

## **SOURCE-CRITICAL STUDIES IN LUKE-ACTS: IMPLICATIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING LUKE, THE EVANGELIST<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

Contemporary scholarship recognises Luke's Gospel and Acts of the Apostles as two volumes of Luke's one book. This has greatly improved understanding of Luke's literary contribution to Jesus' story. One gulf yet impedes better knowledge of Luke's contribution. For some two centuries now, majority of scholars adopt either the Two-Document Hypothesis or the Two-Gospel Hypothesis in explaining the composition of Luke's Gospel. Observably, the Two-Document Hypothesis ignores, and to some degree, the Two-Gospel Hypothesis glosses over Luke's rhetorical concerns and narrative goal in writing, which is central to any utterance. This paper examines the usefulness of these approaches and then presents an alternative one. It argues that a more informed understanding of Luke-Acts, while valuing the author's sources, should focus on Luke's narrative techniques in his two-volume book. The paper employs a language-in-life-situation hermeneutic (name of the theorist), focusing on Luke's use of the oral Gospel he internalised during his kerygma performance, to demonstrate how an author's use of his sources in a literature is dialogically governed by his rhetorical goal and his ability to manage his sources. The study centres on Luke's first volume as a paradigm.

**Keywords:** *Source-criticism, Scribality, Intertextuality, Oral performance, Dialogical discourse*

### **Introduction**

Since the nineteenth century, source-critical studies of the Gospels have become literary-driven and are governed by a tendency towards a cut-and-paste view of the use of "sources." Similarity of language or wording between two gospels is assumed to indicate copying from one of the gospels, leaving no room for other possibilities, like orality. By these open-ended literary theories, later texts are mere extensions of precursor texts,<sup>2</sup> thus, the latter Gospel has no intrinsic value since it is a mere extension of the former. Sadly, these theories govern today's Gospel studies. By this approach Luke is consigned to a "compilation"<sup>3</sup> (wholesale takeover of Mark and Matthew) or at best, "an independent work incorporating considerable portions of Mark."<sup>4</sup> This suppresses the character of the Gospel as Luke's "transmission" of his message, as his "utterance"—an act of "communication" with its vital components like discourse, dialogue, rhetoric,<sup>5</sup> context, "cotext" (total text), etc.

To better appreciate Luke's Gospel, we need a literary theory that recognizes the utterance in the written text as a dialogical discourse with a rhetorical component. This study proposes a language-in-life-situation hermeneutic which interlinks literary, historical, cultural, and ideological approaches in searching for a meaningful language of the text. The approach sees "language" as a symbol system and a communication instrument because language configures words (mental symbols) into an "utterance"<sup>6</sup> to convey intent. The "utterance" is the fundamental unit of communication, which always involves a speaker and a listener in dialogue in a historical situation and social context.<sup>7</sup> This is because language is interactive; each utterance is created in a context of discourse<sup>8</sup> and every discourse is oriented on concrete dialogue, which could be oral or written. This implies that every utterance comes out of a motive and gears toward a goal in an audience and so the essential value of an utterance is its meaning.

The Gospels are utterances that were produced in a cultural context that was largely illiterate and which predominantly preserved its culture in oral literature through oral performance. The orality of the gospel tradition presupposes its utilization of memory as its fundamental vehicle of transmission. It seems evident by its structure and phraseology that the gospel tradition was memorised by its tradents in the manner of rabbinic practice in the first two centuries AD.<sup>9</sup> To this end, Luke, and indeed the Gospels, can also be understood from the perspective of social memory theory in its nuance as construction of the past. This is the retrieval of what happened in the past by mentally reconstructing its picture in the human mind.<sup>10</sup> Social memory, especially in its wider concept of cultural memory, usually originates in a group's social identity activities and is transmitted in narrative format through commemorative ritual performance. Cultural memory is a "domain comprising religion, art, history, and morality";<sup>11</sup> hence its relevance in studying biblical traditions, especially its usefulness in understanding oral tradition in the gospels.

Two centuries of literary source-searching without scholarly agreement and especially a disconnect with the meaning of the Gospels testifies to a headless search. This study espouses that New Testament source-criticism should focus on what the Gospels communicate and the how of it rather than their compositional procedures. The following sections demonstrate that the importance of Luke-Acts lies in Luke's narrative meaning, which is more fully accessible by examining the dynamics of oral performance in producing oral literature which were probably typical of the social context of his kerygma. There is no intention to adduce evidence to support or discount any of the Source-Critical approaches; that is a well-trodden ground to the targeted reader. The study only makes a brief survey of the source-critical approaches to Luke and evaluates their functional value in understanding the Gospel's message and then makes a literary analysis of sample periscopes from Luke's Greek text in the light of his sources, with special attention to their function and how they influenced Luke's narrative discourse.

**State of the Arts of Source-Critical Studies on Luke's Gospel**

The Synoptic Gospels present a problem in their interrelationship in that simultaneously, there are agreements in structure and wording in both the Gospels' triple tradition and double tradition. The more problematic double tradition presents at once very high and very low verbatim agreements in its various stories. This has seriously impeded understanding of the Gospels, especially Luke's since literary source-critical approaches have become the canon for its study. Note-worthily, this academic exercise does not focus a Gospel's message.

