STEPHEN E. YOUNG

Jesus Tradition in the Apostolic Fathers

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Their Explicit Appeals to the Words of Jesus in Light of Orality Studies

Mohr Siebeck

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To Susan and Berto

for the joy of
who you are

Preface

This monograph is a slightly revised version of my Ph.D. thesis, submitted in June 2010 to the faculty of the School of Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary. I have become indebted to many during my years at Fuller. I would like to thank Dr. Richard Beaton, who walked with me as I narrowed down my dissertation topic, and provided guidance and encouragement in my work. I also thank Dr. Marianne Meye Thompson, who read an early draft of Chapter 3 and made many helpful suggestions. I owe Dr. Donald A. Hagner a special debt of gratitude: he has always made time to discuss my work, and to provide valuable feedback as needed. His interest has not been limited to my academic pursuits, as he has ever been concerned also with my well-being and that of my family. His friendship has been a constant source of encouragement, strength, and inspiration throughout my doctoral program and after. For all of this I am deeply grateful. I am also grateful to Dr. Andrew Gregory of the University of Oxford for his insightful and relevant criticism. His feedback, informed by his deep familiarity with my subject matter (I cite him frequently in the pages that follow), proved uniquely helpful during the final revision process. I also thank Susan Wood in Faculty Publications at Fuller for her advice on technical matters related to my manuscript. I am, of course, fully responsible for any and all shortcomings that remain.

It has been a pleasure to work with the editors and staff at Mohr Siebeck, who have been not only efficient and professional, but also personable and gracious. I warmly thank Professor Jörg Frey and Dr. Henning Ziebritzki for accepting this work for publication in the second series of Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. I also thank Anna Krüger for her excellent editorial advice and her assistance with several technical matters that were quite over my head.

I deeply appreciate the assistance received from many other people during the long process that led to the completion of this project. Among them I would like to thank Dr. Richard Erickson, Dr. Seyoon Kim, Dr. Charles Scalise, and Dr. Pamela Scalise, former professors who I am fortunate to count among my friends. Each of them has not only taught me much, but also affirmed and encouraged me in various ways, for all of which I am grateful. My previous forays into the subject matter of this monograph

took the form of papers written for a masters-level course on Christology taught by Dr. Bryan Burton in Winter 2002, and for a doctoral seminar on the Apostolic Fathers taught by Dr. David M. Scholer in Fall 2004. I thank Dr. Burton for his feedback, which encouraged me to further pursue this topic. I wish I could also thank Dr. Scholer, who was ever supportive even in the midst of a lengthy battle with cancer. Unfortunately, however, he eventually lost that battle and passed away in 2008.

It has been a pleasure to work with the staff at Fuller's David Allan Hubbard Library. I thank Gail Frederick of the InterLibrary Loan department who cheerfully and efficiently tracked down many important resources. I also thank Associate Provost for Library Services Dr. David Bundy, and Assistant Provost for Library and Information Technology Michael Murray, for acquiring a number of volumes for the Library that were important for my research.

It would have been impossible for me to complete my program without financial assistance from several quarters. I thank the Center for Advanced Theological Studies (CATS) Committee at Fuller, for the Fellowships the Center provided from 2003 through 2007, and for a Dissertation Writing Award in 2008. I am grateful also to Dr. Charles E. Carlston for generously funding a New Testament Scholarship through CATS, from which I benefited in 2005–2006. I also thank the New Testament department in the School of Theology for giving me the opportunity to teach while engaged in my doctoral work. In this connection I wish to thank as well Jeannette Scholer, Dr. Linda Peacore, Christine Cervantes, Catherine Kelly and others at the Academic Programs office, and also Dr. Juan Martinez at Fuller's Center for the Study of Hispanic Church and Community. This teaching experience provided an opportunity for me to engage with the wonderful student body at Fuller, and also contributed significantly to meeting my financial needs.

Last in order, but first in affection, I thank my wife Susan and our son Alberto for much love and support during these years of research and writing. It was a challenge for Susan and I to leave the many comforts that came with a caring community and two secure jobs in Seattle, to embark on a journey into many unknowns, with our then four-month-old son (now 8 years old!). I am deeply grateful to Susan, given that without her many sacrifices and ongoing encouragement it would have been impossible for me to complete my program. However, I am even more grateful to both her and Alberto for that love that creates home, and that gives meaning to sacrifices and accomplishments. It is to the two of them that I dedicate this book.

Pasadena, August 1, 2011 Stephen E. Young

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in addition to those found in P. H. Alexander, ed., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999), with full bibliographical detail given in the Bibliography:

//	Parallel(s)
AcBib	Academia Biblica (Society of Biblical Literature)
AmAn	*American Antiquity*
ApFa	Apostolic Fathers
Apoc	*Apocrypha: Revue Internationalle des Littératures Apocryphes/International Journal of Apocryphal Literatures*
ARS	*Annual Review of Sociology*
ASBT	Acadia Studies in Bible and Theology (Baker Academic)
AV	Die Apostolischen Väter (Mohr Siebeck)
AYB	The Anchor Yale Bible (Yale University Press)
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Baker Academic)
BibSem	Biblical Seminar (Sheffield)
BNE	Biblioteca para la nueva evangelización (Caparrós Editores)
BPC	Biblical Performance Criticism (Cascade)
CCR	Cambridge Companions to Religion
CCWJCW	Cambridge Commentaries on Writings of the Jewish and Christian World 200 BC to AD 200
CJA	Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity (Notre Dame)
ClAnt	*Classical Antiquity*
ContRev	*Contemporary Review*
CSOLC	Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture
CTL	Crown Theological Library (G. P. Putnam's Sons/Williams & Norgate)
DBI	*Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*. Ed. John H. Hayes. 2 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 1999
DJG	*Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Ed. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992
ECC	Early Christianity in Context (T&T Clark)
EHJ	*Encyclopedia of the Historical Jesus*. Ed. Craig A. Evans. New York and London: Routledge, 2008
ERPWLA	*Encyclopedia of Religious and Philosophical Writings in Late Antiquity: Pagan, Judaic, Christian.* Ed. in Chief Jacob Neusner and Alan J. Avery-Peck. Consulting Ed. William Scott Green. Leiden: Brill, 2007
ETSSS	Evangelical Theological Society Studies Series (Baker and Apollos)
FonC	Fontes Christiani (Herder)
FPat	Fuentes Patrísticas (Ciudad Nueva)

