

Incoherence in the Text of Q: An Investigation on Q Discourse Markers and Boundaries

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Abstract

In critical scholarship, Q, a compilation of verses from Luke and Matthew, is considered to be the earliest document of the gospels. This article assesses the notion of such a document by analyzing its coherence. This is done through the study of discourse markers and boundaries of the Greek text of the Critical Edition of Q with the aim to detect possible areas of incoherence. This study continues the debate on the reality of Q since arguing for Q presupposes the existence of a coherent text. After presenting the nature, characteristics, extent, and problems of Q, an analysis of the information structure of Q was conducted. The study shows that there is coherence in the lower levels of discourse while there is some level of incoherence at higher levels. While such a finding in itself is not an explanation for the non-existence of Q, it is an indicator that the redactors of the Q text constructed a text that is not fully coherent.

Keywords: Q, Discourse Markers, Boundaries, Coherence, Incoherence.

Introduction

The word Q, from the German *Quelle*, meaning “source,” refers to a constructed text that is assumed “in order to make sense of other features of the Gospels.”¹ The idea of Q was born as an explanation to the synoptic problem, the so-called Oxford Hypothesis (or Two Document Hypothesis) which posits that Matthew and Luke used Mark as a source for their Gospel materials while they had

¹ John S. Kloppenborg, Q, *The Earliest Gospel: Introduction to the Original Stories and Sayings of Jesus* (London: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 2.

a common source (Q) for materials they did not get from Mark. John S. Kloppenborg indicates that “Q is posited from logical necessity.”² Indeed, despite the hope by some scholars that some day a convincing discovery might bring tangible evidence of Q to light, for now, Q scholars construct their text out of deductions from Matthew and Luke.

The consideration of the nature of Q itself has evolved. In the last decade of the twentieth century, the Q text project reached its fruition culminating in the publication of a critical edition.³ Nevertheless, there are many debates on the nature of Q and its text.

One of the problems inherent to Q is that “the evangelists were thought of as ‘scissors and paste’ men, compilers and not composers, who edited together pieces from several documents.”⁴ The operational result is that Q scholars see confluences, deletions, and displacements of words and phrases in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Such a view raises the problem of linguistic coherence of the text of Q. “A text is said to be coherent if, for a certain hearer on a certain hearing/reading, he or she is able to fit its different elements into a single overall mental representation.”⁵ The consideration of mental representation heightens the suspicion that Q may not be coherent given the fact that it is an agglomeration of elements from diverse contexts.

² Ibid. While Q serves the synoptic problem, scholars have used it for other purposes like the historical Jesus research. See John S. Kloppenborg, “The Sayings Gospel Q and the Quest of the Historical Jesus,” *Harvard Theological Review* 89 (1996): 307-344; Helmut Koester, “The Sayings Gospel Q and the Quest of Historical Jesus: A Response to John S. Kloppenborg,” *Harvard Theological Review* 89, no 4 (1996): 345-349.

³ James M. Robinson, Paul Hoffmann, and John S. Kloppenborg, *The Critical Edition of Q: Synopsis including the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Mark and Thomas with English, German, and French translations of Q and Thomas* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000).

⁴ Mark Goodacre, *The Synoptic Problem: A Way Through the Maze* (London: Continuum, 2001), 160.

⁵ Robert A. Dooley and Stephen H. Levinsohn, *Analyzing Discourse: A Manual of Basic Concepts* (Dallas: SIL, 2001), 23.

Some scholars have detected some incoherence in the text of Q. Leif E. Vaage saw that the text is abrupt in Q 12⁶ and Ronald Allen Piper detected some oddities.⁷ Michael D. Goulder, who defends the Farrer hypothesis (that accepts Markan priority but rejects Q) has several observations of incoherence in Q. He argues that the evangelists could hardly break parts of discourses “without doing violence to the topic.”⁸ Delbert Burkett, who militates for more sources for Q, has also assessed the word order of Q and shows that the argument of word order is not enough to say that Q was a single document. He advocates that “to assess the unity or plurality of Q, we must consider not only order, but other factors as well.”⁹ Llewellyn Howes has recognized a rude interruption in Q 11:33, 34-35 and tries to explain it.¹⁰

