"FRAME AND FILL"
AND MATTHEW'S USE OF LUKE

Two proponents of the Farrer Hypothesis (FH) have recently expressed puzzlement as to why supporters of the Two-Document Hypothesis (2DH) and Matthean Posteriority Hypothesis (MPH) see Matthew's reordering of Q/Luke as so much more plausible than Luke's reordering of Matthew. Eric Eve describes these operations as mirror images of one another, and so fails to see why working them in one direction should be any more implausible than the other:

> Whatever complicated reordering FH Luke would have to have performed on material taken from Matthew, 2DH[/MPH] Matthew would necessarily have to have performed the reverse on Q[/Luke]; one set of transpositions logically *must* be the mirror image of the other. … It is not immediately apparent why FH Luke's task should be any more difficult than 2DH[/MPH] Matthew's[1].

Mark Goodacre is similarly curious:

> The idea that Luke could not have achieved a strong reworking of Matthew's order has always been strange given the fact that there are large-scale differences between Matthew's and Luke's ordering of the double tradition material. At least one of the two has been rearranging this material. If, with most two-source theorists, one broadly aligns Luke's order with Q's order, we give Matthew a great deal of work to do, so that the supposed unfeasibility of the large-scale rearrangement, the alleged logistical difficulty, is simply transferred from Luke to Matthew[2].

Eric Eve also makes a closely related point:

> What is source utilization for the 2DH[/MPH] goose should be source utilization for the FH gander, so the techniques ascribed to 2DH[/MPH] Matthew for the recycling of Q[/Luke] should also be available to FH Luke for the recycling of Matthew[3].

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1. E. Eve, *Relating the Gospels: Memory, Imitation and the Farrer Hypothesis* (LNTS, 592), London – New York, Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2021, p. 146.

2. M. Goodacre, *Re-walking the "Way of the Lord": Luke's Use of Mark and His Reaction to Matthew*, in M. Müller – J.T. Nielsen (eds.), *Luke's Literary Creativity* (LNTS, 550), London – New York, Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016, 26-43, p. 42.

3. Eve, *Relating* (n. 1), p. 160. M. Goodacre, *Q, Memory and Matthew: A Response to Alan Kirk*, in *JSHJ* 15 (2017) 224-233, pp. 228-229 includes a section headed "Sauce for the

Their puzzlement, broadly speaking, is that if Matthew can perform complex operations on Luke/Q, then why could not Luke have performed the same operations (in reverse) on Matthew[4]?

As I attempt to answer their question one issue needs clarifying from the outset. It is not the case that "one set of transpositions logically *must* be the mirror image of the other"[5]. Suppose it were possible to make an animation of the journey made by five pericopes A, B, C, D and E as they travel from one text to another. If those pericopes were arranged in a single consecutive block in the first text and are widely dispersed in the second, then playing the animation one way would not be the mirror image of playing it in reverse. The two versions tell two distinctly different stories – one of dispersal and the other of gathering. The same is true with Matthew and Luke. Playing an animation of their double tradition transpositions in one direction is not the mirror image of playing it in the opposite direction.

One way is "forward" (the direction that happened in history) and the other is "reverse".

My method for determining which way is "forward" in the Luke-Matthew case is to observe what happens in other ancient examples where, importantly, there is no ambiguity about which texts are sources and which are products[6]. If there is a consistent pattern across all these examples, and if that pattern recurs in Matthew's use of Luke, but not in Luke's use of Matthew, then Matthew's use of Luke is "forward", and *vice-versa*. Before applying this method, however, a terminological issue needs addressing.

Goose" which echoes this point. Eve makes a very similar point in *Relating* (n. 1), p. 152: "This is not to object to the thesis that Matthew could have accessed Q[/Luke] through his scribally trained memory of text, but rather to insist that the techniques and abilities needed by 2DH[/MPH] Matthew must also be allowed to FH Luke". The problem with this logic is that the source utilization capacity demonstrated by one author is not necessarily transferrable to every other author. The only concrete indicator of Luke's source utilization capacity is his simple handling of Mark. This does not suggest that he had the exceptional facility required for FH Luke's complex handling of Matthew.

4. Because I advocate for the MPH, rather than the 2DH, I will hereafter only refer to Matthew's use of Luke rather than Matthew's use of Q. The logic of my argument is broadly the same, however, in either case. My principal objection to the Two-Document Hypothesis, as conventionally conceived, is that it relies on the untested assumption that Matthew could not have used Luke. For an introductory presentation of this point see, A. GARROW, *Streeter's 'Other' Synoptic Solution: The Matthew Conflator Hypothesis*, in *NTS* 62 (2016) 207-226.

5. See full quotation from EVE, *Relating* (n. 1), p. 146, above.

6. Thus, there is no possibility that Kings and Chronicles might depend on Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews*, and no possibility that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John might depend on Tatian's *Diatessaron*, and so on.

I. A Terminological Issue

Previous discussions of the way in which recycling authors combined their sources have focussed on two distinctive, and closely related, behaviours. Such authors are said to use "one source at a time" and generally to avoid "micro-conflation". Thus, Robert Derrenbacker Jr., speaking of Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Arrian of Nicomedia, and Josephus, writes:

> *These authors tend to follow one source at a time.* This we see most explicitly in Josephus' adaptation of [the] Deuteronomistic Historian and the Chronicler in his *Antiquities*. In addition, in the case of the account of the caste system in India, all three authors chiefly follow Megasthenes. It is only at the end of the pericope where they briefly refer to other authors. What we do not see in the above authors is a frequent and regular sort of "micro-conflation" where an author moves back and forth between sources *within* episodes. It is only when a pericope/episode is concluded that the author will typically move to another parallel source if he chooses[7].

There are, however, problems with this observation. First, it is not fully accurate. As pointed out below, Josephus was capable of oscillating between texts to maximise their dual contributions to his recycled version[8]. Second, the accuracy of this statement diminishes when a wider spectrum of relevant texts is included[9]. Tatian's *Diatessaron*, again as argued below, is particularly relevant to the current discussion since it shares with Luke and Matthew the highly specific genre "recycled gospel". It is significant, therefore, that

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7. R.A. Derrenbacker, *The "External and Psychological Conditions under Which the Synoptic Gospels Were Written": Ancient Compositional Practices and the Synoptic Problem*, in P. Foster – A. Gregory – J.S. Kloppenborg – J. Verheyden (eds.), *New Studies in the Synoptic Problem: Oxford Conference, April 2008. Essays in Honour of Christopher M. Tuckett* (BETL, 239), Leuven – Paris – Walpole, MA, Peeters, 2011, 435-457, pp. 440-441. See also Id., *Ancient Compositional Practices and the Synoptic Problem* (BETL, 186), Leuven – Paris – Dudley, MA, Leuven University Press – Peeters, 2005.