Historically, two widely-held solutions to the synoptic problem have emerged with one group espousing Matthean priority and the other supporting Markan priority. Matthean priorists like John Wenham<sup>12</sup> hold to an early church tradition presumably emanating from Papias,<sup>13</sup> and either take the Augustinian hypothesis which espouses that Mark used Matthew and Luke used the two precursor Gospels to compile theirs or the Griesbach hypothesis (now the Two-Gospel Hypothesis) which argues that Luke followed Matthew and Mark used the two earlier Gospels in compiling his.

Markan priorists argue that Mark's short length, primitiveness, and language, seen as "the most blatantly colloquial, the most 'oral' in nature"<sup>14</sup> show that, it was the earliest and the primary source that Matthew and Luke independently used besides an additional logia (sayings) source Q in compiling their Gospels (Two-Document Hypothesis). The presence of myriads of so-called "minor agreements" in the double tradition however, seriously undermines Matthean and Lukan independence and the use of a hypothetical Q source besides other associated queries.

Observations of inconsistencies with Q's avowed essential character, content, and extent have led Q theorists to reassessments of their position and consequent multiplication of strata and sources of Q.<sup>15</sup> Burkett supposes that differences in verbal agreement in parallel Q passages in the double tradition point to possibility of more than one version of Q.<sup>16</sup> There was either an earlier form of Mark (proto-Mark), which Matthew and Luke used after which Mark revised it to the present copy or a revised form from the present extant copy, which Matthew and Luke independently used.<sup>17</sup> Farmer earlier argued, building on Stanton's earlier argument, that agreements in omission are significant if they occur in conjunction with other more positive agreements.<sup>18</sup>

The foregoing represents the pattern of arguments about the sources of the Gospels. The arguments continue on and on, basically in a cyclical mode. One therefore, observes two fundamental issues with the prevailing source-critical approaches that need to be addressed, and are the main concern of this paper.

**Issues in the Use of Literary Source-Critical Apparatuses**

A fundamental issue in the above survey of major strands of source-critical approaches is the missing link with the functional value of all of them. On the language-in-life-situation hermeneutic, one expects to see how the identified Gospels' source(s) help in making sense of the Gospels' meaningful language as utterances. This is either completely absent or seriously suppressed in most arguments for the literary relationships of the Gospels. Both Markan Priorists and Matthean Priorists focus on explaining the compositional procedure of the Gospels but do not engage them as utterances as such and so do not provide a clear path to their interpretation. But, if the goal of source criticism is simply "to provide a perfect solution to the problem of who wrote first, who copied from whom, and whether there are any lost documents,"<sup>19</sup> one would ask, "And then do what? And to what benefit?" We are here dashed to groping in a deep hollow.

Secondly, in all the arguments about the Gospels' interrelationship, there are only occasional indications, basically from opponents of Q, of some recognition of the Synoptic evangelists' authorial ability and agenda. This situation has occurred basically because source-critical studies have largely been literary-driven, evidently influenced by our print-culture rather than the oral communication-culture of the Gospels' authors.<sup>20</sup> This fallacy has dictated the view of the Gospels as compiled texts, with the tendency to understand "text" merely as something written. Ironically, the scholar's eye is conditioned to even see the Gospel author from the backdrop of ancient scribal activities—as a mere "Compiler and editor"—typical in Burkett's depiction of the situation.<sup>21</sup> Farmer<sup>22</sup> and Wenham<sup>23</sup> earlier decried this literary-driven tendency toward the Gospels' source criticism though they themselves engaged in doing it since they apparently had no better alternative.

These phenomena constitute a serious weakness for the literary-driven Gospels source-critical arguments. They tend to especially blindfold many from seeing Luke's literary beauty and the message it conveys. Hence, this paper calls for gear-shift in Gospel-study approaches.

**Understanding Luke's Gospel through Oral Performance Lenses**

While sources are indispensable in understanding a text, a plausible alternative approach to understanding the sources in Luke-Acts is to engage the book as an "utterance." That is the product of a dialogical interaction of Luke's intertexts<sup>24</sup> with his new narrative, in due consideration of his motive and goal in writing. Luke shows evidence of habituating his tradition, as any author does, from the interaction of his own thoughts with thoughts he found in other texts (oral or written) and uses them rhetorically in his new text. Thus, oftentimes, when he recasts a story it differs from its apparent pre-text, in form and sometimes also in meaning.<sup>25</sup> He alludes to more than he quotes the Scriptures in line with his narrative goal. In fact, Luke's Gospel has less than 20 direct

quotations from the Old Testament<sup>26</sup> and all of them are put in the mouths of his characters as his preferred way of using scriptures.

Luke had a world of precursor texts—the oral gospel (the Jesus tradition) he had internalised through performance of the kerygma, the earlier written Gospels, and the Old Testament. Luke's Old Testament text appears to be the LXX because of the linguistic similarity between it and the Greek text of Luke-Acts. He combines Jewish and Greco-Roman historiographical conventions of his time—he cites with dates, past historical events to attest God's dealings in events as Jewish prophets, the chroniclers (2 Chron 9:29; 33:19) often did<sup>27</sup> (cf. Isa 1:1; Hos 1:1). The key to understanding the dialogue among these texts is Luke's theological motivation and goal in writing, which governed his use of those sources. This requires an integration of ideological, literary, cultural, and historical insights, involving the exploration of a broader database of material on community literature that the Gospel is.