While these observations may argue for a chaotic and incoherent Q, there are good defenders of the unity of Q. The main representative is Kloppenborg who writes:

The Synoptic Sayings Source is not, as is sometimes thought, a random collection of sayings but manifests a variety of types of literary organization. Not only are the sayings grouped into several topically *coherent clusters*, there is also *a measure of unity and coherence among the several clusters* as well as logical and thematic development throughout the course of the entire collection.¹¹

Yolanda Dreyer follows Kloppenborg saying that though not written in narrative form, Q displays logical and qualitative

⁶ Leif E. Vaage, “The Son of Man in Q: Stratigraphical Location and Significance,” *Semeia* 55 (1991): 119.

⁷ Ronald Allen Piper, *Wisdom in the Q-Tradition: The Aphoristic Teaching of Jesus* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1989), 153, 155, 156, 167.

⁸ Michael Goulder, “Is Q a Juggernaut,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115, no. 4 (1996): 678.

⁹ Delbert Burkett, *Rethinking the Gospel Sources: The Unity and Plurality of Q*, vol. 2 (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 35.

¹⁰ Llewellyn Howes, “‘Placed in a Hidden Place’: Illuminating the Displacement of Q 11:33, 34-35,” *Neotestamentica* 47, no. 2 (2013): 303-332.

¹¹ John S. Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collection* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 1987), 89, emphasis mine.

progressions that contribute to the structural coherence of Q.¹² This vigorous defense of the coherence of Q calls for an assessment. An investigation on discourse markers (DMs) and boundaries may help to ascertain how far a hypothetical multiple layers/sources document demonstrates a linguistic coherence.

There is a need to clarify, based on linguistic elements, whether the text of Q creates a coherent mental representation. Confronted with many views about the nature of Q, the possibility of many developmental layers, and the singularity or multiplicity of Q sources, it is necessary to assess how DMs and boundaries affect the mental representation and inform the discussion.

Therefore, this paper aims to analyze the information structure of the Greek text of the Critical Edition of Q by studying various DMs and boundaries. The study presupposes that the production of a document by an author (or even a redactor) depends on discourse skills that guarantee a successful mental representation of the readers. Consequently, the aim here is to detect areas of incoherence, places compromising the perception of discourse as a coherent whole; detecting the presence or absence of cohesive ties, indicators that contribute to making the Q discourse chaotic.

The study follows a descriptive approach to linguistic analysis. Each topic is defined and its analysis applied to the text of Q. Besides the introduction and the conclusion, the study consists of two main sections: a general presentation of Q and a linguistic and exegetical analysis.

General Presentation of Q

This segment begins with the presentation of what constitutes the critical text of Q. The presentation is followed by a brief history of the research on Q. Subsequently, the characteristics and nature of Q are presented before the section highlights some problems with the Q hypothesis.

¹² Yolanda Dreyer, "The Tradition History of the Sayings Gospel Q and the 'Christology' of G," *Neotestamentica* 34, no. 2 (2000): 280.

The Critical Text of Q

The critical text used in this study is that of the International Q Project published in *Hermeneia*. This text is the materialization of scholars' efforts to move from the hypothetical stage of reading Q text into Matthew and Luke to the stage of standing as a document in its own right. By the moment of its publication, it was "intended to function as a standard research tool for the study of Q in the future."¹³

Theoretically, Q is a compilation of verses from Luke and Matthew. In practice, the critical text constructed by scholars also harmonizes with some parallel texts from the Gospel of Thomas. This poses the problem of the language of the text of Q since it is presented in Greek while the Gospel of Thomas that was found is in Coptic. Some scholars have argued that Q came from more than one document, one in Greek and another in Aramaic.¹⁴ It follows that Q could have spread in many languages and any finding of a parallel text in a given language may help to reconstruct the Greek text.

Despite the efforts for the construction of the text of Q, no unblemished text has been produced. Instead, many uncertainties remain about what could be the real words, phrases, and sentences of Q. Many signs pervade the text indicating places where the text is uncertain. In some instances, constructions are probable but uncertain. The critical text indicates it with double square brackets □ □. In some other instances, the text is an emendation found as such neither in Matthew nor in Luke; this is indicated by angle brackets < >.