8. A specific challenge to Derrenbacker's claim is also offered in J.W. Barker, *The Use of Sources in Ancient Compositions*, in S.P. Ahearne-Kroll (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Synoptic Gospels*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, forthcoming.

9. That various ancient authors were capable of drawing from multiple texts simultaneously is argued by J.W. Barker, *Ancient Compositional Practices and the Gospels: A Reassessment*, in *JBL* 135 (2016) 109-121; Id., *Tatian's Diatessaron: Composition, Redaction, Recension, and Reception* (OECS), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2021, pp. 29-37; and Id., *The Use of Sources in Ancient Compositions*, in *The Oxford Handbook of the Synoptic Gospels* (n. 8). J.S. Kloppenborg, *Macro-Conflation, Micro-Conflation, Harmonization and the Compositional Practices of the Synoptic Writers*, in *ETL* 95 (2019) 629-643, offers a response to Barker's 2016 article in which he contests the possibility that authors could have had simultaneous visual contact with multiple sources. Whether Kloppenborg is right about this is less significant than the fact that some ancient authors succeeded, by some means, in closely combining multiple sources.

William Petersen observes: "the Diatessaron appears to have been a very subtle, word-by-word harmonization"[10].

When it comes to considering scribal practices relevant to the study of the Synoptic Problem there is also a case for including the gospels themselves. As Derrenbacker himself affirms, every literary solution to the Synoptic Problem requires at least one of the Evangelists to do something a good deal more complex than simple "one source at a time" or "block-by-block" copying[11]. If, therefore, Derrenbacker's sample were enlarged to include the Synoptic Gospels, the effect of thereby increasing its relevance would be to further reduce his conclusion's accuracy. A third problem with the language of "one source at a time" is that it is capable of being misunderstood. It would be a mistake to imagine that ancient recycling authors constructed their texts by switching from one source to another as a child might build a tower of bricks. As illustrated in greater detail below, what they actually did was choose one source as a dominant base and then fill out that base with relevant material from other sources – a technique executed by different authors with different levels of refinement. I propose, therefore, that it is time to replace binary expressions like "one source at a time" and "macro-" or "micro-conflation", with language that embraces the full spectrum of observable activity – from ponderous switching between large blocks to the deft interleaving of minor details[12]. The replacement term I have in mind is "frame and fill".

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10. W.L. PETERSEN, *Tatian's Diatessaron: Its Creation, Dissemination, Significance, and History in Scholarship* (SupplVC, 25), Atlanta, SBL, 1994, p. 27. Note, for contrast, S.L. MATTILA, *A Question Too Often Neglected*, in *NTS* 41 (1995) 199-217, p. 205, when she states: "It must be kept in mind that for the major part of the Diatessaron the conflation is block-by-block, only becoming more when the pressure to reconcile and combine conflicting details in the parallel gospel accounts necessitates it". However, BARKER, *Tatian's Diatessaron* (n. 9), p. 36, specifically responds: "It is highly inaccurate to characterize 'the major part of the Diatessaron' as 'block by block,' since nearly three-fourths of the time Tatian worked with three or four Gospels simultaneously".

11. DERRENBACKER, *Ancient Compositional Practices* (n. 7), pp. 257-258.

12. A. KIRK, *Q in Matthew: Ancient Media, Memory, and Early Scribal Transmission of the Jesus Tradition* (LNTS, 564), London – New York, Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016, p. 56, while careful to avoid the term "micro-conflation", uses a variety of terms to describe the activity of ancient authors who combined material from more than one source. For example: supplemental materials from various sources are "grafted" into a dominant source; authors engage in "combining" elements peculiar to each source into a single version (p. 57); an author may act as a compiler and consolidator of scholarly lexical tradition (pp. 78-79, 88); authors are engaged in "assembling" the lexical interpretations of others (p. 79); the technique of "conflating" by appending a sequence of excerpted sayings (p. 87); a compiler who "effectively unites his two sources" (p. 88); a compiler who achieves the "coherent integration" of parallel accounts achieving "maximal incorporation" of their constituent elements (p. 89) – something "uncannily similar" to Matthew's project; "pulling in" topically related

II. "Frame and Fill"

A broad range of ancient authors behaved in an essentially similar manner when creating new narratives by recycling older ones: they used a technique that might be called "frame and fill". Before looking at some ancient examples it is worth pausing to consider how anyone at any time might be expected to go about the recycling task. Faced with two or three similar-but-different accounts of the same story the simplest approach, if plagiarism is not a concern, is to: read all the available source accounts; decide which seems the most reliable and/or complete; and then use that account as the base for the new version, supplementing that frame with additional details from the other accounts. As the following examples illustrate this appears to have been the practice of a wide range of ancient authors. None of these authors is, individually, a perfect match for Matthew and Luke in terms of their education, cultural context, or technology and tools. Nevertheless, a practice common to them all is highly likely also to have been common to both Luke and Matthew.