Before we consider Luke's theology, it is necessary to clear an obstacle. To be objective in studying Luke-Acts, we must pull out of the common assumptions of our print-culture which dictates the view of the Gospels as necessarily originating from literary sources. Biblical evidence indicates low level of literacy of the Gospel authors (Acts 4:13 describes the apostles as ἀγράμματοί καὶ ἰδιῶται, ["unlettered" or "illiterate" and "untrained"]). And this is evidenced by recent research. Bultmann called attention to oral tradition behind the Gospels but distanced the original form of the tradition from their written form in the Gospels.<sup>28</sup> Against Bultmann, Werner Kelber sees oral tradition (orality) as "hot memory, propelled by active remembering and socialization."<sup>29</sup> For him, prior to their written form (scribality) typified by Mark, the Gospels were probably preserved and transmitted by predominantly being dictated and performed orally in the rural areas.<sup>30</sup>

More recently, Horsley also argues that the Gospel "developed in a largely oral communication environment and was performed orally in communities of ordinary people."<sup>31</sup> Oral composition is seen as naturally proceeding from a singer's memory (as "remembrance" not "memorisation") as a creative activity of an internalised oral performance before an audience which also "internalises" the people's tradition "in the context of an oral performance that re-creates the narrative."<sup>32</sup> Such variants in oral tradition are not without reason; they are due to multiformity that characterises oral societies.<sup>33</sup> Oral performances both ancient and modern are characteristically malleable. They can vary in content, gesture, metre, volume and tone according to the circumstances of the immediate aural audience while retaining their compositional framework by which they can be recognised anywhere.<sup>34</sup> Noteworthy, "such variation was accepted even within a faithful reproduction of the tradition"<sup>35</sup> because "people remember together with other people and that memory is constructed in, by and for a social group."<sup>36</sup>

Based on a language-in-life-situation hermeneutic, which utilises the oral culture theory in concert with insights from Judeo-Greco-Roman literary and

ideological expressions, the internalising effect of oral performance and the idea of variation in various texts of the same tradition due to multiformity are quite applicable to the Synoptic Gospels. They underlie the “gospel” enterprise, which transformed into “The Gospels.” Ancient Israel was primarily an oral society; so even prior to their written stage when the Gospels assumed the status of Scripture as Horsley discusses, the “gospel” was being performed orally (through the kerygma and church liturgy) in various communities from which a body of oral tradition emerged, characterised by the “I received . . . I delivered” terminology or its variants (Lk 1:1-3; 1 Cor 11:23; 15:3; Jn 20:30-31). It is this “gospel tradition” that metamorphosed into the “Gospels.”

A very important distinctive quality of orality is “symbolic language” or “concrete imagistic thinking” which is action oriented.<sup>37</sup> Oral cultures hardly think abstractly and so their language is not descriptive as is characteristic of literary cultures. Voht argued that oral cultures are more concerned with acts; “their mentality is more action oriented than abstraction oriented,”<sup>38</sup> so they tend more to describe things as they see them happening than to discourse on abstract ideas. All the Synoptic Gospels evidence the concern for the actions of Jesus more than his teaching as even Luke’s second volume, Acts, depicts the actions of the Apostles. This confirms an oral background.

It becomes amply evident that, in writing the Gospels, the evangelists already had the oral gospel as one intertext in dialogue with other precursor texts they found in the course of producing their new narrative. They wrote in an environment with close relationship between oral communication and the written text. It is possible that some scribes themselves made written copies of texts from internalised texts they had learned by recitation. Accordingly, oral cultivation affected the “development of written texts as scribes with memorial knowledge of the text made new written copies.”<sup>39</sup> Possibly too, they sometimes used orally performing texts (texts written to be read aloud to listening audiences).<sup>40</sup> This makes it questionable to firmly conclude that their writing was based on pre-written texts in disregard of the oral culture and the ideology that shaped the oral gospel.

It is certain therefore, that, while there may be a literary source behind, say the common double tradition material, and it is relatively easy to explain the stories in the triple tradition on the basis of common written sources, it is also possible that “some double tradition passages are not the result of the textual redaction of a common source text”<sup>41</sup> and so are better explained by the common influence of oral tradition on the evangelists. Many apparent quotations in Luke, for instance, do not appear to have been based on a written text. Analyses of the following passages demonstrate these points.