FSC	Faith and Scholarship Colloquies (Trinity Press International)
FTMT	Fortress Texts in Modern Theology (Fortress)
GBSNTS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship: New Testament Series (Fortress)
GFB	Garland Folklore Bibliographies
GRLH	Garland Reference Library of the Humanities
HHM	Harvard Historical Monographs (Harvard University Press)
HJ	*Historisches Jahrbuch*
HSHJ	*Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*. Ed. Tom Holmén and Stanley E. Porter. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2011
HTCNT	Herder's Theological Commentary on the New Testament
JGGPÖ	*Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für die Geschichte des Protestantismus in Österreich*
JJTP	*The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy*
JSHJ	*Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*
KTAH	Key Themes in Ancient History (Cambridge)
LBS	Linguistic Biblical Studies (Brill)
LJS	Lives of Jesus Series (Fortress)
LkR	Lukan Redaction
LTT	Library of Theological Translations (James Clarke)
MattR	Matthean Redaction
MnS	Supplements to Mnemosyne (Brill)
NAl	Nueva Alianza (Ediciones Sígueme)
NC	Narrative Commentaries (Trinity Press International)
NGC	*New German Critique*
NGS	New Gospel Studies (Mercer)
NLH	*New Literary History*
NTAF	*The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers*. By a Committee of the Oxford Society of Historical Theology. Oxford: Clarendon, 1905
NTAF	The New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers (Oxford)
ODCC	*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church.* Ed. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone. 3rd ed., revised. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005
OLAG	Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece (Brill)
OrTr	*Oral Tradition*
PFLUS	Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg (Ophrys)
PillNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
PSCE	Princeton Series of Collected Essays
RCatT	*Revista Catalana de Teologia*
RPP	*Religion Past and Present: Encyclopedia of Theology and Religion*. Ed. Hans Dieter Betz, Don S. Browning, Bernd Janowski, and Eberhard Jüngel. Leiden: Brill, 2007–
SBEC	Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity (Edwin Mellen)
SchU	Schriften des Urchristentums (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft)
SD	Scripta et documenta (Abadia di Montserrat)
SH	Scripture and Hermeneutics (Paternoster and Zondervan)
SHBC	Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Smyth & Helwys)
SLFCS	Studies in Literacy, Family, Culture and the State (Cambridge)
SM	Scripta Minora (Gleerup)
SNTW	Studies in the New Testament and Its World (T&T Clark)
SocTh	*Sociological Theory*

SST	Schleiermacher: Studies and Translations (Edwin Mellen)
STAR	Studies in Theology and Religion (Deo)
StBibLit	Studies in Biblical Literature (Peter Lang)
T&TCBS	T&T Clark Biblical Studies
TICP	Travaux de l'Institut Catholique de Paris (Bloud & Gay)
TSS	Themes in the Social Sciences (Cambridge)
TUMSR	Trinity University Monograph Series in Religion
UCL	Universitas Catholica Lovaniensis Series
VCSup	Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae (Brill)
VetChr	*Vetera Christianorum*
VPT	Voices in Performance and Text (Indiana University Press)

Chapter 1

Orality and the Study of Early Christianity

"… notwithstanding its stunning accomplishments, [historical biblical scholarship] is empowered by an inadequate theory of the art of communication in the ancient world."
– Werner H. Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel*, xxviii

1.1 Introduction

Early Christianity arose and spread within cultures that were predominantly oral.[1] The full implications of this basic insight are just beginning to be worked out within the field of New Testament studies. Not that oral tradition is a new concept; on the contrary, New Testament scholars have appealed to it for centuries in debating such topics as the sources and historical reliability of the canonical Gospels.

In the modern period, scholars began to give serious attention to the place of oral tradition in the composition of the canonical Gospels in reaction to Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768). In the Wolfenbütel Fragments (1774–78), Reimarus held that the disciples fabricated much of the Gospels' history and doctrine; see his "Concerning the Intention of Jesus and His Teaching," in *Reimarus: Fragments* (ed. C. H. Talbert; trans. R. S. Fraser; LJS; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970), 59–269. The reactionary appeal to oral tradition in support of the reliability of the Gospels is traceable through the works of Gotthold Lessing (1729–1781), Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), Johann Gieseler (1792–1854), and Brooke Foss Westcott (1825–1901); see Lessing, "New Hypothesis Concerning the Evangelists Regarded as Merely Human Historians," in *Lessing's Theological Writings* (ed. and trans. H. Chadwick; LMRT; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1956), 65–81; J. G. Herder, *Against Pure Reason* (FTM; ed. and trans. M. Bunge; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993); Westcott, *An Introduction to the Study of the Gospels* (7th ed.; London: Macmillan, 1888), 166–71; on Gieseler see W. G. Kümmel, *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of its Problems* (trans. S. M. Gilmour and H. C.

[1] "Predominantly oral" here and below is used in reference to societies with a literate minority in which most of daily life is conducted (even for the literate minority) on the basis of orality. In these societies one cannot make the distinction between "oral" and "literate" individuals, in that even those who have gained the skill of writing and reading use them for very limited activities, while relying on orality in most social contexts; see D. Tannen, "The Oral/Literate Continuum in Discourse," in *Spoken and Written Language: Exploring Orality and Literacy* (ed. D. Tannen; Norwood, N.J.: Ablex, 1982), 1–16, and the other essays in the same volume, and further ch. 3 below.

Kee; Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), 83; W. Baird, *History of New Testament Research*, Vol. 1: *From Deism to Tübingen* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 296–7.