1. Plutarch (early 2nd Century CE)

Plutarch, like other Roman biographers, created his *Lives* by rewriting earlier biographies. His work is not an exact comparator for the Evangelists inasmuch as he belonged to a stratum of the literary elite unlikely to have included authors like Matthew and Luke. Furthermore, Plutarch was not dealing with sources he saw as preserving the words and actions of a divine

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material by memory (p. 119); "conflation by bringing together compatible δόγματα from different dialogues" (p. 123 – quoting J. WHITTAKER, *The Value of Indirect Tradition in the Establishment of Greek Philosophical Texts, or the Art of Misquotation*, in J.N. GRANT [ed.], *Editing Greek and Latin Texts: Papers given at the Twenty-Third Annual Conference on Editorial Problems, University of Toronto, 6-7 November 1987*, New York, AMS, 1989, 63-95, pp. 89-90); "systematic concatenation and standardization of multiple, multi-sourced, and originally distinct oracles" (p. 127); proverbs, maxims, and the like "collocated" to enable the creation of a single cognitive entity (p. 137); heterogenous items "collected" (p.136); "combining" or "laying together" (p. 144 – quoting M. CARRUTHERS, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (CSML), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ²2008, p. 244); "slipping" material into heuristic schemes (p. 145 – cf. CARRUTHERS, *Book of Memory*, p. 221); and bringing together topically cohering materials from different memory locations (p. 145). Kirk also mentions: "Matthew's … comprehensive strategy for solving the technical problem of combining two sources coherently into a new work" (p. 190); M materials are said to "supplement" the core Q sayings to make a coherent M *topos* (p. 196); and, "Matthew's utilization actions in the Sermon are part of a comprehensive strategy for solving the technical problem of coherent coordination of his two sources, and more particularly, of his narrative source with his non-narrative source" (p. 223).

figure. Nevertheless, his literary objectives are sufficiently like those of Luke and Matthew to be worthy of inclusion in this collection of comparators. A striking feature of Plutarch's method is his practice, despite being very well read, of basing his recycled versions on a single original.

> Plutarch drew on a fairly wide range of material. Yet … it is still clear that the greater portion of the Lives is based on the Pollio-source alone: even on those occasions (such as Caesar's murder) where Plutarch has other sources, it is still Pollio's account with provides the basic narrative articulation, and Pollio's account which provides most of the facts. The extraneous material is not more than one quarter of the whole of Plutarch's narrative. This wide reading of sources is surprisingly unproductive; it seems to provide only a few stray supplements and additions, and occasionally to replace the Pollio-source where that account was unsuitable[13].

Thus, one source provides the frame for Plutarch's recycled version (accounting for more than three quarters of the whole) with other sources supplementing that frame where they have relevant material to add (accounting for up to one quarter of the whole)[14]. According to Pelling this pattern was also employed by Cassius Dio, Livy, Dionysius, and Tacitus[15].

2. Josephus (late 1st Century CE)

A closer comparator to the activity of the Evangelists, given particular attention by F. Gerald Downing, is the Jewish author Josephus[16]. In his *Antiquities of the Jews* Josephus engages in a comparable project inasmuch as his sources had the authority of Scripture. Josephus's technology and tools are also likely to be comparable to those of the Evangelists insofar as he wrote at a similar date[17]. Here again Josephus adopts the technique of frame and fill.

13. C.B.R. PELLING, *Plutarch's Method of Work in the Roman Lives*, in *JHS* 99 (1979) 74-96, p. 91.

14. D.S. RUSSELL, *Plutarch's Life of Coriolanus*, in *JRS* 53 (1963) 21-28, puts the ratio at 80:20.

15. PELLING, *Plutarch's Method* (n. 13), p. 91, refers to these authors when noting that "This [approach] is not confined to Plutarch, nor to biography". With specific reference to Livy (*ibid.*, pp. 91-92): "Livy … has one principal authority for each section of his account, and uses the rest of his reading merely to supplement this principal narrative source".

16. F.G. DOWNING, *Redaction Criticism: Josephus' Antiquities and the Synoptic Gospels (I)*, in *JSNT* 8 (1980) 46-65; and ID., *Redaction Criticism: Josephus' Antiquities and the Synoptic Gospels (II)*, in *JSNT* 9 (1980) 29-48. For details of Josephus' conflationary practice see ID., *Josephus' Antiquities (I)*, the sections "Assembly" (pp. 57-60) and "Conflation" (pp. 61-64).

17. M. GOULDER, *Luke's Compositional Options*, in *NTS* (1993) 150-152, p. 150, suggests: "We may think Josephus the closest model for Luke, since he is writing the *Antiquities* in the same decade (90s), and is also treating sacred texts". Even here, however, important differences may apply. The date of Luke is debatable and his sources are unlikely to have had the status of "sacred text" in the same way as Kings, Chronicles and Samuel.

> [Josephus] basically adopts the order of Kings, inserting material from Chronicles at appropriate junctures. Occasionally, however, one finds Josephus reordering and re-combining the sequence of happenings proper to Kings itself[18].

> Where the two sources generally run parallel to each other, but differ in details, Josephus typically oscillates between then, utilizing items now from one, now from the other … [in each case] Josephus evidences his intention of making maximal use of the data of both his historical sources – in so far as these do not militate against his authorial purposes[19].

> Another factor influencing the historian's re-arrangements seem to have been his desire to keep together related materials which he found separated in his sources[20].

Thus, while there is variety in Josephus' practice, the overall method is largely consistent. Josephus selects a frame, for example Kings, and draws in supplementary fill from, for example, Chronicles. Significantly, when Josephus is sufficiently motivated to do so, he is capable of "oscillating" between sources. Furthermore, as he works his sources together, he "brings together related topics"[21].

3. Tatian (late 2nd Century CE)

Moving into the latter part of the Second Century, Tatian shares a striking point in common with Matthew and Luke. Like them he was a Christian seeking to recycle divergent accounts of the life of Jesus. Indeed, the resources available to the third-most Evangelist would have overlapped to a large and specific extent with the resources available to Tatian[22]. There should be particular profit, therefore, in observing how Tatian went about his task.

William Petersen describes Tatian as adopting a strategy common to historians in general:

> When confronted with contradictory or inconsistent information, the historian's task was to reconstruct "the true events." This was done (and still is done) by carefully evaluating the reliability of each account. The one judged most reliable forms the framework of the narrative; where possible and proba-

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18. C. BEGG, *Josephus' Account of the Early Divided Monarchy (*AJ *8,212-420)* (BETL, 108), Leuven, Leuven University Press – Peeters, 1993, p. 278.

19. ID., *Josephus' Story of the Later Monarchy (*AJ *9,1–10,185)* (BETL, 145), Leuven – Paris – Sterling, VA, Leuven University Press – Peeters, 2000, p. 623.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 629 (examples provided). Begg (*ibid.*, p. 635) describes Josephus as "a literary juggler of no little skill".

21. ID., *Early Divided Monarchy* (n. 18), p. 278.

22. Tatian combined the canonical gospels of Mark, Luke, Matthew and John. The third-most evangelist combined: Mark and Matthew, or Mark and Luke, or Mark and Q, along with Special Material.

ble, what appears less reliable is fitted into that framework. … [This] is precisely what Tatian attempted to do in the Diatessaron[23].