### 1. Jesus' Healing of the Centurion's Servant (Mat 8:5-13; Lk 7:1-10)

<p><sup>5</sup> Εισεληθόντος δὲ αὐτοῦ εἰς Καφαρναοὺμ προσήλθεν αὐτῷ ἑκατόνταρχος παρακαλῶν αὐτόν·</p> <p><sup>6</sup> καὶ λέγων· κύριε, ὁπαῖς μου βέβληται ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ παραλυτικός, δεινῶς βασανιζόμενος.</p> <p><sup>7</sup> καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· ἐγὼ ἐλθὼν θεραπεύσω αὐτόν.</p> <p><sup>8</sup> καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ ἑκατόνταρχος ἔφη· κύριε, οὐ κείμι ἱκανὸς ἵνα μου ὑπὸ τὴν στέγην εἰσεέλθῃς.</p> <p><u>ἀλλὰ μόνον εἰπὲ λόγῳ, καὶ ἰαθήσεται ὁ παῖς μου.</u></p> <p><sup>9</sup> <u>καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπός εἰμι ὑπὸ ἐξουσίαν, ἔχων ὑπ' ἐμαυτὸν στρατιώτας, καὶ λέγω τούτῳ· πορεύθητι, καὶ πορεύεται, καὶ ἄλλῳ· ἔργου, καὶ ἔργεται, καὶ τῷ δούλῳ μου· ποιήσον τοῦτο, καὶ ποιεῖ.</u></p> <p><sup>10</sup> ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐθαύμασεν καὶ εἶπεν τοῖς ἀκολουθοῦσιν· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, παρ' οὐδενὶ τοσαύτην πίστιν ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ εὔρον.</p> <p><sup>11</sup> λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι πολλοὶ ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν καὶ δυσμῶν ἤξουσιν καὶ ἀνακλιθήσονται μετὰ Ἀβραάμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν,</p> <p><sup>12</sup> οἱ δὲ υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας ἐκ βληθήσονται εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον· ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων.</p> <p><sup>13</sup> καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ ἑκατοντάρχη· ὕπαγε, ὡς ἐπίστευσας γενηθήτω σοι, καὶ ἴαθη ὁ παῖς [αὐτοῦ] ἐν τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐκείνῃ. (Mat 8:5-13 BGT)</p>	<p>Ἐπειδὴ ἐπλήρωσεν πάντα τὰ ῥήματα αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς ἀκοὰς τοῦ λαοῦ, εἰσηλθεν εἰς Καφαρναοὺμ.</p> <p><sup>2</sup> Ἐκατοντάρχου δὲ τινος δοῦλος κακῶς ἔχων ἡμελλεν τελευτᾶν, ὃς ἦν αὐτῷ ἔντιμος.</p> <p><sup>3</sup> ἀκούσας δὲ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἀπέστειλεν πρὸς αὐτὸν πρεσβυτέρους τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐρωτῶν αὐτὸν ὅπως ἐλθὼν διασώσῃ τὸν δοῦλον αὐτοῦ.</p> <p><sup>4</sup> οἱ δὲ παραγενόμενοι πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν παρεκάλουν αὐτὸν σπουδαίως λέγοντες ὅτι ἄξιός ἐστιν ᾧ παρέξῃ τοῦτο·</p> <p><sup>5</sup> ἀγαπᾶ γὰρ τὸ ἔθνος ἡμῶν καὶ τὴν συναγωγὴν αὐτὸς ᾧκοδόμησεν ἡμῖν.</p> <p><sup>6</sup> ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἐπορεύετο σὺν αὐτοῖς. ἤδη δὲ αὐτοῦ οὐ μακρὰν ἀπέχοντος ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκίας ἐπεμψεν φίλους ὁ ἑκατοντάρχης λέγων αὐτῷ·</p> <p><u>κύριε, μὴ σκύλλου, οὐ γὰρ ἱκανός εἰμι ἵνα ὑπὸ τὴν στέγην μου εἰσεέλθῃς.</u></p> <p><sup>7</sup> διὸ οὐδὲ ἐμαυτὸν ἠ ξίωσαπρὸς σὲ ἐλθεῖν· <u>ἀλλὰ εἰπὲ λόγῳ, καὶ ἰαθήτω ὁ παῖς μου.</u></p> <p><sup>8</sup> <u>καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπός εἰμι ὑπὸ ἐξουσίαν τασσόμενος ἔχων ὑπ' ἐμαυτὸν στρατιώτας, καὶ λέγω τούτῳ· πορεύθητι, καὶ πορεύεται, καὶ ἄλλῳ· ἔργου, καὶ ἔργεται, καὶ τῷ δούλῳ μου· ποιήσον τοῦτο, καὶ ποιεῖ.</u></p> <p><sup>9</sup> ἀκούσας δὲ ταῦτα ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐθαύμασεν αὐτὸν καὶ στραφεὶς τῷ ἀκολουθοῦντι αὐτῷ ὄχλῳ εἶπεν· λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐδὲ ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ τοσαύτην πίστιν εὔρον.</p> <p><sup>10</sup> Καὶ ὑποστρέψαντες εἰς τὸν οἶκον οἱ πεμφθέντες εὔρον τὸν δοῦλον ὑγιαίνοντα. (Luk 7:1-10 BGT)</p>
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The underlined words are shared by Matthew. Notice that the only words shared by the two evangelists in the story are quotations from either of the two main characters in the narrative, Jesus and the Centurion. So are many other passages. Such quotations can be easily internalised by any evangelist in the course of their “oral performance” of the gospel. Secondly, those shared words are not exact parallels; many of them have different grammatical usage in the two