There are places where the text cannot be reconstituted. This is represented in the critical edition by three dots when not even a gist can be suggested, and by two dots when the supposition of a text to be reconstructed is even doubtful. An example with Q3:2-3 can illustrate this: <...> Ἰωάννη... <...> πᾶσα..η.. περίωρο... τοῦ Ἰορδάνου <...> Here, the words before and after Ἰωάννη, before

¹³ Robinson, Hoffmann, and Kloppenborg, *The Critical Edition of Q*, xv.

¹⁴ See Burkett, *Rethinking the Gospel Sources*, 40.

πᾶσα, after Ἰορδάνου, and the incomplete word περίχωρο are said to be difficult to reconstruct and there is no suggestion. The ending of πᾶσα and what may precede or follow η is difficult and it is even doubtful that there should be a reconstruction there.

Concerning the organization, the critical text of Q follows the order of Luke. The division into chapters and the versification all follow Luke. This leads to eighteen chapters with variable lengths and verses that are not arranged ordinally. Also, the chapters are duplicated according to the placement of the text that suits the logic of the editors. For instance, chapter 17 is placed thrice: the first with one verse (17:33) is sandwiched between 14:27 and 14:34, and the second (17:1-2) follows chapter 16 which comes before 15, the third with erratic versification stands between chapters 15 and 19.¹⁵

A Brief History of Q Research

Q entered a new stage of its history in the year 2000 with the publication of the critical edition. Before then, Q remained a hypothesis based on the reading of dispersed texts in Matthew and Luke. In recent times, Q enjoys the status of a majority view in source-critical studies.

The story of Q began in the nineteenth century as part of the two source (double tradition) theory explaining the synoptic problem. Before that time, scholars considered that the Gospels were the product of the Evangelists' recollection, either as eyewitnesses or as associates of eyewitnesses. By the time of the Enlightenment, scholars started to doubt that pre-critical view. The critical period can be traced back to Schleiermacher (1768–1834) who analyzed Papias' word, *logia*, and claimed that Matthew wrote only a document consisting of the sayings of Jesus, not the gospel itself.

While Schleiermacher's analysis of *logia* was an error—since Papias commented the *logia* to mean what Jesus said and did

¹⁵ The order of chapters is as follows: 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 14, 16, 17, 15, 17, 19, 22. Chapters 5, 8, 18, 20, and 21 are non-existent.

Christian Hermann Weisse (1801-1866) took it to build his theory.¹⁶ In 1838, he claimed that the sayings-source was a source for the Gospel of Luke as for Matthew, a document that has been lost. Weisse, based on another misunderstanding, argued that Lachmann proved that Mark was the source for Matthew and Luke, therefore standing for the Markan priority. The earliest designation of the sayings source as Q is attributed to Weiss in 1890, though the origin of the abbreviation may alternatively be traced to the work of Eduard Simons, who used Q alongside L in defense of the two-source theory.¹⁷ Eta Linnemann observes that the two-source theory was based both on Schleiermacher's mistake and Weisse's lie.¹⁸

After Weisse, Burnett Hillman Streeter was the one who gave the classic articulation of the Q hypothesis. He asserted that Luke preserves the general order of Q,¹⁹ a view that is still prevalent in most circles of Q research. Streeter listed the verses of Luke comprising his constructed Q source, about 272 verses of material with a high level of probability of belonging to Q. He added 17 verses (included in brackets) that signified considerable doubt.²⁰ His proposals were popularized as the established basis of the Q hypothesis.

In the middle of the 20th century, there was a deterioration of interest in the study of source criticism until the 1970s, when redaction criticism and other theological studies began to emerge, reviving the interest in the study of Q. This revival culminated in the idea that Q needed to depart from the status of hypothesis to become a document in its own right. Thus, the formation of the International Q Project, which first met on November 17, 1989,

¹⁶ While Weisse is at the fore of the theory, it is Heinrich Julius Holtzmann who popularized the theory of the double tradition by establishing it as a scholarly consensus. Cf. H.J. Holtzmann, *Die Synoptischen Evangelien: Ihr Ursprung und geschichtlicher Charakter* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1863).