A specific example of choosing a frame, in this case Matthew, and supplementing that frame from related material in other sources is noted by Charles Hill:

> Another example, this one from Fuldensis, is Jesus's saying about putting a light on a stand (Matt 5:14-16; Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16; 11:33), where all three Synoptic sources are integrated. As Zola says, "F[uldensis] manages to incorporate the objects of each instance into the Matthean form by supplying *neque* before each one, and by altering other small details." The same technique is visible throughout the Arabic Diatessaron[24].

As with Josephus, the integration of supplementary material into the frame appears to have been, logically enough, based on thematic grouping. As James Barker puts it: "Thematic grouping clearly emerges as one [of Tatian's redactional tendencies], since the *Diatessaron* clusters similar statements and characters"[25].

If Tatian's activity could be shown to be the product of conditions that only existed in the late second century, then its relevance to the current debate would be reduced. In reality, however, there are good reasons for suspecting that Tatian's activity belonged to an extended tradition. As Nicholas Perrin puts it: "[Tatian] was self-consciously participating in a literary tradition that had already been well established for decades"[26]. This echoes the opinion of Peterson who concludes, after exploring the relationship between Justin Martyr's harmony and Tatian's *Diatessaron*: "These agreements admit only two explanations: either Tatian knew and used Justin's harmony, or both relied on the same pre-existing harmonized source"[27].

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23. PETERSEN, *Tatian's Diatessaron* (n. 10), p. 75.
24. C.E. HILL, *Diatessaron, Diapente, Diapollon? Exploring the Nature and Extent of Extra-canonical Influence in Tatian's Diatessaron*, in M.R. CRAWFORD – N.J. ZOLA (eds.), *The Gospel of Tatian: Exploring the Nature and Text of the Diatessaron* (RJT, 3), London – New York, Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2019, 25-53, p. 30.
25. J.W. BARKER, *The Narrative Chronology of Tatian's Diatessaron*, in *NTS* 66 (2020) 288-298, p. 298.
26. N. PERRIN, *What Justin's Gospels Can Tell us about Tatian's: Tracing the Trajectory of the Gospel Harmony in the Second Century and Beyond*, in CRAWFORD – ZOLA (eds.), *The Gospel of Tatian* (n. 24), 93-109, p. 100. Similarly, MATTILA, *Question* (n. 10), p. 205: Tatian's technique, "while being an innovation, is not *sui generis*, it does not emerge out of nowhere. It stems from methods that have already been in use, but *stretches these to new limits*" (emphasis original).
27. PETERSEN, *Tatian's Diatessaron* (n. 10), p. 29.

Looking back to Justin's activity Watson notes that Justin also employs the frame and fill technique with, again, Matthew providing the frame:

> In Justin's two major works … Material from Matthew is cited frequently, often supplemented by or conflated with material from Luke … In many cases the primacy of Matthew is clear. The whole of the Matthean infancy narrative is recounted, at least in outline, and Luke provides only supplementary details[28].

For his part, Perrin suggests that Justin does not provide the earliest example of this type of activity:

> There are also indications that Justin's harmony was not the first of its kind either. A generation or two before the Apologist's death we find evidence of a circulating composite gospel of sorts in *2 Clement*, one materially reminiscent of Justin's[29].

This line of ancestry may extend further back still, given Petersen's observation:

> [A]ll the canonical gospels "harmonize" earlier materials. While is true that the Diatessaron appears to have been a very subtle, word-by-word harmonization, and the canonical gospels seem to use their sources *en bloc*, the genre of both is, ultimately, the same[30].

If the technique of frame and fill was consistently employed across the latter stages of this continuum, it makes sense to suppose that it may also have been used, albeit at a lower level of sophistication, from its start.

4. Ammonius of Alexandria and Eusebius

That Tatian was not alone in his willingness to expend prodigious amounts of effort in reconciling and consolidating divergent accounts of the life of Jesus is illustrated by Eusebius' description of the activities of Tatian's contemporary, Ammonius of Alexandria. Thus, Matthew Crawford writes:

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28. F. WATSON, *Gospel Writing: A Canonical Perspective*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2013, pp. 473-474.

29. PERRIN, *Justin's Gospels* (n. 26), p. 98.

30. PETERSEN, *Tatian's Diatessaron* (n. 10), p. 27. The strength of continuity between the genre of Luke, Matthew and Tatian's *Diatessaron* is enhanced by M.R. CRAWFORD, *Diatessaron, a Misnomer? The Evidence from Ephrem's Commentary*, in *EC* 7 (2016) 253-277, who argues that Tatian understood his work to be a full "Gospel". F. WATSON, *Harmony or Gospel? On the Genre of the (So-Called) Diatessaron*, in CRAWFORD – ZOLA (eds.), *The Gospel of Tatian* (n. 24), 69-92, p. 69, similarly refers to the *Diatessaron* as: "a gospel rather than a gospel harmony".

[Eusebius] provided a one-sentence summary of [Ammonius'] work, which is our sole surviving description of Ammonius' composition:

τὸ διὰ τεσσάρων ἡμῖν καταλέλοιπεν εὐαγγέλιον, τῷ κατὰ Ματθαῖον τὰς ὁμοφώνους τῶν λοιπῶν εὐαγγελιστῶν περικοπὰς παραθείς

He has left behind for us the Diatessaron-Gospel, having placed alongside the [Gospel] according to Matthew the sections from the other evangelists that agree [with those of Matthew].

Clearly what Eusebius is describing here is something akin to a modern gospel synopsis with parallel columns. Ammonius dissected the latter three gospels in order to align the parallels he found there with corresponding passages in Matthew[31].

Here again Ammonius' activity, even though he is engaged in a different type of project, has much in common with Tatian's compositional technique. The same is true of Eusebius' canons, as Watson now explains:

Both Ammonius of Alexandria in his synopsis and Eusebius in his canons take Matthew as their base text, partly … to reduce the considerable technical difficulties presented by their respective scholarly projects … Once established, it would be relatively easy to reintroduce elements of Lukan or Johannine sequence into a framework which remains, overall, essentially Matthean[32].