versions of the story. Thirdly, each evangelist emphasises different elements in his own narrative of the story. For illustration of these two points, in Matthew the centurion presented his request himself (vv. 5-6) and Jesus responded with an assurance of his going to heal the child (v. 7). In Luke the centurion utilised a number of social functions in the spirit of Greco-Roman patronage system, to approach Jesus. Since he was not a Jew and the Jesus movement was at this time predominantly Jewish, and moreover, he probably did not even know Jesus personally, he employed his friends among the Jewish elders, from whom he was actually receiving servitude of some kind for his previous beneficences, to broker the interaction (vv. 3-5). The elders emphasised: ἀγαπᾷ γὰρ τὸ ἔθνος ἡμῶν καὶ τὴν συναγωγὴν αὐτὸς ᾠκοδόμησεν ἡμῖν (for he loves our nation and he built the synagogue for us). Luke here also highlights the elders' depiction of the centurion's self-interest in the request which is lacking in Matthew, the fact that the servant was ὃς ἦν αὐτῷ ἔντιμος (he was very dear to him). Matthew presents the action the centurion solicited from Jesus as a statement of faith in humility. Adding the adverb, μόνον "merely," he uses a future subjunctive, ἰαθήσεται, to claim the miracle. Luke however, presents the centurion's request from the backdrop of his power influence (cf. v. 8) again lacking in Matthew, using the imperative, εἰπέ λόγῳ, καὶ ἰαθήτω ὁ παῖς μου (say a word and heal my child, v. 7). There are several other differences, which a short article of this nature cannot account for.

This analysis shows no trace of copying from any one of the evangelists by another. It is rather evident that Luke and Matthew independently related the popular story they had been accustomed to telling and retelling during their oral kerygma. The second example is another in this category, but it points out an additional noteworthy feature: Luke's characteristic language.

## 2. The Lord's Prayer (Mat 6:9-13; Lk 11:2-4)

<p><u>Πάτερ</u> ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς· <u>ἀγιασθήτω</u> τὸ ὄνομά σου· <sup>10</sup> <u>ἔλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου</u>· γεννηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς· <sup>11</sup> <u>τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δός ἡμῖν</u> σήμερον· <sup>12</sup> <u>καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν</u>, ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν· <sup>13</sup> <u>καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν</u>, ἀλλὰ ῥύσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ.</p>	<p><u>Πάτερ</u>, <u>ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου</u>· <u>ἔλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου</u>· <sup>3</sup> <u>τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δίδου ἡμῖν τὸ</u> <u>καθ' ἡμέραν</u>· <sup>4</sup> <u>καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν</u>, καὶ γὰρ αὐτοὶ ἀφίομεν παντὶ ὀφείλοντι ἡμῖν· <u>καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν</u>.</p>
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There is much evidence of oral performance influence in the two versions of this prayer. Each was probably performed in the immediate community of the evangelist who has preserved it. Matthew's version is identical to the version in the *Didachē* which was housed in Syria by the heavy Jewish presence there. It thus witnesses to a Jewish Christian source. This is evidenced by its Hebraisms. Matthew's version, for instance, beautifully preserves Hebrew poetic parallelism,

fitting for a Jewish audience. He qualifies the Father being addressed as ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς as he characteristically does nine times over in his Gospel; an expression never once found in Luke. Obviously, it is his own addition which was probably also taken over by the *Didachē*. Stylistically, Matthew mostly uses the aorist in characterising the aspect of the action in the petitions of the prayer.

All of this fits well with Matthew's countercultural kingdom idea which emphasises the necessity of recognising God's kingship or sovereignty among humankind. This is the motivating factor for his characteristic Jewish qualification of the Πάτερ being petitioned as ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς (who is in the heavens) to demonstrate his highness. The same is true of his addition of the ethical twist in the apposition γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημα σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς (let your will be done as it is in heaven also on earth) to the petition of the coming of God's kingdom.

Above all, both cases witness to the concerns or agenda of the given evangelist in writing and has the stamp of the individual evangelist's characteristic way of speaking. With Matthew, Luke shares the countercultural conception of the Jesus event, but he is more universal in outlook than Matthew. In fact, his Gospel was probably motivated by the need on the mission field to have a Gospel that the Gentile wing of the Christian community would be happier reading. This is in view of the activities of the Judaizers that almost broke up the nascent community of God's people (Acts 15; cf. Gal 2-5). Luke's version of Jesus' model prayer is probably the one that was used in the Gentile mission field. Because of his universal focus, while Luke probably knew Matthew's version of the prayer, he chose to maintain the version that was closer to the prayer as Jesus said it to make it more amenable to non-Jews. Hence, he leaves the Father addressed unqualified as Jesus characteristically would have called him; as it was done on the Gentile mission field.

Stylistically, Luke employs the indicative in most of the requests of the prayer. The Father is to δίδου ἡμῖν our daily bread “καθ' ἡμέραν” (Luk 11:3 BGT), a characteristic Lukan expression (five times in the Gospel and six times in Acts). Luke's Gentile community interpreted Jesus' technical expression of “debts” (ὀφειλήματα) as sins (ἁμαρτίας (Luk 11:4 BGT). In Luke, the petition for forgiveness of sins is causal; γὰρ αὐτοὶ ἀφίομεν παντὶ ὀφείλοντι ἡμῖν (Luk 11:4 BGT “because we also repeatedly forgive those indebted to us”). Since Luke knew Matthew's Gospel and had probably recently read it, he is also influenced by that Gospel's preservation of the Jewish idea of offence against someone as indebtedness to the offender as retained in παντὶ ὀφείλοντι ἡμῖν.