¹⁷ See for instance Eduard Simons, *Hat der dritte Evangelist den kanonischen Matthäus benutzt?* (Bonn: Universitäts-Buchdruckerei von Carl Georg, 1880), 22-23.

¹⁸ Eta Linnemann, "The Lost Gospel of Q—Fact or Fantasy?" *Trinity Journal* 17, no. 1 (1996): 8.

¹⁹ Burnett Hillman Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study in Origins Treating of the Manuscript Tradition, Sources, Authorship, and Dates* (London: Macmillan, 1930), 271-278.

²⁰ Paul Foster, "Q Source," *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

generated a renewed interest in scholarly constructions of Q. Various meetings were held till 1996, resulting in the text used as the basis for the critical edition that was published in the year 2000.

The revival of the research on Q is far from limiting itself to the production of a constructed text. The Q document has also been used in the research of Christian origins and of the historical Jesus. Instrumental to this development are Siegfried Schulz and his followers (James McConkey Robinson, John Kloppenborg, and Burton L. Mack)²¹ who argued for multiple layers or stages of Q. The main result here is that an acceptance of Q in some theological provinces has undermined the orthodoxy and authority of the Gospels description of Jesus. For instance, Burton L. Mack downplays the event of Jesus' resurrection arguing, "Q's challenge is that a vigorous Jesus movement was generated without recourse to such an originating event, religious experience, or message of salvation. Q demonstrates that factors other than the belief that Jesus was divine played a role in the generation of early Jesus and Christ movements."²² Further, Mack undermines the authority of the Gospels. He opines, "The narrative gospels can no longer be viewed as the trustworthy accounts of unique and stupendous historical events at the foundation of the Christian faith. The gospels must now be seen as the result of early Christian mythmaking. Q forces the issue, for it documents an earlier history that does not agree with the narrative gospel accounts."²³ The core of the preceding arguments is that Q deprives Jesus and His mission of any salvific significance.

However, while the historical survey of Q research shows that Q enjoys the position of the majority view among critical scholars, the rejection of Q has been promoted by some scholars such as Mark Goodacre or Goulder following Farrer who accepts the Markan priority but rejects Q. Very few scholars, such as Linnemann, still

²¹ James McConkey Robinson, "The Sayings of Jesus: 'Q,'" *Drew Gateway* (Fall 1983); John Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q; Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000); Burton L. Mack, *The Lost Gospel Q: The Book of Christian Origins* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993).

²² Mack, *The Lost Gospel Q*, 8.

²³ *Ibid*, 10.

promote the pre-critical view of the origin of the Gospels that rejects any literary dependence. Thus, Q is still the most prevalent view in synoptic studies circles.

The Nature and Characteristics of Q

The Nature of Q.

The definition of Q in the *Historical Dictionary of Jesus* states what scholars think about the nature of Q:

The Q source is a hypothesis based on comparison of texts in the Synoptic Gospels: Q is where Matthew and Luke coincide, and Mark has nothing or something very different. The Q source is considered to have existed in Greek perhaps around 50 CE as an anthology of Jesus' sayings (like parts of Proverbs, Sirach, and the *Gospel of Thomas*) and without infancy or passion narratives.²⁴

Though this definition acknowledges Q as a hypothesis, its perception has changed over time. Critical scholarship has experienced what Goodacre calls a “metamorphosis of Q into a gospel.”²⁵

Scot McKnight synthesizes the evolution of Q that prompts the question to know what could be the exact nature of Q. He observes,

Scholars have inferred a Q tradition to a Q document to a Q genre; from a Q document to a Q author and his community; from a Q author and his community to redactional layers and theological ideas of the Q author(s) and his (their) community/communities, even to the point that some scholars have convinced themselves that the Q community moved several times.²⁶

²⁴ Daniel J. Harrington, *Historical Dictionary of Jesus* (Plymouth, UK: Scarecrow, 2010), 127.