Watson's observation brings us back to where we began. The simplest method for creating a single narrative out of two or more related narratives, whether in antiquity or at any other time, is to choose one source to serve as the frame and then use the other sources to fill out that frame[33]. Given that this method is not only relatively simple but also universally attested amongst ancient authors who recycled related narratives, it is reasonable to expect that it would also have been used, albeit in different ways and with differing levels of sophistication, by Luke in his use of Matthew or by Matthew in his use of Luke[34]. However, before assessing which of these two options is more likely, there is another preliminary question to address: did Luke use Mark as a frame source or as a fill source[35]?

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31. M.R. CRAWFORD, *Ammonius of Alexandria, Eusebius of Caesarea and the Origins of Gospels Scholarship*, in *NTS* 61 (2015) 1-29, p. 7.

32. WATSON, *Harmony or Gospel?* (n. 30), pp. 84-85. For a more detailed description of Eusebius' approach, which notes that Eusebius declines to structure his whole project around Matthew, see J. COOGAN, *Mapping the Fourfold Gospel: Textual Geography in the Eusebian Apparatus*, in *JECS* 25 (2017) 337-357.

33. A further example of this same technique, with still greater levels of sophistication, is Origen's *Hexapla*.

34. It is unlikely that Matthew's and Luke's education exceeded that of the authors considered above. It follows, therefore, that, like these authors, they would have used the simplest available method for combining multiple versions of the same narrative.

35. This question, which formed part of the 'Proto-Luke' debate, was a matter of heated discussion between the two World Wars. Advocates for the Proto-Luke theory (which necessarily

III. LUKE'S USE OF MARK

The question of whether Luke uses Mark as his frame or his fill source has a significant bearing on what follows. Specifically, it matters if FH Luke did *not* use Mark as his frame because, if Mark serves as one of FH Luke's *fill* sources, then this provides a model for how we might expect FH Luke to use another fill source, namely Matthew.

The following assessment of whether Luke used Mark as his frame begins in what might seem an odd location: the Beelzebul Controversy. This passage has long been recognised as an important one for Synoptic Problem debates. Back in 1965, Downing used this pericope to argue that, under the FH, Luke is required to "unpick", as in "reverse conflate", Matthew's additions to Mark[36]. FH proponents sometimes concede that, if Downing's arguments are accurately expressed, they are indeed highly damaging to the FH cause[37]. What they argue in response is that Luke used his sources in blocks, and here focussed on his non-Markan source alone (which from a FH perspective, is Matthew). On this basis they contend that the charge of "unpicking" no longer holds. Thus, Eric Eve states: "The pattern of agreements in the body of the Beelzebul Controversy set out in Table 5.4 [which, incidentally, shows high levels of commonality between Mark and Luke, with 25% of Mark's text directly paralleled in Luke] is thus compatible with what one might expect if Luke were using Matthew *alone*"[38]. Similarly, Ken Olson, in his response to Downing states: "There is no need to suggest that

held that Mark was not Luke's frame) included: B.H. STREETER, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins*, London, Macmillan, 1924, pp. 199-222, and V. TAYLOR, *Behind the Third Gospel: A Study of the Proto-Luke Hypothesis*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1926; ID., *Is the Proto-Luke Hypothesis Sound?*, in *JTS* 29 (1928) 147-155. The theory's detractors included J.W. HUNKIN, *The Composition of the Third Gospel, with Special Reference to Canon Streeter's Theory of Proto-Luke*, in *JTS* 28 (1927) 250-262, and J.M. CREED, *The Gospel according to St. Luke*, London, Macmillan, 1930. Creed draws on R. Bultmann, K.L. Schmidt, J. Wellhausen, E. Klostermann, J. Weiss, A. Loisy and C. Montefiore. Despite occasional support, for example, from T.L. BRODIE, *Proto-Luke: The Oldest Gospel Account*, Limerick, Dominical Biblical Institute, 2006, the current consensus runs against the Proto-Luke hypothesis.

36. F.G. DOWNING, *Towards the Rehabilitation of Q*, in *NTS* 11 (1965) 169-181. Downing considers the phenomenon of FH Luke's capacity to select Matthew's additions to Mark, while avoiding material common to Matthew and Mark, in this and three other passages. A comprehensive tabulation of occasions when FH Luke 'unpicks' Matthew's additions to Mark is now offered by O. ANDREJEVS, *FH Luke's 'Unpicking': Some Observations on Francis Watson's Recent Analysis (2018) and the Extent of the Phenomenon*, in *JSNT* 45 (2022) 3-22.

37. I. MILLS: *NT Review Podcast 18. F.G. Downing, "Towards the Rehabilitation of Q"* https://soundcloud.com/user-829560134/18-gerald-downing-towards-the-rehabilitation-of-q [accessed February 22, 2022]. In this podcast Ian Mills, a Farrer supporter, states his belief that, if the data were as Downing presents it, then it would be necessary to accept the existence of Q (or, alternatively, that Matthew used Luke).

38. EVE, *Relating* (n. 1), p. 133 (emphasis added).

Luke would have consulted Mark's text *at all*"[39]. Arguing that Luke uses Matthew alone in this and similar instances lessens the immediate difficulty for the FH but it has an awkward implication for the question of whether Luke used Mark as his frame.

According to the FH, Luke knows both Mark's and Matthew's versions of the Beelzebul Controversy, but rather than choosing to integrate the two he prefers to focus on Matthew's version while ignoring Mark's altogether. From Luke 22,15 onwards, something similar seems to happen. Luke, we may presume, knows Mark's version of the Passion and Resurrection but he also apparently knows another version that is consistently different from Mark's. On the basis that Luke treats his sources one at a time, and given that Mark cannot supply even a small proportion of the vocabulary or detail found in Luke, it follows that Luke here follows his other source in preference to Mark[40].

The same logic applies with: The Rejection at Nazareth (Mark 6,1-6// Luke 4,16-30); The Call of the First Disciples (Mark 4,1-2; 1,16-20// Luke 5,1-11); Jesus is Anointed (Mark 14,3-9//Luke 7,36); and The Lawyer's Question (Mark 12,28-34//Luke 10,25-28). In these cases, Luke records the incident in a way that bears comparison with Mark's account, but the shared vocabulary is again very limited and, as with the Beelzebul Controversy, the story does not appear in its Markan sequence. If FH Luke ignores Mark in the one case, then it makes sense to suppose that Luke does not use Mark in these other cases also.