A different trajectory, anticipating and including the form-critical view of oral tradition as fragmentary and open to constant innovation and invention on the part of the early church, runs through Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), David Friedrich Strauss (1808–1874), Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918), William Wrede (1859–1906), Hermann Gunkel (1862–1932), Karl Ludwig Schmidt (1891–1956), Martin Dibelius (1883–1947), and Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976); see Schleiermacher, *Luke: A Critical Study* (trans. C. Thrilwall; SST 13; Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1993), 7–15; Strauss, "Hermann Samuel Reimarus and His Apology," in *Reimarus: Fragments* (ed. Talbert), 44–57; idem, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* (ed. P. C. Hodgson; trans. G. Eliot; LJS; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 58, 73–4, 82–6, 467. On the importance of Wrede, Wellhausen, Schmidt, and Gunkel for the form-critical perspective see R. Bultmann, "The New Approach to the Synoptic Problem," in *Existence and Faith* (selected and trans. S. M. Ogden; Cleveland: World, 1960), 35–40, who gives a brief history of the scholarship that led to the development of his own approach. See also P. C. Hodgson, Introduction and editorial note in Strauss, *Life of Jesus*, xvii–xviii, 786 (n. 74); Kümmel, *History*, 84, 282, 328; Baird, *History*, 1:215–17; idem, *History of New Testament Research,* Vol. 2: *From Jonathan Edwards to Rudolf Bultmann* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 156. We will return to the topic of form criticism and the work of Dibelius and Bultmann below.

Relatively new, however, are the numerous insights into the inner workings of oral tradition developed by a number of scholars in the wake of the pioneering work of Milman Parry and Albert Lord.[2] Notable among these scholars for the purposes of the present study are John Miles Foley,[3] Jack

[2] M. Parry's publications have been conveniently collected in *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry* (ed. A. Parry; Oxford: Clarendon, 1971). Parry's work, which was cut short by his early accidental death in 1935 at the age of 33 (see A. Parry, Introduction to ibid., ix–x) was carried on by his assistant, Albert Lord. The most important works of the latter for the present monograph include *The Singer of Tales* (HSCL 24; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960); "The Gospels as Oral Traditional Literature," in *The Relationships Among the Gospels: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue* (ed. W. O. Walker, Jr.; TUMSR 5; San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1978), 33–91; "Memory, Fixity, and Genre in Oral Traditional Poetries," in *Oral Traditional Literature: A Festschrift for Albert Bates Lord* (ed. J. M. Foley; Columbus: Slavica, 1981), 451–61; "Perspectives on Recent Work on the Oral Traditional Formula," *OrTr* 1 (1986): 467–503; "Characteristics of Orality," *OrTr* 2, no. 1 [FS for W. J. Ong] (1987): 54–72; "The Nature of Oral Poetry," in *Comparative Research on Oral Traditions: A Memorial for Milman Parry* (ed. J. M. Foley; Columbus: Slavica, 1987), 313–49; *The Singer Resumes the Tale* (ed. M. L. Lord; Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995). For a bibliography of Lord's publications see M. E. Grey, M. L. Lord, and J. M. Foley, "A Bibliography of Publications by Albert Bates Lord," *OrTr* 25 (2010): 497–504. On both Parry and Lord see further sec. 3.3 below, under the subtitle "Markers of Orality: Oral Indicators in an Oral Medium."

[3] See J. M. Foley, "The Oral Theory in Context," in *Oral Traditional Literature* (ed. Foley), 27–122; idem, "Tradition-Dependent and -Independent Features in Oral Literature: A Comparative View of the Formula," in *Oral Traditional Literature* (ed. Foley), 262–81; idem, *The Theory of Oral Composition: History and Methodology* (Bloomington

R. Goody,[4] Eric A. Havelock,[5] and Walter J. Ong.[6] The insights of these and other scholars have the potential to greatly impact our understanding of early Christian writings, both in terms of the interrelationships among them and of the nature of their sources.[7]

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and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988); idem, *Traditional Oral Epic: The Odyssey, Beowulf, and the Serbo-Croatian Return Song* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990); idem, *Immanent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991); idem, *The Singer of Tales in Performance* (VPT; Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995); idem, *Homer's Traditional Art* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999); idem, "What's In a Sign?," in *Signs of Orality: The Oral Tradition and its Influence in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (ed. E. A. Mackay; MnS 188; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 1–27; idem, *How to Read an Oral Poem* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002); idem, "Memory in Oral Tradition," in *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory, and Mark: Essays Dedicated to Werner Kelber* (ed. R. A. Horsley, J. A. Draper, and J. M. Foley; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 83–96. Foley has also made an important contribution through the volumes he has edited, two of which were already mentioned above: *Oral Traditional Literature: A Festschrift for Albert Bates Lord* and *Comparative Research on Oral Traditions: A Memorial for Milman Parry*, and see further idem, ed., *Oral Tradition in Literature: Interpretation in Context* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986); idem, ed., *Teaching Oral Traditions* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1998).

[4] J. Goody and I. Watt wrote the seminal essay "The Consequences of Literacy," in *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (ed. J. R. Goody; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 27–68; see further J. R. Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (TSS; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); idem, *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society* (SLFCS; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); idem, *The Interface between the Written and the Oral* (SLFCS; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

[5] Among the works by E. A. Havelock see especially *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963); idem, *The Literate Revolution in Greece and Its Cultural Consequences* (PSCE; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); idem, *The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986).

[6] Among his many works, see especially W. J. Ong, *The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History* (Terry Lectures; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967); idem, *Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1977); and (one of the writings that provided the initial impetus for this book) idem, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (New Accents; London and New York: Methuen, 1982; many reprints since 1988 by London and New York: Routledge). For a selected bibliography of Ong's works up to 1987 see R. F. Lumpp, "Walter Jackson Ong, S.J.: A Selected Bibliography," *OrTr* 2 [FS W. J. Ong] (1987): 19–30. I am indebted to many other authors as well, but those mentioned above are not only (after Parry and Lord) pioneers in the field or contemporary orality studies, but also have exerted the most influence upon the thought process that led to the present study.