²⁵ Goodacre, *The Case Against Q: Studies in Markan Priority and Synoptic Problem* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 2002), 17

²⁶ Scot McKnight, “Source Criticism,” in *Interpreting the New Testament: Essays on Methods and Issues*, ed. David Alan Black and David S. Dockery (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2001), 92.

An idea that was a mere hypothesis meant to explain the double tradition of the synoptic gospels has now reached the stage of claiming the privilege to be the first gospel. It is in this vein that Kloppenborg affirms “it is now common to call Q ‘the Sayings Gospel Q’ or ‘the Synoptic Sayings Gospel.’”²⁷ This is a major departure from the time he was saying, “Q is not a ‘Gospel.’ It is still primarily a speech or sayings collection.”²⁸ He defends the new status of Q saying, “when we call Q a ‘gospel,’ it is to make the point that Q deserves to be considered as a decisive proclamation of a new state of affairs for humans, not simply relegated to the status of a ‘source’ of Matthew and Luke.”²⁹ This statement looks like a modest revendication of equal status with the canonical Gospels. The reality is that by making Q the earliest gospel, Q scholars claim a higher status than the Gospels.

Q scholars are consistent and active in creating ex-nihilo. In their procedure, “wisdom and apocalyptic strains concurrent with in Q have been separated out and have served as a basis for hypothesizing successive layers of redaction, which in turn have been utilized to reconstruct a socioreligious history of the Q community.”³⁰ From a hypothesis, these scholars have succeeded to make a “gospel.” From a manuscript that has never been discovered, they have succeeded in arguing for the existence of a document. Now, a critical edition of this Q document exists and it is translated and arranged, just as the canonical Gospels.³¹

Q scholars have not just granted the gospel status to Q, they also claim it has a consistent structure, a genre, a thematic unity, and theology, characteristics normally attributed to conventional pieces of literature. Most of those issues remain unsettled. For instance, David B. Sloan observes that “whether Q should be read as a

²⁷ Kloppenborg, *Q, The Earliest Gospel*, 60.

²⁸ Idem, *The Formation of the Gospel*, 262.

²⁹ Idem, *Q, The Earliest Gospel*, 61.

³⁰ Graham N. Stanton and Nicholas Perrin, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 2nd ed., ed. Joel B. Green, Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin (Nottingham, England: Inter Varsity, 2013), 712.

³¹ Mack, *The Lost Gospel Q*, 71-102.

wisdom book, a prophetic book, a narrative, a biography, or a loose collection of sayings”³² is far from being resolved.

The Extent of Q.

The extent of Q is among the unsettled questions. While Kloppenborg raises the number to 264 verses³³ some think the number of verses should be lesser³⁴ and others propose that it should be higher.³⁵ Thus, the critical edition of Q has considered 271 verses.

The problem with the extent of Q is not just a matter of the number of verses to be included in Q. The rationale is to find if the totality of Q has been recovered through the collection of its verses from Matthew and Luke. Once that is done, the matter is taken to prove that Q never had some important narratives appearing in the canonical gospels.

That is precisely what Kloppenborg does when he claims that “a substantial portion of Q is already preserved in the double tradition,” and that “there is no convincing evidence to suggest that Q contained either a baptismal story or a passion account.”³⁶ Elsewhere, he argues that “because Q lacks any direct reference to Jesus’ death and resurrection, we can no longer suppose that every literary account of the significance of Jesus had to narrate his death.”³⁷ Although scholars see that Kloppenborg has not convincingly “demonstrated that Q never had a passion account,”³⁸ the absence of the passion narrative is one of the main arguments that Qscholars use to downplay the significance of the Passion narrative in the canonical gospels.

³² David B. Sloan, “Q Source, Critical Issues,” *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

³³ Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q*, 99.

³⁴ See Sloan, “Q Source, Critical Issues.”

³⁵ See Burkett, *Rethinking the Gospel Sources*, 69-86.

³⁶ Kloppenborg, *The Formation of the Gospel*, 88.

³⁷ Idem, *Q, The Earliest Gospel*, ix.

³⁸ Dennis Ingolfsland, “Kloppenborg’s Stratification of Q and Its Significance for Historical Jesus Studies,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 46, no. 2 (2003):221.