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39. K. OLSON, *Unpicking on the Farrer Theory*, in M. GOODACRE – N. PERRIN (eds.), *Questioning Q: A Multidimensional Critique*, Downers Grove, IL, InterVarsity Press; London, SPCK, 2004, 127-150, p. 141 (emphasis added).

40. Luke shares very little vocabulary with Mark in the case of: The Last Supper (Mark 14,22-25//Luke 22,15-20); Jesus Foretells his Betrayal (Mark 14,22-25//Luke 22,21-23); Precedence among the Disciples and the Reward for Discipleship (Mark 10,41-45// Luke 22,24-30); Peter's Denial Predicted (Mark 14,26-31//Luke 22,31-34); Gethsemane (Mark 14,32-42//Luke 22,39-46); Jesus Arrested (Mark 14,43-52//Luke 22,47-53); Jesus Before the Sanhedrin (Mark 14,53-65//Luke 22,54-71); Jesus' Trial before Pilate (Mark 15,2-5// Luke 23,2-5); Jesus or Barabbas? (Mark 15,6-14//Luke 23,17-23); Pilate Delivers Jesus to be Crucified (Mark 15,5//Luke 23,24-25); The Crucifixion (Mark 15,22-26//Luke 23,33-34); Jesus Derided on the Cross and the Two Thieves (Mark 15,27-32//Luke 23,35-43); The Death of Jesus (Mark 15,33-39//Luke 23,44-48); Witnesses of the Crucifixion (Mark 15,40-41// Luke 23,49); and The Resurrection (Mark 16,1-8//Luke 24,1-12). The direct parallels between Luke and Mark in these passages never come close to 25% of Mark's text, with the exception of the words of institution in Mark 14,22-25//Luke 22,15-20. High levels of agreement here are likely to be the product of liturgical familiarity as much as direct copying. It is also necessary to take account of the impact of the Western non-interpolation (Luke 22,19b-20) when assessing the levels of agreement in this particular passage.

A similar set of phenomena occur in Luke's coverage of John the Baptist. It seems that Luke knows at least two different streams of tradition about John the Baptist. One is extensive and the other, as represented by Mark, is relatively terse. Under the FH, of course, Luke is an author who prefers to focus on his sources in substantial blocks, rather than attempting to weave them together more finely. Mark cannot be the source for the majority of what Luke has to say about John the Baptist[41], so it follows that Mark was not the source that Luke decided to follow for this block, or blocks. This logic requires, of course, that Luke's non-Markan source happened to include the various details about the Baptist that are *also* featured in Mark: he was called John; he was a baptizer; he presented himself in a less-to-greater relationship with Jesus; and he died at a dramatic and unjust death at the hands of Herod. This does not present a significant difficulty, however, since it is hard to imagine a tradition about John, relevant to the wider story of Jesus, that does not include these elements[42]. In summary, therefore, the application of the FH supporter's view that Luke uses his sources in substantial blocks favours the conclusion that, in all the examples considered so far, Luke did not use Mark at all[43]. This coheres with Mark Goodacre's view that Luke is "[t]aking Mark for a stretch (Lk. 4,31–6,19), then Matthew for a stretch (6,20–[8,3]), then returning to Mark (8,4–9,50), and so on[44]". In adopting this view Goodacre picks up on Michael Goulder's position:

> I maintain that Luke followed one Gospel at a time, Mark for instance from Luke 3.1 to 6.19 and 8.4 to 9.50, Matthew from Luke 6.20 to 8.3 and 9.51 to 18.14; the 'echoes' of the source not in use I attribute to reminiscence, arising from familiar use[45].

41. The Annunciation of the Birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1,5-25); Mary's Visit to Elizabeth (Luke 1,39-56); The Birth of John (Luke 1,57-80); John's Preaching (Luke 3,7-14); The Baptist's Questions (Luke 7,18-23); and Jesus' Testimony to the Baptist (Luke 7,24-35).

42. T.M. DERICO, *Oral Tradition and the Synoptic Verbal Agreement: Evaluating the Empirical Evidence for Literary Dependence*, Eugene, OR, Pickwick, 2016 shows how independent recollections of a foundational narrative may overlap at this level of detail.

43. It may be of interest to note that scholars who belong to the Jerusalem Perspective see Luke as wholly independent of Mark. See, for example, R.S. NOTLEY, *Non-Septuagintal Hebraisms in the Third Gospel: An Inconvenient Truth*, in R. BUTH – R.S. NOTLEY (eds.) *The Language Environment of First Century Judaea: Jerusalem Studies in the Synoptic Gospels* (JCPS, 26), Leiden – Boston, MA, Brill, 2014, vol. 2, 320-346.

44. M. GOODACRE, *On Choosing and Using Appropriate Analogies*: *A Response to F. Gerald Downing*, in *JSNT* 26 (2003) 237-240, p. 239, refers to Goulder with approval. Note, however, that he does not echo Goulder's claim that Luke is following Mark for the whole of Luke 3,1–6,19.

45. GOULDER, *Luke's Compositional Options* (n. 17), p. 150.

It is worth taking a step back at this point to observe how much of Luke, under this 'alternating blocks' model, was constructed without reference to Mark. Story elements in this category include: The Birth Narratives of John the Baptist and Jesus; John the Baptist's ministry; Jesus' Genealogy; The Temptations; The Rejection at Nazareth; The Call of the First Disciples; The Sermon on the Plain; Jesus' Testimony to the Baptist; the long central Travel Narrative; The Lord's Supper; The Arrest; Trial before the Sanhedrin; Trial before Pilate; Jesus before Herod; the Crucifixion; and the Resurrection. This amounts to more than three-quarters of Luke's total narrative and includes every key juncture in the story[46]. If Luke did not consult Mark "at all" for these passages, then one thing is certain: Mark was not Luke's frame.

A refusal to accept this conclusion cuts against the claim that Luke used just one source at a time, which in turn removes the FH's defence against the damaging charge of "unpicking"[47]. To put it bluntly, FH supporters cannot have it both ways.