These stark differences between these parallel passages do not speak for interdependence or dependence of the evangelists, one on another. The evidence is weightier on the side of oral performance influence. Although, Matthew was probably one of his intertexts, Luke was not bound to copy it; he simply used the ideas in it governed by such factors as his narrative motive and goal and the result of the dialogue between the thoughts in his Matthean source and the other sources

he interacted with. In this case Luke seems to have been more influenced in making his choice material and even words by his internalised knowledge of the tradition and his mission concerns. This fact is equally evident in triple tradition passages like that on Jesus' last supper with his disciples when he instituted the Eucharist.

Luke's version of this story is particularly helpful because it points to two important subtexts: the liturgical tradition and the Old Testament, especially Isaiah's Servant Songs. There is possible evidence of some influence of the precursor Gospel of Matthew, as well as some indication of Mark's use of Luke and Matthew though it is difficult to talk about any of them "copying" from another. The source-pointers are in the agreement and or difference of structure and wording as well as style of the various evangelists.

All the three evangelists precede the institution of the Eucharist with its preparatory narrative. All however, agree only on the day of the supper—the day of unleavened bread—and the disciples' question about where the supper should take place, as well as the fact that they prepared the Passover. All three points of agreement are possible in oral performance or recitation, in which case, they are coincidences. Beyond these, there are agreements only between two evangelists, especially Matthew and Mark, on certain elements in the story. All in all, there are more divergences than agreements such as makes it difficult to identify cords of literary dependence or interdependence.

This scenario leads to the view that the shared narrative order and similarity of wording indicates the use of Matthew's Gospel or source by Mark. Luke however, clearly stands out with his own structure and wording. In the narrative of the preparation for the Passover, Luke is closer to Mark in wording (but not structure) than Matthew. In the institution of the Eucharist, Luke's wording is much closer to Paul's wording of it in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. Luke's Jesus began the Passover dinner with a speech, a preamble, expressing his prevailing burning desire to celebrate the Passover with his disciples before his passion because of its significance as the last for them in this life (vv. 15-16). The language used suggests the Isaianic Servant Songs as subtext for Luke, evident in Luke's language of "suffering for many" (v 15) and "pouring out a cup for others" (v 20) which corresponds to the language of Isaiah 52:13-53:11, describing the sacrificial role of the Suffering Servant of God. Luke's Jesus specifically says to his disciples: "For I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, 'and he was numbered with transgressors' [Isa 53:12]; for that which refers to Me has *its* fulfillment" (Lk 22:37 NAU). His use of the "cup" symbol for Jesus' redemptive suffering allusively links his thoughts at this point with the tradition behind Matthew's discussion of Jesus' remedial discourse to his disciples about life in the government of God (Mat 20: 22-23). That this tradition was a subtext for Luke here is evident in his discussion of Jesus' key teaching in that discourse—prompted by the disciples' leadership tussle—in the context of this Passover celebration (Lk 22:24-30). Taken from the cotext therefore, there is

hardly evidence of copying, but much evidence of allusion as is usual in intertextuality.

There is a theological component, which points to Luke's motivation and purpose in including this supper narrative in his account of Jesus' life and ministry. In his narrative, after the opening speech, Jesus took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to his disciples to share it among themselves. Then he took bread, gave them to share and explained the gesture as a symbol of his body sacrificed for them, which they should commemorate. There is a second cup after supper symbolizing a new covenant sealed with Jesus' blood. The second cup probably signifies the institution of the Eucharist. This explains the textual confusion in this part of the Lukan text for the Last Supper. The minority reading that removed the first cup but retained the second probably did so because of its apparent oddity in table procedures. But, understood from Luke's theological concerns, the first "cup" was possibly a cultural gesture of welcoming someone to a place; notice that it attracts no comment. In that case, the second "cup" was the actual Eucharistic symbol as Luke has Jesus explain it as a cup poured out for the people. Luke's interpretation of the "cup" as "new covenant" identifies its source with the liturgical tradition preserved also by Paul (1 Cor 11:25).<sup>42</sup> According to Paul, the celebration of the Lord's Supper became tradition in the Church's liturgy by the time he wrote 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 11:23). This is a probable pointer to the source of Luke's shared material with Paul.

These features distinguish Luke's version of the Lord's Supper from the other accounts, in structure and wording in a manner that suggests influence of the liturgical cultural expression as intertext. Luke's few agreements with Matthew and Mark do not warrant identification of either as his source. One notes that this is characteristic of Luke's literary procedures; he uses information from sources in the best way that such material conveys his intended meaning. Luke has drawn from Christian tradition of the Jesus event (oral and written), which has its basis in and includes the Old Testament, and the precursor Gospels. This precludes the identification of Luke as a compiler as does Burkett<sup>43</sup> and many others engaging the Gospel sources from our print cultural perspective. But, why does Luke behave like this? The answer is to be found in his theology latent throughout his narrative, which spells out his motivation and goal that dictated his use of these sources.