The Stages of Q.

While many possibilities have been considered, prevalent views in scholarship are influenced by the idea of multiple layers in the composition of Q. Kloppenborg mostly defends the idea of three compositional stages. He sees the first layer as Q¹, the formative stratum. It is the sapiential (wisdom) layer comparable to the book of Proverbs of the Old Testament.³⁹ Many other scholars defend the same point. In a study of aphoristic sayings in Q, Ronald A. Piper defines sapiential motifs in the double tradition. For him, aphoristic sayings are perceptible in pre-synoptic traditions and were incorporated at some unknown stages into Q, a supposition that gives some indirect credibility to Q hypothesis.⁴⁰

Kloppenborg argues that Q¹ underwent some redactional changes and resulted in Q² with a collection of sayings including Christology and the motif of delayed Parousia that were absent from the formative stratum. Dreyer adds that while Q¹ focuses on an early Christian believing community and its message, Q² is an elaboration of a changing situation where the community sees itself as having a mission to go beyond the confines of Judea.⁴¹

The third layer, Q³, is described as the result of a struggle. The argument opines that the Jesus movement experienced opposition from the Judean elite and the Q community fought to find a new identity. Tolerance disappeared and conformity to Pharisaic thought was required, a critical situation that fostered the formation of Q³. As a result, the third layer is made of apocalyptic eschatology. From the mission perspective of Q², the development is made into a universal perspective in Q³. Q scholars assert that Mark only used Q² while Matthew and Luke used Q³, which is the final version of the Sayings Gospel Q.⁴²

³⁹ Cf. Kloppenborg, *The Formation of the Gospel*, 153.

⁴⁰ Ronald A. Piper, *Wisdom in the Q-Tradition: The Aphoristic Teaching of Jesus* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1989), 195.

⁴¹ Dreyer, "The Tradition History," 275.

⁴² *Ibid.*

Some Problems with the Q Hypothesis

Many scholars have raised arguments against Q and it is impossible to repeat those arguments in a single paper.⁴³ While the whole Q hypothesis is anchored on the similarity of content between Matthew and Luke, Linnemann shows that “similarity in content is in itself no proof for literary dependence. It could be caused by the same event: a saying of Jesus, for instance, reported independently by several different persons who heard it. In other words, similarities might have been historically, not literarily, transmitted.”⁴⁴ After statistical analyses, she argues that “there is no conclusive evidence for the alleged Q in Matthew and Luke. There are not even noteworthy facts that speak in favor of such a hypothesis.”⁴⁵

The Hypothetical Nature of Q

One of the main problems with the Q hypothesis is the magnitude of what a hypothesis with no historical reality and value has become. Q scholars argue and write as if there is a reality called Q. Circularity here is common. An instance can be taken from Stephen J. Patterson’s view of Q. He writes, “Q is an early Christian document widely held to have been used by Matthew and Luke in the composition of their respective Gospels. The Q hypothesis is one-half of the most commonly held explanation for the extensive parallels between the first three canonical Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke.”⁴⁶ He adds that “unfortunately it did not survive antiquity and must therefore be reconstructed on the basis of Matthew’s and Luke’s use of it.”⁴⁷

⁴³ Arguments can be found in Goulder, “Is Q a Juggernaut;” *Luke: A New Paradigm* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989); Goodacre, *The Case Against Q; Goulder and the Gospels: An Examination of a New Paradigm* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); *The Synoptic Problem*.

⁴⁴ Linnemann, “The Lost Gospel of Q,” 8.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴⁶ Stephen J. Patterson, *The Gospel of Thomas and Christian Origins: Essays on the Fifth Gospel* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2013), 142

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

These statements contain some contradictions: Q is affirmed as “an early Christian document” but recognized as a “hypothesis.” Then circularity comes in: one expects some proof—a manuscript, an ancient reference—confirming the status of a document, a document that is Christian and that is ancient. Such proof does not come. Instead, another theory is built upon the assumed existence: its loss. That proof too does not come but is stated to be in the parallels found in Matthew and Luke, parallels that are supposed to be explained by the very document that finds its existence in them! In the end, the only thing certain is the hypothesis of Q.

