MATTHEAN POSTERIORITY: A PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL

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1. Introduction

This article takes preliminary steps toward defending an alternative solution to the Synoptic Problem. According to this alternative solution, Matthew was dependent on Luke and Mark (+ special material\textsuperscript{1}), and Luke was dependent on Mark (+ special material).\textsuperscript{2} Since it is not widely disputed that Luke and Matthew are dependent on Mark, primary attention will be given here to the possibility of Matthew's dependence on Luke. If the proposed solution is correct, what had been the lost document Q would now

\textsuperscript{1} "Special material" as used here includes both the traditional and the redactional. It is not necessary to sort out the two for Matthew here, since the basic solutions arrived at from the perspective of the two-source theory are also valid from the perspective of Matthean Posteriority.

\textsuperscript{2} H. P. West ("A Primitive Version of Luke in the Composition of Matthew," NTS 14 [1967-68] 75-95) makes a case similar in some ways to the present one. According to West, the canonical Matthew and Luke both drew upon a primitive form of Luke, which "consists of the bulk of the material in Luke between the pericopes on John the Baptist and the Passion narrative, inclusive. It contains all the Marcan material in Luke, all the common material to Matthew and Luke, and much of the material peculiar to Luke" (p. 75). West insisted however that Matthew and Luke used Primitive Luke independently (p. 76). West's case has been largely ignored, although Kümmel alludes to it as alleged evidence that "all theoretically possible combinations have found their supporters" (Introduction to the New Testament [rev. and enl. English ed.; trans. H. C. Kee; Nashville: Abingdon, 1975] 47). West's case would have been more forceful had he not attempted to relate it to the question of the form of Marcion's Gospel. His assertion, further, that Matthew and Luke depended on Primitive Luke may have been an attempt to sidestep the problem of the so-called "argument from order", which is usually taken to indicate that Matthew and Luke did not know each other. In seeking to avoiding this impediment, however, West all but guaranteed the ultimate dismissal of his case, since it is precisely this objection that seems most formidable to scholars.
become simply the sum of the non-Marcan passages taken over from Luke by Matthew.

Matthean Posteriority (a clumsy but convenient title) shares many of the same explanatory advantages of the dominant two-source hypothesis. In recognizing Matthew as the most heavily redacted of the Synoptics it does not founder, as do some alternatives to the two-source hypothesis, on having to create far-fetched arguments to explain why Mark and/or Luke, though appearing to be more primitive than Matthew, actually used him as one of their sources. Doublets are turned inside out to become examples of Matthew using Lukan material that in some way parallels Mark, for his own speech-building purposes rather than for supplementing Mark at the actual Marcan sites where these parallels occur. Conversely, Mark/Q overlaps disappear behind a curtain only to emerge a moment later as examples of Matthew supplementing Mark with parallel or thematically related Lukan material. Further, the argument in favor of Q, which points out the general agreement of order within the double tradition itself—both in terms of the larger individual blocks and in terms of the overall distribution throughout Matthew and Luke—\(^3\) is neutralized by the observation that the argument works equally well to prove that Matthew used Luke as that Matthew and Luke used Q.

The triumph of the two-source theory and the resultant creation of a highly technical investigative apparatus associated with it, makes it particularly difficult to propose alternative solutions at this stage of the game. The specific one proposed here, however, has in its favor the fact that instead of deriving from an outside source, such as tradition or the arbitrary choice of one of the numerous theoretically "possible" sequential Synoptic arrangements, it responds directly to discoveries arising from investigations carried out on the basis of the two-source theory itself. Prominent in this regard is the establishment beyond reasonable doubt of an all but indisputable sequence of Synoptic dependencies: (1) Mark is prior to both Matthew and Luke, and (2) Luke is more primitive than

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\(^3\) As argued recently, e.g., by J. Kloppenborg, The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections (Studies in Antiquity & Christianity; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 72-3.