[7] The best guide to the expanding literature on oral tradition is J. M. Foley, *Oral-Formulaic Theory and Research: An Introduction and Annotated Bibliography* (GFB 6;

Some of this impact is already being felt, as exemplified by the presidential address delivered by James Dunn at the 57th Annual Meeting of Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas in 2002, entitled, "Altering the Default Setting: Re-envisaging the Early Transmission of the Jesus Tradition."[8] Dunn's address was a call for the New Testament guild to recognize that members of ancient oral cultures operated very differently than scholars in today's Western cultures. Western scholars' "default setting" – Dunn's image for "an established mindset, an unconscious bias or *Tendenz*, an instinctive reflex response"[9] – is literary. Due to this literary mindset, Dunn argued, they naturally propose literary answers for problems in Christian antiquity that, given the insights into oral tradition provided by those who have built upon Parry and Lord's research, are better solved using the presuppositions of an oral mindset.[10]

Dunn devoted a large part of his address to discussing how one might "alter the default setting" in relation to various aspects of the reigning solution to the Synoptic Problem, the Two-Source Theory. Though we cannot cover all of Dunn's arguments here, we will give an example to illustrate his point. First, a brief introduction to place Dunn's comments in context: according to the Two-Source Theory Mark wrote first, and Mat-

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GRLH 400; New York: Garland, 1985), together with its updates by various authors in *OrTr* 1 (1986): 767–808; 3 (1988): 191–228; 12 (1997): 366–484 (complete back issues available at http://journal.oraltradition.org/; accessed 03/11/2011).

[8] Published in *NTS* 49 (2003): 139–75, and reprinted as an appendix in Dunn's *A New Perspective on Jesus: What the Quest for the Historical Jesus Missed* (ASBT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 79–125; see further idem, *New Perspective on Jesus*, 35–56; idem, *Christianity in the Making,* Vol. 1: *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 173–254; idem, *Christianity in the Making,* Vol. 2: *Beginning from Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 111–27; idem, "Reappreciating the Oral Jesus Tradition," *SEÅ* 74 (2009), 1–17; idem, "Remembering Jesus: How the Quest of the Historical Jesus Lost Its Way," in *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus* (ed. T. Holmén and S. E. Porter; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 183–205.

[9] Dunn, "Altering," 141.

[10] In addition to Parry and Lord, Dunn makes special reference to the work of J. Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press and London: Currey, 1985), the comparative work of R. Finnegan, *Oral Literature in Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970) and I. Okpewho, *African Oral Literature: Backgrounds, Character and Continuity* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), as well as "the 30 years' personal, albeit anecdotal, experience of [K. E.] Bailey in the Middle East" as reflected in Bailey's "Informal Controlled Oral Tradition and the Synoptic Gospels," *AJT* 5 (1991): 34–54; idem, "Middle Eastern Oral Tradition and the Synoptic Gospels," *ExpTim* 106 (1994–95): 363–67 (quote from Dunn, "Altering," 150). In the course of his discussion Dunn also refers to R. Finnegan, *Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance, and Social Context* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); Foley, *Immanent Art*; idem, *Singer*; Havelock, *Muse*; Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, as well as other works that apply the insights of orality studies to Jesus tradition and the Gospels.

thew and Luke depended on Mark. In addition, Matthew and Luke followed a second main source, commonly called Q, discernible behind the double tradition (material common to Matthew and Luke but not found in Mark). Dunn saw no problem with this general hypothesis. He did see a problem, however, with the way Western scholars – given their literary mindset – envision Q as a written document that can be clearly delineated in terms of extent, content, redactional layers, and so on.

In order to fit the theory to the evidence, e.g., scholars hypothesize that Matthew and Luke had access to two different Q documents, Q^M and Q^L, that reflected the redaction to which Q was subject during the time that intervened between its use by each evangelist. The theory of a Q^M and Q^L, however, built on the *differences* between Matthew and Luke, calls into question the basic theory of Q's existence, which is predicated on the *similarities* between Matthew and Luke in the double tradition. Dunn argued that taking seriously the insight that much of the Jesus tradition was transmitted early on by word of mouth entails recognizing, among other things, that the variations and agreements between Matthew and Luke in certain cases are best understood as reflecting the combination of fixity and flexibility, or stability and diversity, characteristic of oral tradition.[11] To put it in general terms, certain variations among the Gospels are best understood as arising neither from different versions of their written source, nor from the literary redaction of the evangelists, but from the very nature of their source(s) as oral tradition.

1.2 Thesis

Dunn's address was necessarily limited in scope, dealing primarily with the topic of the interrelations of the Synoptic Gospels. The need to "re-envisage the early transmission of the Jesus tradition" in light of ongoing revisions to our understanding of orality is not limited, however, to the study of the Gospels. It also carries over to the study of Jesus tradition in other early Christian literature, such as the NT epistles, the Apostolic Fathers, and the Nag Hammadi texts.[12]

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[11] Dunn's examples are the pericopes on turning the other cheek (Mt 5:39b–42//Lk 6:29–30), dividing families (Mt 10:34–38//Lk 12:51–53, 14:26–27), and forgiving sin seven times (Mt 18:15, 21–22//Lk 17:3–4); see ibid., 163–64.

[12] The words in quotation marks reflect the sub-title of Dunn's "Altering." Dunn himself notes that the study of the Jesus tradition outside the Gospels, in documents such as the NT epistles, the Apostolic Fathers, and the Nag Hammadi texts, "has been seriously flawed by overdependence on the literary paradigm" (ibid., 169–70), which in essence constitutes a call to investigate this literature afresh from the perspective of orality.