The sustainability of the Q hypothesis is intrinsically difficult due to the multiple theories for a document that does not simply exist. Once more, the idea of McKnight needs to be stated here. The fact that Q has moved from a tradition to a document and a genre; from a document to an author or a community; from an author and his community to redactional layers, makes the Q theory itself far from being believable. McKnight states that “the problem is with probability—and the multiplication of theories on the basis of a document that is already hypothetical does not increase one’s chances of being accurate.”⁴⁸ Ingolfsland also recognizes that “the real problem is the number of hypotheses Kloppenborg builds on top of this increasingly questionable foundation.”⁴⁹

Most often, apart from circularity, Q scholars face problems of contradictions. For instance, Ingolfsland shows that “the main reasons Kloppenborg proposes for assuming that virtually all of Q can be reconstructed have been successfully refuted by his own arguments.”⁵⁰ He points out Kloppenborg’s contradiction of saying that he does not know why Q has disappeared after he had already agreed with scholars who think that Q disappeared because it was absorbed in Matthew and Luke.

⁴⁸ McKnight, “Source Criticism,” 92.

⁴⁹ Ingolfsland, “Kloppenborg’s Stratification of Q,” 219.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 221.

Q and the Christian Faith

The greatest impact of Q hypothesis is its use in Christian Origins and Historical Jesus research. Q scholars have dethroned the Gospels, which they consider as myths, from their status of reliable accounts and have replaced them with a hypothesis, which they uphold as a reliable account of Christian origins. It follows that Jesus presented in the Gospels as the divine Messiah is replaced by a mere Jewish sage and preacher.

In the end, the Christian faith, according to Q scholars, needs to be taken from the Bible, a historical document, and put into Q, a mere hypothesis. As Linnemann ironically puts it, “Q is the lever needed to pry the Christian faith out of its biblical moorings. Not the gospels but Q must be faith’s new anchor, since Q is earlier than the gospels and does not agree with them. Q settles the matter.”⁵¹ The question then comes: if one cannot trust the Gospels that are based on solid historical data, how will he or she trust a mere hypothesis? Q simply stands as a danger to the Christian faith.

Linguistic and Exegetical Analysis of Q

To assess the linguistic coherence of the critical text of Q, the present section mainly focuses on its *discourse markers* and boundaries. The study of these features is justified by the fact that they greatly contribute to the coherence of a text. The first part of this section addresses DMs and the second addresses boundaries.

Discourse Markers in the Text of Q

Definition and Function of Discourse Markers.

The definition of DMs is elusive and the term itself is presented as controversial.⁵² Liesbeth Degand, Bert Cornillie, and Paola Pietrandrea explain that “a great deal of the disagreement can be put

⁵¹ Linnemann, “The Lost Gospel of Q,” 5.

⁵² Graham Ranger presents nearly thirty terms “covering coextensive or overlapping domains” that show the difficulty of terminology. Graham Ranger, *Discourse Markers: An Enunciative Approach* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave, 2018), 2.

on the account of the fact that DMs are multifunctional linguistic expressions and that they do not form a recognized (closed) word class.”⁵³ Graham Ranger suggests that the terminological confusion is due to the recency of the science and the multiplicity of theoretical approaches.⁵⁴

Definitions of DMs often put together what they are and what they do. The same pattern is followed here though the highlight of the function is given after the presentation of the notion. Fraser defines DMs as “a pragmatic class, lexical expressions drawn from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbials, and prepositional phrases.”⁵⁵ He sees DMs as a pragmatic class “because they contribute to the interpretation of an utterance rather than to its propositional content.”⁵⁶ His framework is mainly concerned with differentiating content versus pragmatic meaning.

