

Class 4a

## EXCAVATING THE GOSPELS

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Outline

- The Formation of the Gospel Tradition
- The Relationship of the Gospels
  - Synoptics and John
  - The Synoptic Problem & its solutions
- Eight Independent Sources of the Canonical Gospels
- Three Other Early Gospels

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## THE FORMATION OF THE GOSPEL TRADITION

---

---

---

---

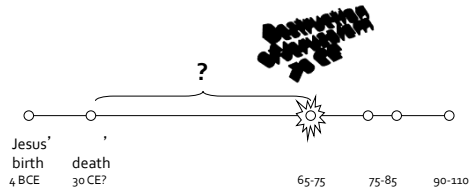
---

---

---

---

## Formation of the Gospel Tradition



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE GOSPELS

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The Relationship of the Gospels

- The Synoptics vs. John
  - VERY different stories and style
  - VERY little overlap
- Matthew-Mark-Luke in relation to each other
  - These three are very similar, SO similar that they must share some sources in common
  - How are they related?  
→ *This question is called the synoptic problem*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The Synoptic Gospels: The Evidence

### Case 1

Some material is shared by Mark, Matthew and Luke.  
This is called the Triple Tradition.

#### Matthew 9:18-19

While he was thus speaking to them, behold, a ruler came in

and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter has just died;

but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live." And Jesus rose and followed him, with his disciples.

#### Mark 5:22-24

Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and seeing him, he fell at his feet, and besought him, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death.

Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live." And he went with him.

#### Luke 8:41-42

And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue; and falling at Jesus' feet he besought him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying.

As he went, the people pressed round him.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The Synoptic Gospels: The Evidence

### Case 2

Some material is not in Mark at all, but is identical in Matthew and Luke. This is called the Double Tradition.

#### Matthew 10:37-38

"He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me."

#### Mark

#### Luke 14:25-26

Now great multitudes accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, "If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The Synoptic Gospels: The Evidence

### Case 3a

Some material is only found in Matthew.

#### Matthew 25:31-40

<sup>31</sup> he will sit on the throne of his glory. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, <sup>33</sup> and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. <sup>34</sup> Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; <sup>35</sup> for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' <sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?' <sup>38</sup> And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? <sup>39</sup> And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' <sup>40</sup> And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'"

#### Mark

#### Luke

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The Synoptic Gospels:

### The Evidence

#### Case 3b

Some material is only found in Luke.

Matthew | Mark

Luke 15:11-32

And he said, "There was a man who had two sons, and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that falls to me.' And he divided his living between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger!...'"

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The Synoptic Gospels

### The Consensus Solution: The Two-Source Hypothesis

The theory that the authors of Matthew and Luke used two shared sources for their gospels

- Q (a list of sayings of Jesus)
- and the Gospel of Mark,

in addition to their own unique material. The theory is one way of accounting for the synoptic problem.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The Synoptic Gospels

### Why It's the Consensus View

1.
  - o The style and theology of Mark' explain how later authors "cleaned up" Mark than to argue that Mark abbreviated the other gospels and created an inferior narrative.
  - o Matthew and Luke have all of Mark except 3 episodes, and largely follow Mark's order. Meanwhile, there's a lot in Matthew and Luke that doesn't appear in the other or in Mark.
2. "Q"
  - o It's reasonable to imagine that a list of Jesus' sayings would have circulated.
  - o We've never found it, but the \_\_\_\_\_ is like it.

---

---

---

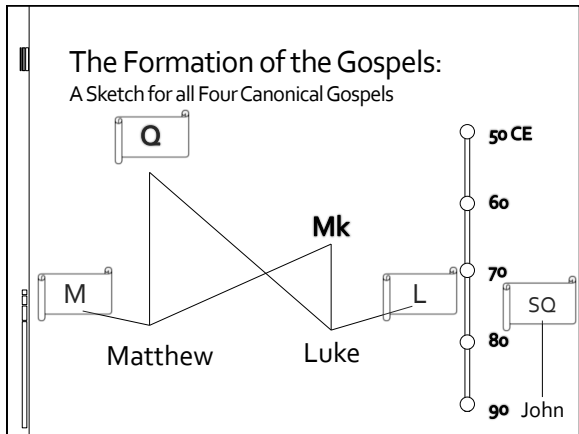
---

---

---

---

---




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## EIGHT INDEPENDENT SOURCES OF THE CANONICAL GOSPELS

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Source #1

Q *Quelle* = source, an early sayings source, 50 CE?

- What is the evidence for it?
  - over 50 sayings and teachings of Jesus that are preserved in Matthew and Luke, almost word-for-word, but are not in Mark
- What is its portrait of Jesus?
  - teacher; authoritative expression of law
  - God's agent of salvation
  - fulfillment of prophets
  - Son of Man, Son of Father
  - envoy of the Wisdom of God
  - not called messiah, doesn't narrate crucifixion/resurrection
- Is it reliable for reconstructing the historical Jesus?
  - this is one of our most important sources for reconstructing the historical Jesus
  - but it too reflects developing traditions of Jesus

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Source #2

M (special Matthean source, 70 CE?)