IV. FRAME AND FILL AND THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM

With the preliminaries complete I now turn to trace the compositional processes required under the FH and the MPH. My aim here is to see which follows the patterns of frame and fill and which requires those patterns to run in reverse.

1. The Farrer Hypothesis

The processes required under the Farrer Hypothesis begin, of course, with Mark. Mark gathers traditions, however received, and uses them to create his gospel narrative.

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46. For what it is worth, as PELLING, *Plutarch's Method* (n. 13), p. 91 observes, Plutarch's frame source generally occupies about three-quarters of his narrative.

47. FH supporters do, nevertheless, affirm that Mark was Luke's frame. For example, EVE, *Relating* (n. 1), p. 18: "Matthew and Luke are in sufficient agreement with Mark … that they can employ his gospel as the basis for their own"; p. 167: "Up to this point Luke has worked by alternating Markan and Matthean blocks, largely (though not exclusively) following the Markan narrative while mining Matthew for additional sayings material. On reaching his central section Luke once again switches back to Matthew while also bringing in material from elsewhere"; and p. 193: "[From Luke 18,15] Luke abandons Matthew to resume his use of Mark until the end of the Passion Narrative (although, as we shall see, further sequential uses of Matthew occasionally recur until the end of both gospels)". Addressing the central section, GOODACRE, *Way* (n. 2), p. 39 writes: "The journey motif is a literary conceit that allows Luke to draw in his best Matthean material, while integrating it into a structure that is inspired by Mark".

The next event, according to this model, is the creation of Matthew. There can be little doubt that Matthew selected Mark as his main frame and filled out that frame using other resources. All the classic markers are present: Matthew uses almost every element of Mark; he generally adopts Mark's order; Mark's material usually provides the docking point onto which supplementary material is appended or into which it is inserted[48]; and the removal the Markan material would leave a remainder that does not tell a coherent story (and *vice versa*). It is also the case, however, that Mark appears not to serve as Matthew's frame at every juncture. This is most obvious in the case of the Sermon on the Mount. Markan material is indeed used to create the *context* for the Sermon, but *within* the Sermon Markan material is either absent or subordinate to an agenda set from elsewhere. This suggests that Matthew's Sermon is built around a non-Markan sub-frame. This raises the question of where that sub-frame might have come from. The FH requires that Matthew either created it himself or drew it from an unknown source[49]. The former seems relatively unlikely since it would be in stark contrast to Matthew's use of frame and fill in the remainder of the gospel. The latter, on the other hand, would require Matthew's knowledge of a tradition remarkably like Luke's Sermon on the Plain[50]. This is a subject to which I will return.

Speaking more generally, Matthew is required, under the FH, to acquire or generate additional material with which to fill out Mark. On this model it is not possible to distinguish between Matthean redaction of Mark and the use of additional sources.

The next event, following the FH, is the creation of Luke. Under this model Luke begins to create his gospel with knowledge of both Mark and Matthew. And, as FH proponents sometimes suggest, in a situation where

48. Thus, the Mission Discourse (Matthew 10), the Parabolic Discourse (Matthew 13), the Discourse on the Church (Matthew 18) and the Discourse on the End Times (Matthew 24–25) all open with a section of Mark that sets the agenda for the remainder of the Discourse – the contents of which are drawn from other sources as well as sometimes from elsewhere in Mark. A slightly different pattern occurs in the Sermon on the Mount, see below.

49. If the Sermon already existed as a complete unit (less perhaps a few minor additions from Mark), then there would be no difficulty since Matthew could simply have inserted this block wholesale into his text. The way Matthew operates elsewhere, however, suggest this is unlikely. In his other discourses Matthew gathers material from various sources. It is probable, therefore, that this is also how he creates his longest discourse.

50. Note that Matthew also needs a frame from elsewhere to create Matthew 11. As will be noted later, the Sermon on the Plain provides all the necessary elements of a frame for the Sermon on the Mount. It is a sermon, which the Matthean context requires, all the elements of the Sermon on the Plain are included and many of them are expanded using material from elsewhere – as Matthew does with Mark in the remainder of his text.

Luke and his community are particularly familiar with Mark[51]. Under these circumstances FH Luke might be expected to accept the double attestation provided by Mark and Matthew regarding the Passion and Resurrection. Instead, however, FH Luke adopts a strategy unlikely to have been well received by audiences already well familiar with Mark (and familiar, if less so, with Matthew). He generates his own, alternative, account of the Passion and Resurrection.

FH Luke also takes a surprising turn in declining to adopt Matthew as his frame. Matthew had already expanded Mark using material that Luke will similarly choose to add, albeit in a different way[52]. It is beyond dispute, however, that Luke does not make Matthew his frame: the order of the Matthean material in Luke is too substantially re-arranged for this to be the case. This presents the possibility that Luke chose Mark as his frame. This is the position favoured by the great majority of scholars, including FH supporters[53]. As noted above, however, taking this option places FH supporters in the awkward position of needing Mark to serve as Luke's frame to avoid the problems described below, while also needing Luke extensively to ignore Mark to avoid the "unpicking" problem noted by Downing. Given the recognised severity of the latter, I continue on the basis that Luke used neither Mark nor Matthew as his frame.

The difficulty for the FH, if Mark is not Luke's frame, is that Luke is then required to adopt highly contrasting procedures when filling out his frame (sourced from elsewhere) with material from Mark and Matthew. The procedure Luke adopts with Mark is relatively simple. First, Luke looks for places in his frame where a block of Mark might be inserted. For example, the base narrative includes a sequence in which a parable about a Pharisee and a justified Tax Collector is then immediately followed by the story of Zaccheus of Jericho – who becomes a justified Tax Collector. The humility of the Tax Collector provides a hook for the insertion of Mark's story of the

51. EVE, *Relating* (n. 1), p. 23: "For as long as Mark remained the primary written narrative account of Jesus' ministry available to them, it is likely that Matthew and Luke would have preached on it, taught from it, discussed it with friends and colleagues, deeply pondered it and generally internalized it as a central part of their tradition".