### **Luke's Theology: A Bird eye's View**

By way of introducing Luke's theology, the story that Luke narrates is about an emerging movement that ideologically had an introversionist response to its larger social world (Acts 4:12). Luke-Acts presents God's plan of an ἐκκλησία, which according to the narrative, will be realized through God's agent of restoration, Jesus the Christ (Lk 24: 19-24; Acts 4:12). This is evident in Luke's direct citations and echoes of allusions to Old Testament promises and events (cf. Lk 1-2; Acts 2:16-39). The author of Luke-Acts is engaged in a dialogical

rhetorical discourse in narrative that is two-dimensional. He is addressing a concrete reader. But he also explicitly states his engagement in another dialogue with precursor texts—what others previously expressed about his object of discourse (Lk 1:1-4). The discourse is about God’s programme of a new creation community, an ἐκκλησία. This is what he means by “things accomplished among us” (Lk 1:1). It is, the history of how God in Christ was crafting a new people out of the larger world society, beginning with the Jews from Jerusalem (cf. Acts 1:8 and the progress reports in Acts 6:7—on Jerusalem; 9:31—Judea and Samaria; 12:24 Gentile Antioch; 16:5 Asia Minor; and 19:20 Europe) to be a counterculture in the conception of God’s covenant with Abraham and his children and grand children in all their generations (Gen 11-21; Ex 19:5-6; cf. Lk 1-2). This is not a political unit like the Roman Empire, though. The counterculture is the kingdom of God—a people living by the ideals of the government of God on earth (Lk 4:18-22; 22:24-30; Acts 2:44-47)—an alternative society to the Judeo-Greco-Roman society that lost bearing with the ideals of God’s government (Acts 5:1-5). Luke-Acts might therefore be seen as a social identity document.

It appears though, that by the time Luke started his narrative, the new community had not yet been properly identified by the name ἐκκλησία. This was a later development that became especially commonplace by the time he was writing his second volume. That is when the new community was struggling with defining its self-identity according to Acts 11:26 where members of the ἐκκλησία are also identified for the first time as Christians. Following this development, Luke uses the term ἐκκλησία 23 times in describing the Church, only in the second volume of his narrative. This self-identification note above all else attests to Luke’s primary intertext being his theology of the mission field where he orally performed the kerygma as Paul’s companion. This is the source that underlies and undergirds Luke’s two-volume book; the mission field story he had internalised over a long period of his oral gospel performance.

### **Conclusion**

As we saw in the foregoing discussion, the Gospels’ source-critical studies have been literary driven and built on an open-ended literary theory that sees later texts as mere extensions of precursor texts. This however, infringes on the essential character of the Gospels as “utterances” which by their function as communication units, are necessarily dialogical. Since no human being is an island to himself or herself, and every utterance is made in a context of a dialogical discourse, the Gospels are dialogical interactions of their authors’ intertexts with their new narratives, governed by each author’s ideological world. Exploring Gospel sources is, therefore, tantamount to exploring a broad database of community literature that is scribalised, but retains salient marks of its orality; and is transmitted in a manner that defies a neat taxonomy of any kind. This requires an integration of ideological, literary, cultural, and historical insights.

On these categories, Luke-Acts is found to be an ideologically based self-identity document of an emerging movement that came to be known as the ἐκκλησία—an alternative society that God promised Abraham and his progeny. The document is intertextually built with evidence of heavy oral communication influence and some literary dependence without a clear dividing line. To have a more informed understanding of sources for Luke-Acts, therefore, we should focus his narrative techniques—his ideological use of sources intertextually.

## Notes and References

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1. This is a two-part paper. This first part examines the usefulness of source-critical studies for understanding the gospel tradition as springboard to the message of the Gospels. Consequently, Luke's theology is only introduced, but is the focus of Part Two (in progress) being prepared for a later volume of this journal.
  2. Earl Doherty, *Jesus Neither God nor Man: The Case for a Mythical Jesus*. (Ottawa: Age of Reason, 2009), 108 exemplifies it: "As a general rule, when two documents are similar in content and layout, and one is longer than the other, the longer one tends to be an expansion of the shorter."
  3. Delbert Burkett, *Rethinking the Gospel Sources Volume 2: The Unity and Plurality of Q*. (Atlanta: SBL, 2009), 40.
  4. B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins, The Manuscript Tradition, Sources, Authorship, and Dates*. (London: MacMillan, 1924; online version by Paul Ingram 2004), <<http://www.katapi.org.uk/index.html>>
  5. Mikhail Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel." *The Dialogic Imagination*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 280.
  6. Unlike a "text" that could be a mere sentence, "An "utterance" has both context—its generative social milieu—and cotext; thus, text, cotext, and context determine the meaning of an utterance as Peter Cotterell explains in "Linguistics, Meaning, Semantics, and Discourse Analysis." *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. (Ed. Willem A. VanGemeren). CD-ROM. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan. Harper), 1996,.
  7. Bakhtin 280
  8. That is the contextual configuration of words used in a specified manner.
  9. Cf. Harald Riesenfeld, *The Gospel Tradition: Essays*, Transl. E.M. Rowley & R.A. Kraft, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970), 22.
  10. John R. Gillis (Ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3.
  11. Jan Assmann, "Form as a mnemonic device: Cultural texts and cultural memory." R.A. Horsley, J.A. Draper & J.M. Foley (eds.), *Performing the Gospel: Orality, memory, and Mark: Essays dedicated to Werner Kelber*, (Augsburg: Fortress Press, (2006, 67–82), 68.
  12. John Wenham, *Redating Matthew, Mark, and Luke: A Fresh Assault on the Synoptic Problem*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1991).
  13. From Phrygia, Asia, Papias wrote (c. 125) that Mark wrote his Gospel from his interpretation of Peter's preaching (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, 3.39.15); "Matthew on the other hand compiled the oracles in the Hebrew [Aramaic] dialect and every person translated them as he was able" (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, 3.39.16). One immediately notices that these statements say nothing about the

Gospels' order. Papias apparently was concerned, not with the Gospels' chronology but their authorship. There is however, a hint on the Gospels' chronology from Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria. Irenaeus wrote from Lyons (c. 170s-180s) that "So Matthew among the Hebrews issued a writing of the gospel in their own tongue, while Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel at Rome and founding the Church" (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, *Haer*3.1.1). Later, Clement, writing c. 190s stated that "those of the gospels comprising the genealogies progegrafqai(were written before)" (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl*6.14.5).