Some of this re-envisaging has been taking place over the past three decades, spurred on especially by the publication in 1983 of Werner Kelber's groundbreaking work entitled *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q*.[13] Kelber, Dunn and others have examined a variety of early Christian writings from the perspective of orality: a number of studies have been conducted on the double tradition or Q,[14] as well as the synoptic tradition in general (including the implications of orality studies for the Synoptic Problem),[15] and also on the Gospel of Matthew,[16] the Gospel of

[13] Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983. In his introduction to a *Festschrift* in Kelber's honor, R. A. Horsley gives credit to Kelber as "the first to recognize that the Gospels were composed and received in a world dominated by oral communication," and goes on to state that Kelber has also "patiently explained the implications to other scholars still stubbornly faithful to the typographical assumptions of the modern western study of sacred texts" (Horsley, introduction to *Performing the Gospel* [ed. Horsley, Draper, and Foley], viii).

[14] J. D. G. Dunn, "Q^1 as Oral Tradition," in *The Written Gospel [FS for Graham Stanton]* (ed. M. Bockmuehl and D. A. Hagner; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 45–69; R. A. Horsley with J. A. Draper, *Whoever Hears You Hears Me: Prophets, Performance, and Tradition in Q* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999); R. A. Horsley, ed., *Oral Performance, Popular Tradition, and Hidden Transcript in Q* (SBL SemeiaSt 60; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006).

[15] A. D. Baum, *Der mündliche Faktor und seine Bedeutung für die synoptische Frage: Analogien aus der antiken Literatur, der Experimentalpsychologie, der Oral Poetry-Forschung und dem rabbinischen Traditionswesen* (TANZ 49; Tübingen: Francke, 2008); Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 173–254; idem, *New Perspective on Jesus*, 35–56; idem, "Reappreciating the Oral Jesus Tradition," 1–17; idem, "Remembering Jesus," 183–205; W. H. Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q* (repr. with a new intro. by the author and a foreword by W. J. Ong; Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997); T. C. Mournet, *Oral Tradition and Literary Dependency: Variability and Stability in the Synoptic Tradition and Q* (WUNT 2.195; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005); idem, "The Jesus Tradition as Oral Tradition," in *Jesus in Memory: Traditions in Oral and Scribal Practices* (ed. W. H. Kelber and S. Byrskog; Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2009), 39–61. We might also include here Bailey, "Informal" and idem, "Middle Eastern," who charts a path of his own. For a survey of research conducted during the last three decades on oral tradition and the Gospels, see K. R. Iverson, "Orality and the Gospels: A Survey of Recent Research," *Currents in Biblical Research* 8 (2009): 71–106.

[16] A. D. Baum, "Matthew's Sources – Oral or Written? A Rabbinic Analogy and Empirical Insights," in *Built Upon the Rock: Studies in the Gospel of Matthew* (ed. D. M. Gurtner and J. Nolland; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 1–23; R. Beaton, "How Matthew Writes," in *Written Gospel* (ed. Bockmuehl and Hagner), 116–34; S. I. Wright, "Debtors, Laborers and Virgins: The Voice of Jesus and the Voice of Matthew in Three Parables," in *Jesus and Paul: Global Perspectives in Honor of James D. G. Dunn for His 70th Birthday* (ed. B. J. Oropeza, C. K. Robertson, and Douglas C. Mohrmann; LNTS 414; London and New York: T&T Clark International, 2009).

Mark[17] and the Gospel of John,[18] the Pauline literature,[19] the Apocalypse of John,[20] and the New Testament in general.[21] Non-canonical writings have

[17] P. J. J. Botha, "Mark's Story as Oral Traditional Literature: Rethinking the Transmission of Some Traditions about Jesus," *HvTSt* 47 (1991): 304–31; J. Dewey, "Oral Methods of Structuring Narrative in Mark," *Int* 43 (1989): 32–44; idem, "Mark as Interwoven Tapestry: Forecasts and Echoes for a Listening Audience," *CBQ* 53 (1991): 221–36; idem, "Mark as Aural Narrative: Structures as Clues to Understanding," *STRev* 36 (1992): 45–56; idem, "The Gospel of Mark as an Oral-Aural Event: Implications for Interpretation," in *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament* (ed. E. V. McKnight and E. S. Malbon; JSNTSup 109; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 145–63; idem, "The Survival of Mark's Gospel: A Good Story?," *JBL* 123 (2004), 495–507; idem, "The Gospel of Mark as Oral Hermeneutic," in *Jesus, the Voice, and the Text: Beyond The Oral and the Written Gospel* (ed. T. Thatcher; Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 71–87; R. A. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 53–78 and passim; idem, "Oral and Written Aspects of the Emergence of the Gospel of Mark as Scripture," *OrTr* 25 (2010): 93–114; idem, "Oral Performance and Mark: Some Implications of The Oral and the Written Gospel, Twenty-Five Years Later," in *Jesus, the Voice, and the Text* (ed. Thatcher), 45–70; idem, "A Prophet Like Moses and Elijah: Popular Memory and Cultural Patterns in Mark," in *Performing the Gospel* (ed. Horsley, Draper, and Foley), 166–90; W. H. Kelber, "Mark and Oral Tradition," in *Perspectives on Mark's Gospel* (ed. N. R. Petersen; *Semeia* 16; Missoula: Society of Biblical Literature/Scholars, 1979), 7–55; idem, *Oral and Written*, 44–139; Y.-M. Park, *Mark's Memory Resources and the Controversy Stories (Mark 2:1–3:6): An Application of the Frame Theory of Cognitive Science to the Markan Oral-Aural Narrative* (LBS 2; Leiden: Brill, 2010); V. K. Robbins, "Interfaces of Orality and Literature in the Gospel of Mark," in *Performing the Gospel* (ed. Horsley, Draper, and Foley), 125–46; W. Shiner, *Proclaiming the Gospel: First Century Performance of Mark* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003); idem, "Memory Technology and the Composition of Mark," in *Performing the Gospel* (ed. Horsley, Draper, and Foley), 147–65; contrast B. W. Henaut, *Oral Tradition and the Gospels: The Problem of Mark 4* (JSNTSup 82; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), which is based on the literary "default setting."