- What is the evidence for it? material that is unique to Matthew's gospel
- What is its portrait of Jesus?
  - authoritative leader who founded the church
  - sent to Jews only, restores Mosaic law to its original intent — its "inner demands"
  - heralds end of time; judgment will be based on righteousness
- Is it reliable for reconstructing the historical Jesus? scholars can't agree on what's in it some material may be early; it's hard to know

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Source #3

L (special Lukan source, 70 CE?)

- What is the evidence for it? material that is unique to Luke's gospel
- What is its portrait of Jesus?
  - teacher/agent of God's free grace; authority demonstrated in healings
  - the message breaks beyond Jews to Samaritans and Gentiles
  - no christological titles; more prophet than messiah
  - little mention of suffering, dying savior
- Is it reliable for reconstructing the historical Jesus? scholars generally agree on what's in it predates Luke, though still post-Jesus interpretations

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Source #4

SQ (Semeia Quelle = Signs Source, 70 CE?)

- What is the evidence for it? material on the "signs" that Jesus performs that are unique to John's gospel
- What is its portrait of Jesus?
  - messiah, established by 7 "signs" or miracles he performs
  - paralleled to Moses
  - low Christology, despite titles that sound divine (Son of God, Lamb of God, Lord)
- Is it reliable for reconstructing the historical Jesus? This cycle of signs or miracles probably does predate the final author of John. But scholars suspect that any core historical material has been thoroughly reshaped by the final author "John"

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Sources #5-#8

- 2 discourse sources      Behind the unique and long discourses or speeches that Jesus gives in John's gospel
- 2 passion narratives      One may lie behind Mark's original (and very long) passion narrative  
  
One may lie behind John's quite different (and even longer) passion narrative

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## THREE OTHER EARLY GOSPELS (AND ONE THAT MIGHT BE A HOAX)

---

---

---

---

---

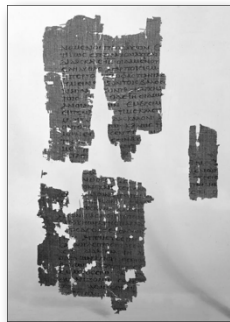
---

---

---

## Three Other Early Gospels Egerton Papyrus 2

- 100-150 CE
- 4 episodes from the life of Jesus
- one is otherwise unknown, and therefore an independent witness
- the other three may be independent as well, though they parallel
  - ◊ John 5:39-47; 7:30-32; 9:29 (conflict with Jewish leaders)
  - ◊ Mark 1:40-45 (leper healed)
  - ◊ Mark 12:13-17 (taxes to Caesar)



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Three Other Early Gospels

Gospel of Thomas



- mid 100s CE in Syria
- 114 sayings of Jesus, only a couple embedded in stories
- some sayings are very similar to Q

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Three Other Early Gospels

Gospel of Thomas



- mid 100s CE in Syria
- 114 sayings of Jesus, only a couple embedded in stories
- some sayings are very similar to Q
- but there are also some unusual sayings

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Three Other Early Gospels

Gospel of Thomas



Logion 56

Jesus said, "Whoever has come to know the world has discovered a carcass, and whoever has discovered a carcass, of that person the world is not worthy."

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Three Other Early Gospels

### Gospel of Peter

- mid-100s CE, Syria?
- like the canonical gospels but limited (?) to the passion and resurrection
- greater emphasis on the miraculous
- Pilate washes hands, Jews bear greater responsibility for Jesus' death; resurrection narrated (the cross emerges from the tomb and confirms that Jesus has preached to the dead)
- some parts may be early, but not the miraculous additions



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Secret Gospel of Mark

### Real or a Hoax?

There is only one manuscript, and only one scholar has worked on it

- ❖ a previously unknown letter that quotes from this gospel
- ❖ Letter: Clement of Alexandria to Theodorus
- ❖ Manuscript: 18<sup>th</sup>-century Greek copy



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Secret Gospel of Mark

- **Date** Known by 170 CE in Alexandria  
Could it be the basis of canonical Mark?
- **Genre** Fragmentary, so hard to tell; a narrative
- **Gospel comparison** Tells a version of a resurrection story found in John 11:1-44; introduces a young man wearing only a linen loincloth earlier in story (see Mark 14:51-52, where he appears in Gethsemane)
- **Content** Smith thought the special all-night revelation session with the nearly naked young man to be homoerotic; in gnosticism, such motifs can be used as metaphors for spiritual intimacy/rebirth



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Secret Gospel of Mark

frg. 1, col ii, lines 4-10



*[Jesus raises a young man from the dead]*

[The] young man looked upon him and loved him and began to entreat him that he might remain with him. And when they had gone out from the tomb, they went into the young man's house, for he was rich. And after six days Jesus commissioned him; and in the evening the young man came to him, clothed only in a linen cloth upon his naked body. And he remained with him that night, for Jesus was teaching him the mysteries of the Kingdom of God.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---