52. F.G. DOWNING, *A Paradigm Perplex: Luke, Matthew and Mark*, in *NTS* 38 (1992) 15-36, p. 25, notes that if Luke knew both Mark and Matthew "we might well expect him only very rarely to refer to his scroll of Mark at all … As the churches quickly decided, almost everything of importance in Mark is there in Matthew". See also the same article reproduced in ID., *Doing Things with Words in the First Christian Century* (SupplJSNT, 200), Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 2000, pp. 174-197, esp. 185. Later authors, such as Tatian and Ammonius of Alexandria, identify Matthew as a useful frame because it has already done a lot of the heavy lifting involved in filling out Mark with additional material.

53. See note 47 above.

blessing of the (humble) children – and this block of Mark also happens to include a link with Jericho, since it includes a description of how Jesus heals a blind man as he leaves Jericho. To connect this Markan block back to Luke's frame, therefore, all that is needed is to place Mark's blind man on the way *into* Jericho, rather than on the way out. Elsewhere, Luke similarly inserts whole blocks of Mark at points where such insertions expand, and do not too badly disrupt, the flow of the base narrative[54].

FH Luke's pedestrian insertions of blocks of Mark stands in marked contrast to FH Luke's adventurous treatment of Matthew. Mark Goodacre likens Luke's handling of Matthew to radical reworkings of Matthew by Franco Zeffirelli and Martin Scorsese:

> One of the very things that many have claimed to be implausible about the Farrer theory's Luke is one of the very things he shares with the Jesus films: the desire to do something radical with Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, to abbreviate, to relocate, to redistribute, to restructure but most importantly to add some dramatic biographical plausibility to the substance of it. If we were fond of the language of trajectory and tendency, we might say that Luke is on a trajectory at the culmination of which are the Jesus films, the tendency of which is creatively and critically to rework the Sermon on the Mount[55].

This contrast between FH Luke's handling of Mark and Matthew is odd[56]. Odder still, however, is the fact that FH Luke's unconventional treatment of Matthew has a very remarkable effect when viewed in reverse, as noted below.

2. The Matthean Posteriority Hypothesis

The story told by the MPH begins, as does the FH, with Mark. Mark gathers traditions, however received, and uses them to create his gospel narrative.

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54. The insertion of a Markan block at Luke 4,31-44 (Jesus heals Peter's Mother-in-Law) creates a minor disruption in Luke's narrative to the extent that Peter might be expected to receive Jesus into his house after his call to discipleship (Luke 5,1-11) rather than before. The natural continuity between the Call of the First Disciples (Luke 5,1-11), the Naming of the Twelve (Luke 6,12-16) and the Teaching of the Disciples (Sermon on the Plain) (Luke 6,17-49) is interrupted by the Markan insertion at Luke 5,12–6,11. The link between the Hospitable Women (Luke 8,1-3) and the Inhospitable Samaritans (Luke 9,51-56) is interrupted by the Markan insertion at Luke 8,1–9,50), and so on.

55. M. GOODACRE, *The Case Against Q: Studies in Markan Priority and the Synoptic Problem*, Harrisburg, PA, Trinity Press International, 2002, p. 130.

56. It is sometimes suggested that Luke's treatment of Mark 4 provides a parallel to Luke's treatment of Matthew. The minimal textual rearrangement required in the former is not, however, anything like the multiple and dramatic rearrangements required in the latter.

The next event is the creation of Luke. As argued above, Mark does not serve as Luke's frame and so, on this model, Luke's frame comes from elsewhere and Markan blocks are inserted into that frame with rudimentary editorial skill. There is no evidence to suggest that this contrasts with how Luke used his other sources, if only because such are not extant[57].

The next event is the creation of Matthew. Under this model Matthew has a choice of two possible frames: Mark or Luke. It is beyond dispute that Matthew chooses Mark as his overall frame, which raises the question of why he rejected Luke. Matthew's exact motivation is, of course, beyond our reach but the fact he includes almost all of Mark, and not even one quarter of Luke, shows that he had some reason for regarding Mark as the more authoritative of the two texts[58].

Matthew's broad policy is then to fill out Mark's agenda by gathering like supplementary materials – including from Luke. In the case of the Sermon on the Mount, however, Matthew does not use Mark as his frame. As noted above, it appears that Matthew drew on a separate sub-frame to support this section. An exceptionally strong candidate for that role is Luke's Sermon on the Plain, which exhibits all the necessary features of such a frame. First, every element is reused in Matthew's version. Second, they are re-used in the same order in Matthew's version. Third, these elements are variously expanded upon by supplementary material from elsewhere. It would be a remarkable coincidence if Matthew happened to find a sub-frame from elsewhere that suited his purposes so perfectly.

Continuing to focus on the Sermon on the Mount, an animation of its creation would show, first, the selection of the Sermon on the Plain as a frame and then the expansion of that frame by the gathering and insertion of related material from elsewhere in Luke, Mark and other sources. Such an animation would be comparable to animations of the work of Plutarch, Josephus and Tatian, each of which gathers related materials to fill out a frame.

Herein lies the final obstacle to the possibility that Luke used Matthew. Luke treating Matthew like a Zeffirelli or a Scorsese makes it *look* like Matthew is using Luke like a Plutarch, a Josephus or a Tatian. It is simpler by far to suppose that Matthew looks like he is using Luke like one of his ancient contemporaries because that is what he was doing.

57. On a finer point of detail, I argue in A. GARROW, *An Extant Instance of 'Q'*, in *NTS* 62 (2016) 398-417, that Didache 1,2-5a was a source for Luke.

58. The combined length of the pericopes substantially common to Luke and Matthew is less than a quarter of the total length of Luke. This does not include, for example, the Birth Narrative and those parts of the Passion Narrative where there is limited verbal similarity.

V. Conclusion

It is sometimes claimed that FH Luke's transpositions of Matthew are equivalent to MPH Matthew's transpositions of Luke. These moves must have been made by someone, it is said, but there's nothing to say that it was one way around or the other. Such statements are, however, a little like saying that action played forwards is the same as action played in reverse. A study of wider ancient compositional practices shows what normally happens when the action is played forwards. Authors who created new narratives by recycling older ones began by selecting one source as a frame and then expanded that frame by drawing in related material from other sources. The Farrer Hypothesis requires this process to run in reverse. For example, in the case of the Sermon on the Mount, "fill" material is scattered throughout Luke's Gospel leaving the denuded "frame" in the form of the Sermon on the Plain. By contrast, the Matthean Posteriority Hypothesis follows the pattern of other ancient authors. It plays the "frame and fill" process forwards.

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