[18] J. D. G. Dunn, "John and the Oral Gospel Tradition," in *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition* (ed. H. Wansbrough; JSNTSup 64; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 351–79; see also T. Thatcher, *The Riddles of Jesus in John: A Study in Tradition and Folklore* (SBLMS 53; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000).

[19] J. Dewey, "Textuality in an Oral Culture: A Survey of the Pauline Traditions," in *Orality and Textuality in Early Christian Literature* (ed. J. Dewey; *Semeia* 65; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature/Scholars, 1994), 37–65; J. D. Harvey, *Listening to the Text: Oral Patterning in Paul's Letters* (ETSSS; Grand Rapids: Baker/Leicester: Apollos, 1998); T. Holtz, "Paul and the Oral Gospel Tradition," in *Jesus and the Oral Gospel* (ed. Wansbrough), 380–93; Kelber, *Oral and Written*, 140–83; S. Tsang, "Are We 'Misreading' Paul?: Oral Phenomena and Their Implication for the Exegesis of Paul's Letters," *OrTr* 24 (2009): 205–25; see also D. E. Aune, "Jesus Tradition and the Pauline Letters," in *Jesus in Memory* (ed. Kelber and Byrskog), 63–86.

[20] D. Barr, "The Apocalypse of John as Oral Enactment," *Int* 40 (1986): 243–56.

[21] P. J. Achtemeier, "*Omne Verbum Sonat:* The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity," *JBL* 109 (1990): 3–27; C. B. Amphoux, "Le style

also been the focus of orality studies, including the Gospel of Thomas,[22] the *Didache*,[23] the *Shepherd* of Hermas,[24] and the *Acts of Peter*,[25] among others.[26] All of these studies together – and the above list is meant to be illustrative rather than exhaustive – are moving New Testament studies in a new direction, one that increasingly recognizes the impact of orality upon early Christianity and its writings.

The present work is envisioned as a contribution along the above lines: its purpose is to reevaluate the tradition of Jesus' sayings in the Apostolic Fathers from the perspective of orality. No full-scale study of the Apostolic Fathers has been published which takes into account the new insights into oral tradition in Christian antiquity that have been gained over the last

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oral dans le Nouveau Testament," *ETR* 63 (1988): 379–84; W. H. Kelber, "New Testament Texts: Rhetoric and Discourse," in *Teaching Oral Traditions* (ed. Foley), 330–8.

[22] A. D. DeConick, *Recovering the Original Gospel of Thomas: A History of the Gospel and its Growth* (LNTS 286; ECC; New York: T&T Clark International, 2005); idem, "The Gospel of Thomas," *ExpTim* 118 (2007): 469–79; R. Uro, "*Thomas* and Oral Gospel Tradition," in *Thomas at the Crossroads: Essays on the Gospel of Thomas* (ed. R. Uro; SNTW; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 8–32.

[23] J. A. Draper, "Vice Catalogues as Oral-Mnemonic Cues: A Comparative Study of the Two-Ways Tradition in the *Didache* and Parallels from the Perspective of Oral Tradition," in *Jesus, the Voice, and the Text* (ed. Thatcher), 111–33; W. Rordorf, "Does the Didache Contain Jesus Tradition Independently of the Synoptic Gospels?," in *Jesus and the Oral Gospel* (ed. Wansbrough), 394–423; A. Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope, and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.* (New York and Mahwah: Newman, 2003), esp. xxxii–xxxiii and also passim; idem, "Synoptic Tradition in the *Didache* Revisited," *JECS* 11 (2003): 443–80.

[24] C. Osiek, "The Oral World of Early Christianity in Rome: The Case of Hermas," in *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome* (ed. K. P. Donfried and P. Richardson; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 151–72.

[25] C. M. Thomas, "Word and Deed: The *Acts of Peter* and Orality," *Apoc* 3 (1992): 125–64.

[26] See other essays and bibliographies in Dewey, ed., *Orality and Textuality*; Horsley, Draper, and Foley, eds., *Performing the Gospel*; L. H. Silberman, ed., *Orality, Aurality and Biblical Narrative* (*Semeia* 39; Decatur: Society of Biblical Literature/Scholars 1987); Thatcher, ed., *Jesus, the Voice, and the Text*; Wansbrough, *Jesus and the Oral Gospel*; see also L. C. A. Alexander, "The Living Voice: Scepticism towards the Written Word in Early Christian and in Graeco-Roman Texts," in *The Bible in Three Dimensions: Essays in Celebration of Forty Years of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield* (ed. D. J. A. Clines, S. E. Fowl, and S. E. Porter; JSOTSup 87; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 221–47; F. G. Downing, "A bas les aristos: The Relevance of Higher Literature for the Understanding of the Earliest Christian Writings," *NovT* 30 (1988): 212–30; T. J. Farrell, "Early Christian Creeds and Controversies in the Light of the Orality-Literacy Hypothesis," *OrTr* 2 (1987): 132–49; J. Halverson, "Oral and Written Gospel: A Critique of Werner Kelber," *NTS* 40 (1994): 180–95.

four decades following the pioneering work of Parry and Lord.[27] It is this lack that the present study seeks to address.

The thesis that will guide this work is that an oral-traditional source best explains the form and content of the explicit appeals to Jesus tradition in the Apostolic Fathers that predate *2 Clement*. It will argue further that there is no unequivocal evidence for the use of any of the canonical Gospels by any of the Apostolic Fathers. Rather, much of the evidence that has been brought forward in the past in support of the Apostolic Fathers' use of the canonical Gospels points to the independent use of common or related sources by the Apostolic Fathers and the gospel writers. While it is possible that *2 Clement* marks the beginning of the appeal to written sources that will characterize Christian literature after Irenaeus, this is also open to other interpretations, and is therefore not conclusive.

