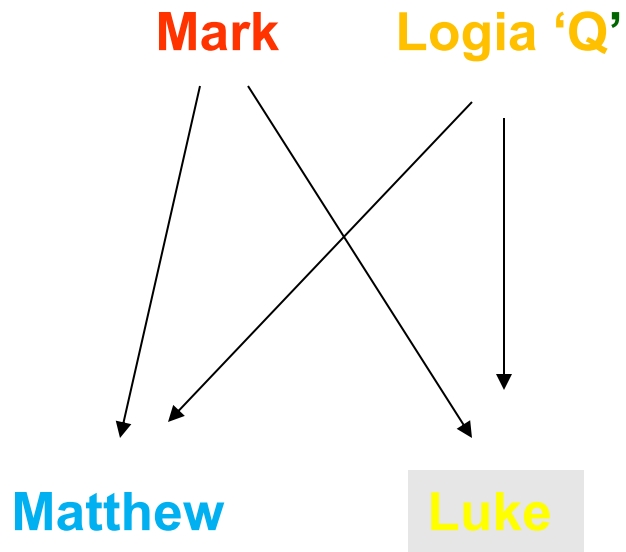
Mathew and Luke had access to another source, known as Q (Quelle = 'source' in German).

This hypothetical source could account for material common to Mathew and Luke (e.g. Sermon on the Mount [Matthew 5-7] and the Sermon on the Plain [Luke 6:17-49]).

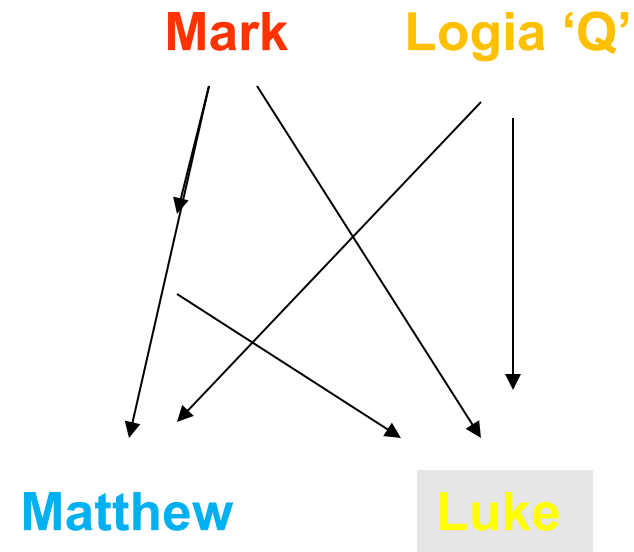
Some claim that the Q source underwent more than one edition or version.

Q sceptics propose that Luke made use of Matthew (e.g. Farrer, Goulder, Goodacre).