- 14 Mark Goodacre, *The Synoptic Problem: A Way Through the Maze*. (London: T&T Clark, 2001), p. 62 ; Earl Doherty, *Jesus Neither God nor Man*, p. 108.
- 15 For instance, Delbert Burkett in his *Rethinking the Gospel Sources Volumes 1 and 2*, all attempting to confirm the existence of Q and explain apparent contradictions in its size and shape.
- 16 Burkett, *Rethinking the Gospel Sources*, 37, 51, 59.
- 17 Burkett p. 4.
- 18 William R. Farmer. *The Synoptic Problem: A Critical Analysis*, (Mercer University Press, 1979), 120.
- 19 Mark Goodacre, *The Synoptic Problem*, 29.
- 20 Richard A. Horsley (Ed.), *Oral Performance, Popular Tradition, and the Hidden Transcript in Q* (Semeia St 60; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 95-96.
- 21 Burkett, *Rethinking*, p. 102.
- 22 Farmer, *The Synoptic Problem*, pp. 17-18.
- 23 Wenham, *Redating*, p. 2.
- 24 Intertextuality as used in this paper is inclusively the inter-action of texts with pre-texts to produce new texts. On this understanding of the concept, a precursor text (an intertext) generates new meaning in a new text fundamentally because it is a source for the latter text. But intertexts are not necessarily always used with new meaning; an author sometimes simply reproduces a pre-text that excited him with its original meaning when it better conveys his intent. A "text" can be either oral or written just as there are oral literature and oral history. In illiterate and so oral communities an orally performed text could generate a new meaning when it is re-performed in a new context owing to several dynamics of oral performance, such as gestures, tone, digressive comments etc. as oral texts characteristically do.
- 25 See Luke Timothy Johnson, *Septuagintal Midrash in the Speeches of Acts*, (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2002), 13-18.
- 26 Johnson makes this list (p. 59-60): Luke 3:4-6 (Isa. 40:3-5); Luke 4:4 (Deut. 8:3); Luke 4:8 (Deut. 6:13); Luke 4:10-11 (Ps. 91:11-12); Luke 4:12 (Deut. 6:16); Luke 4:18-19 (Isa. 61:1, 2; 58:6); Luke 7:27 (Mal. 3:1); Luke 10:27

- (Deut. 6:4/ Lev. 19:18); Luke 18:20 (Exod. 20:12-16/Deut. 5:16-20); Luke 19:37 (Ps. 118:26) Luke 19:45 (Isa. 56:7/Jer. 7:11); Luke 20:17 (Ps. 118:22-23); Luke 20:17 (Isa. 8:14-15); Luke 20:41 (Ps. 110:1); Luke 22:37 (Isa. 53:12); Luke 23:46 (Ps. 31:5).
- 27 For more details, see Igbakua Iorjaah, *Introduction to Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic*, (Makurdi: The Return, 2009), 6-8.
- 28 Rudolf Bultmann's central argument in his *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, Transl. J. Marsh, (New York: Harper & Row, 1963).
- 29 Werner H. Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel*, 2nd ed., (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1997), 30.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. xix, in this frame of thought, Kelber sees the writing down of Mark's Gospel as "resistance to oral drives, norms, and authorities" rather than "extension of an antecedent oral tradition."
- 31 Richard A. Horsley "Oral and Written Aspects of the Emergence of the Gospel of Mark as Scripture." *Oral Tradition*, 25/1 (2010): 93-114, 94-5.
- 32 Raymond F. Person Jr. "The Role of Memory in the Tradition Represented by the Deuteronomic History and the Book of Chronicles." *Oral Tradition*, 26/2 (2011): 537-550., p. 538.
- 33 Person Jr., 546.
- 34 Anthony Le Donne and Tom Thatcher (Eds.), "Introducing Media Culture to Johannine Studies: Orality, Performance, and Memory." *The First Gospel in First Century Media Culture*. Eds. Anthony Le Donne and Tom Thatcher. London: T&T Clark, 2011.
- 35 Person Jr., 538.
- 36 Dennis C. Duling, 2011, "Memory, Collective Memory, Orality and the Gospels", *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*67(1), Art. #915, 11 pages.  
<<http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v67i1.915>"target="\_blank">doi.10.4102/hts.v67i1.915>
- 37 Esteban Voth, "Orality And Writtenness in Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy: Its Effect on Translation as Communication in Latin America." *The Bible Translator* 56/3. 114.
- 38 Voth, 114.
- 39 Horsley, *Oral Performance*, 95.
- 40 Le Donne and Thatcher, 5.
- 41 Terrence C. Mournet, *Oral Tradition and Literary Dependency: Variability and Stability in the Synoptic Tradition and Q*. (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 287.
- 42 Cf. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, 2nd Edition*, (UBS) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 150.
- 43 Rethinking, Vol 2, 102.