1.3 Problems

A danger inherent in much historical research is that one's method and presuppositions too often predetermine the outcome of one's work. Previous studies of the Jesus tradition in the Apostolic Fathers have tended to err on the side of hypothesizing an unwarranted degree of dependence on the canonical Gospels, a trend that is often traceable to the presuppositions and method that under-girded these studies.[28] Similarly, the presuppositions and method applied in the present work could lead to hypothesizing an unwarranted degree of dependence on oral tradition. This is a risk worth taking, however, in order to test the limits of the theory that a large percentage of the Jesus tradition in the Apostolic Fathers *can* be understood as having derived from oral tradition. If this work succeeds in showing that this understanding is truly feasible, then the way is open to ask the further question of which of the two paradigms best accounts for all of the evidence: dependence on literary or oral sources.

Inherent in the task of comparing variations of a saying of Jesus to each other is the problem that one can often not be certain that the variations

[27] H. Köster (hereafter Koester to be consistent with his later publications) gives an important place to oral tradition in his monograph *Synoptische Überlieferung bei den apostolischen Vätern* (TU 65; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957). His understanding of oral tradition, however, is derived from the presuppositions of form criticism, which leave much to be desired; on the form-critical perspective on oral tradition see sec. 1.4.1 below, under the sub-title "Form Criticism." Koester will be a valuable conversation partner throughout the present work.

[28] For a full discussion see ch. 2 below entitled "A Brief History of Scholarship on the Sources of the Jesus Tradition in the Apostolic Fathers."

being compared are of the same saying, let alone of the same utterance. In identifying parallels to consider, materials that are similar to each other will be chosen for comparison, but similarity may arise not from a shared origin in a single speaking event, but from Jesus having said similar things on different occasions. Jesus probably repeated the same stories and sayings not twice but *many* times, in many different contexts, before many audiences, and in different versions, with various applications, as suited both to the parabolic nature of much of his teaching and to his itinerant career.[29] Even though this brings an element of unknown to investigations such as the one undertaken here, one can only proceed, as the alternative would be paralysis.

One of the inevitable problems involved in the type of work attempted here is that one only has access to the oral Jesus tradition from antiquity as it has been captured in written sources.[30] In the form the oral Jesus tradition has come down to us, it is no longer "oral" in the most basic sense of the term. As will be developed more fully in chapter 3, however, the fluid relationship between writing and reading in antiquity means that to classify materials primarily on the basis of whether they are found in a written or oral medium is to make a somewhat superficial distinction. A more appropriate distinction is based on the *conception* both of the discourse in the sources and of the process in which it was put into writing. In other words, did the discourse originate as, and therefore follow the norms associated with, a spoken interaction or a written text? How was the discourse put into writing? Was it composed in writing or transcribed?[31]

In the final analysis it is not possible to prove that any particular saying or tradition in any given document was derived from oral tradition. It is not, however, a matter of proof, but of identifying which approach to the material under consideration best accounts for all of the evidence in light of what we know of Christian antiquity. This is where the two main alter-

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[29] W. H. Kelber, "Jesus and Tradition: Words in Time, Words in Space," in *Orality and Textuality* (ed. Dewey), 146, 148–51; idem, "The Works of Memory: Christian Origins as Mnemohistory – a Response," in *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity* (ed. A. Kirk and T. Thatcher; SBL SemeiaSt 52; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 237–8; N. T. Wright, *Christian Origins and the Question of God,* Vol. 1: *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 422–23; idem, *Christian Origins and the Question of God,* Vol. 2: *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 136, n. 32; 170–71; 181. Other factors may also produce variables, such as the process of translation from Aramaic to Greek; see Dunn, "Altering," 171.

[30] This problem is frequently noted; see, e.g., Ø. Andersen, "Oral Tradition," in *Jesus and the Oral Gospel* (ed. Wansbrough), 30.

[31] See further the discussion in sec. 3.1 below, under the subtitle "Orality in Oral-Derived Texts," which is based in large part on the work of Egbert Bakker. I have left the citation of Bakker's works for ch. 3, to avoid cluttering up the footnotes unnecessarily here.

natives to the approach to oral tradition taken in the present work, i.e., form criticism and the rabbinic model developed by Birger Gerhardsson, have fallen short. We will consider why this is the case in what follows.

1.4 An Alternative to Form Criticism and the Rabbinic Model

In the introductory remarks to this chapter we noted that oral tradition is not a new topic of discussion in New Testament studies. Here we turn to address the question of why the approach to oral tradition used in the present work was chosen over those offered by form criticism and by Birger Gerhardsson, what we will call the "rabbinic model."

1.4.1 Form Criticism

Form criticism, especially the pioneering work of R. Bultmann and M. Dibelius in the 1920s, did a great service to New Testament studies in drawing attention to the importance of oral tradition for understanding the background of the Gospels.[32] According to Bultmann (and here he agrees

[32] The three classic form-critical texts are K. L. Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu* (Berlin: Trowitzsch, 1919); M. Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel* (LTT; Cambridge: James Clarke, 1971 [1st German ed. 1919]), and R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (3rd ed.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1972 [1st German ed. 1921]). The following assessment of form criticism is perforce brief. For fuller treatments see R. Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 241–49; K. Berger, "Form Criticism, New Testament," *DBI* 1:413–17; C. L. Blomberg, "Form Criticism," *DJG* 243–50; D. L. Bock, "Form Criticism," in *Interpreting the New Testament: Essays on Methods and Issues* (ed. D. A. Black and D. S. Dockery; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 106–27; S. Byrskog, review of R. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, *JBL* 122 (2003): 549–55; D. R. Catchpole, "Source, Form and Redaction Criticism of the New Testament," in *Handbook to Exegesis of the New Testament* (ed. S. E. Porter; NTTS 25; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 167–88; C. A. Evans, "Source, Form and Redaction Criticism: The 'Traditional' Methods of Synoptic Interpretation," in *Approaches to New Testament Study* (ed. S. E. Porter and D. Tombs; JSNTSup 120; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 27–32; idem, "Form Criticism," in *Encyclopedia of the Historical Jesus* (ed. C. A. Evans; New York and London: Routledge, 2008), 204–8; Kelber, *Oral and Written*, 2–14; idem, "The Oral-Scribal-Memorial Arts of Communication in Early Christianity," in *Jesus, the Voice, and the Text* (ed. Thatcher), 243–46; Mournet, *Oral Tradition*, 55–63; V. K. Robbins, "Form Criticism: New Testament," *ABD* 2:841–44; K. L. Sparks, "Form Criticism," *DBCI* 111–4; S. H. Travis, "Form Criticism," in *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods* (ed. I. H. Marshall; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 153–64; C. Tuckett, "Form Criticism," in *Jesus in Memory* (ed. Kelber and Byrskog), 21–38. For a full introduction see E. V. McKnight, *What is Form Criticism?* (GBSNT; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), and for extensive critiques see E. Güttgemanns, *Candid Questions Concerning Gospel Form Criticism: A Methodological Sketch of the Fundamental Problematics of Form and*