Q and Theories of Markan Priority



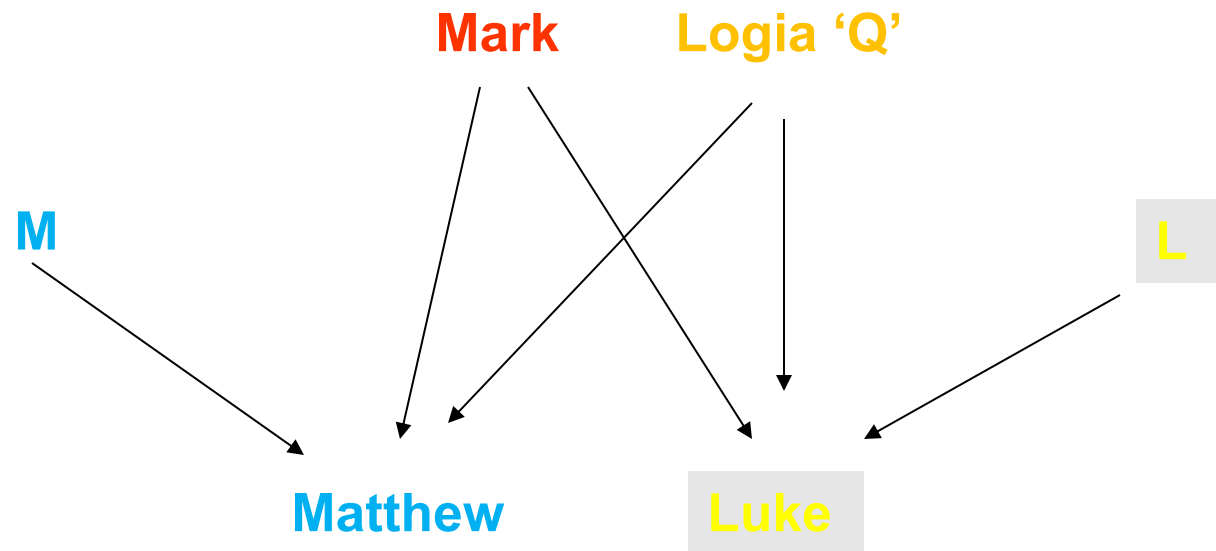
The Two-Document Theory



The Farrer Theory

(Michael Goulder
Mark Goodacre)

Special Sources for Matthew and Luke



The Griesbach Hypothesis

J.J. Griesbach (18th cent.): Mathew's Gospel was written first, it was used by Luke and that Mark used both as sources.

Why would Mark choose to omit so much significant Matthean and Markan material (e.g., the infancy narratives).

If Matthew already existed, why would anyone compose Mark?

Griesbach Hypothesis: Case Study

Mark 8:29

‘You are the Christ’.

Matthew 16:16

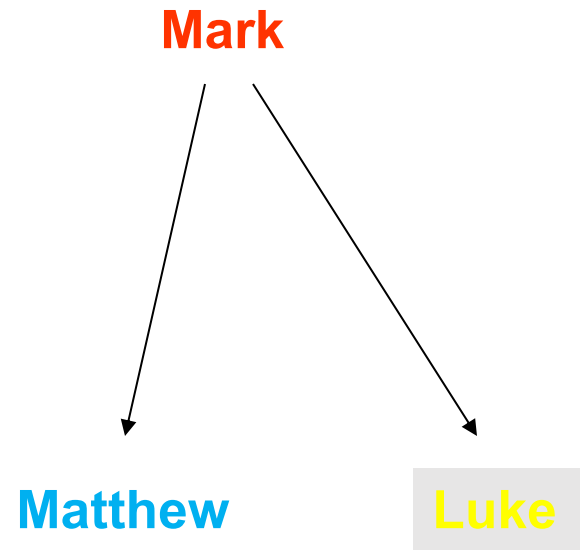
‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God’.

Luke 9:20

‘You are the Christ of God’.

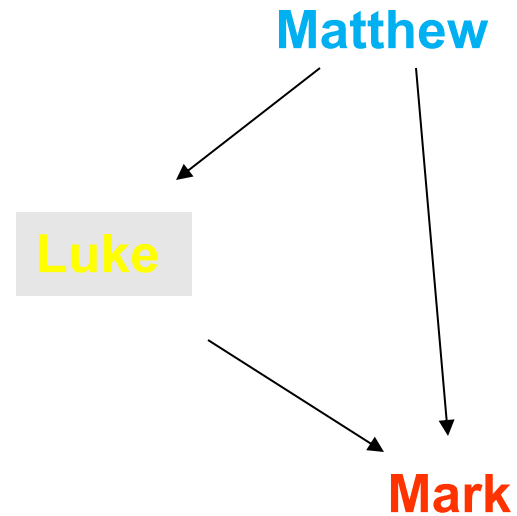
Who Copied Who?

Markan Priority



The Two-Document Hypothesis

Matthean Priority



The Griesbach Hypothesis

John and the Synoptics

Clement of Alexandria (*Ecclesiastical History* 4:14:7)
spiritual Gospel'

John = 'the

- Jesus' ministry is spent both in Galilee and Jerusalem
- No parables
- Extended discourses about Jesus' identity