with Dibelius), the ultimate goal of form criticism is "to rediscover the origin and the history of the particular units [of Jesus tradition] and thereby to throw some light on the history of the tradition before it took literary form."[33] The influence of Bultmann, Dibelius and other form critics upon New Testament studies was such that their view of the tradition's oral period became dominant for over half a century. As a result it has become almost axiomatic to recognize that there was a period prior to the formation of the Gospels during which the Jesus tradition was transmitted primarily in oral form.[34] In this regard not only the present work but also the entire field of gospels studies stands in debt to the form critics.

The basic problem with the form critical approach, however, is that it was not based upon an informed model of how oral tradition functioned in antiquity. Instead, it was based upon the form critics' understanding of the needs of the early church. In an important work dedicated to examining the form-critical approach to Jesus tradition,[35] E. P. Sanders explains this problem as follows: given that the early form critics appealed to analogies to the Jesus tradition such as folk tradition, one would expect that they would have based their understanding of how oral tradition worked in early Christianity upon these analogies. Instead, Sanders notes, the early form critics turned to the church's *motive* for spreading the early Jesus tradition, and upon this basis fashioned "laws" that governed the tradition. For example, for Dibelius the sermon was one of the essential ways in which the early church spread the Jesus tradition, given the motive to further the mission of the church. Dibelius identified the "paradigm" as the form in which the words and deeds of Jesus were passed on in keeping with the requirements of the sermon. He then explained the presence of elements in paradigmatic Jesus sayings that did not conform to the needs of the sermon as arising out of the church's changed situation (*Sitz im Leben*), and thus as later developments. Sanders concludes, "So we see that, for Dibelius, the laws of the development of the Christian tradition are not derived from ob-

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Redaction Criticism (trans. W. G. Doty; PTMS 26; Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1979) and E. P. Sanders, *The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition* (SNTSMS 9; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

[33] Bultmann, *Synoptic Tradition*, 4.

[34] As stated by E. P. Sanders and M. Davies, "Everyone accepts oral transmission at the early stages of the gospel tradition. … The problem is that we do not know how to imagine the oral period, neither how long it lasted not how oral transmission actually functioned" (*Studying the Synoptic Gospels* [London: SCM/Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989), 141.

[35] On what follows see Sanders, *Tendencies*, 10–14.

serving the development of other folk traditions, but by analyzing the needs and activities of the Christian communities."[36]

Due to their lack of a solid theoretical foundation in the topic of orality in antiquity, for the most part form critics simply assumed that certain things were true of the Jesus tradition in its oral stage, that upon closer scrutiny have been shown to be unfounded. For example, one of Bultmann's basic tenets was that oral tradition by its very nature tended to grow and expand: brief sayings were enlarged; different but similar sayings were combined; sayings already in circulation occasioned others by analogy, accrued introductory or concluding material derived from their context, or were enhanced with dialogue; unspecified characters were given names and descriptions; stories were developed out of sayings or parables; secular proverbs or folk stories were added to the tradition when the Church began to use them as sayings of or stories about Jesus; separate small units were gathered into "speeches" or even "catechisms"; and so on.[37] In short, the Jesus tradition moved inexorably from the simple to the complex, leading up to the written Gospels.[38] As (once again) E. P. Sanders has shown, however, in the synoptic tradition there is movement *both* from the simple to the complex *and* from the complex to the simple.[39] That Bultmann was mistaken in this regard calls into question much of his form-critical work that was built upon this basic premise.

Many of the other basic presuppositions of form criticism have been either refuted or seriously called into question: that the pre-gospel Jesus tradition existed in pure forms, and that one can trace the history of the tradition by studying the corruption of these forms; that oral sayings floated freely in isolation from each other; that each form of the Jesus tradition can be assigned to a unique *Sitz im Leben* in the early church; that for those transmitting the tradition there was a sharp discontinuity between

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[36] Sanders, *Tendencies*, 14. Bultmann appeals to analogies in rabbinic stories and sayings, Hellenistic stories, proverbs, anecdotes and folk-tales, and "the history of the Jakata collection of the Buddhist canon," and adds "Fairy stories are instructive in many respects, and in some ways folk-songs are even more so, because the characteristics of primitive story telling are even more firmly preserved in their set form" (*Synoptic Tradition*, 6–7). Yet, as Sanders notes, his laws of the transmission of the Jesus tradition are not based on these analogies at all, but on observing the interrelations of the written Gospels (*Tendencies*, 15–20).

[37] Bultmann, *Synoptic Tradition*, 51–54, 67–69, 81–93, 102–8, 148–50; 230–31, 322–28. This list is not exhaustive, but only the result of glancing through Bultmann's work following the list provided in Kelber, *Oral and Written*, 4.

[38] Not that Bultmann did not allow for exceptions; e.g., he was willing to admit that "occasionally a saying has been abridged" and give several examples (*Synoptic Tradition*, 84).

[39] Sanders, *Tendencies*, 24, 68, 272–75.