This insight has led scholars to see that DMs have a metalinguistic and specifically a meta-discursive nature. Accordingly, Christoph Rühlemann broadly defines DMs as “words or phrases that meta-lingually flag how discourse relates to other discourse, as a continuation, elaboration, digression, transition, qualification, quotation or other.”⁵⁷ Like Fraser in the relational aspect, Maria Josep Cuenca states that “discourse markers, at least in their more traditional definition as connective elements or items that bracket units of talk, are two position operators, i.e. units typically linking two content segments.”⁵⁸

⁵³ Liesbeth Degand, Bert Cornillie, and Paola Pietrandrea, “Modal Particles and Discourse Markers: Two Sides of the Same Coin?” in *Discourse Markers and Modal Particles: Categorization and Description*, ed. Liesbeth Degand, Bert Cornillie, and Paola Pietrandrea (Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins, 2013), 5.

⁵⁴ Ranger, *Discourse Markers*, 3.

⁵⁵ Bruce Fraser, “What Are Discourse Markers,” *Journal of Pragmatics* 31 (1999): 950.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 946.

⁵⁷ Christoph Rühlemann, “What Can A Corpus Tell Us about Pragmatics?” in *The Routledge Handbook of Corpus Linguistics*, ed. Anne Okeeffe and Michael McCarthy, (London: Routledge), 295

⁵⁸ Maria Josep Cuenca, “The Fuzzy Boundaries Between Discourse Marking and Modal Marking,” in *Discourse Markers and Modal Particles*, 192.

Deborah Schiffrin initially defined DMs as “sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk.”⁵⁹ She proposed that DMs could be considered as a set of linguistic expressions comprising members of word classes as varied as conjunctions, interjections, adverbs, and lexicalized phrases. Gabriele Diewald highlights indexicality as she states that “discourse markers are defined as indexical elements relating items of discourse to other items of discourse.”⁶⁰ For Yael Maschler, a DM must fulfil two requirements, a semantic requirement consisting of “a metalingual interpretation in the context in which it occurs,” and a structural requirement wherein an “utterance must occur at intonation-unit initial position.”⁶¹

More recently, Ludivine Crible has offered a more comprehensive approach saying:

DMs are a grammatically heterogeneous, syntactically optional, polyfunctional type of pragmatic marker. Their specificity is to function on a metadiscursive level as procedural cues to constrain the interpretation of the host unit in a co-built representation of on-going discourse. They do so by either signaling a discourse relation between the host unit and its context, making the structural sequencing of discourse segments explicit, expressing the speaker’s meta-comment on their phrasing, or contributing to the speaker-hearer relationship.⁶²

This definition builds on previous studies and tries to put together the elements that characterize DMs. Further, the definition also outlines the functions of DMs. Péter B. Furkó also builds on previous

⁵⁹ Deborah Schiffrin, *Discourse Markers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 31.

⁶⁰ Gabriele Diewald, “‘Same but Different’ Modal Particles, Discourse Markers, and the Art (and Purpose) of Categorization,” in *Discourse Markers and Modal Particles*, 26.

⁶¹ Yael Maschler, *Metalinguage in Interaction: Hebrew Discourse Markers* (Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins, 2009), 17

⁶² Ludivine Crible, *Discourse Markers and (Dis)fluency: Forms and Functions across Languages* (Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins, 2018), 35.

research saying that “discourse markers comprise a functional class of linguistic items that do not typically change the propositional meaning of an utterance but are essential for the organization and structuring of discourse, for marking the speaker’s attitudes to the proposition being expressed as well as for facilitating processes of pragmatic inferences.”⁶³ Furkó summarizes his description of DMs saying that “discourse markers are best perceived with reference to various stages of the pragmaticalization cline: initially they have inherent, context-independent, propositional meaning, which is gradually replaced/enriched by context-dependent, pragmatic, procedural meanings.”⁶⁴ Laure Lansari also follows a contrastive approach and states that given the heterogeneity of DMs, “it seems impossible to define a unique syntactic behaviour common to all DMs. It may however be possible to analyse the syntactic features of individual members of the class.”⁶⁵

The functions of DMs are diverse and follow the theoretical frameworks of the researcher. Some major functions are summarized here. Beginning with the structural function, Fraser said that DMs “impose a relationship between some aspects of the discourse segment they are a part of, call it S2, and some aspect of a prior discourse segment, call it S1. In other words, they function like a two-place relation, one argument lying in the segment they introduce, the other lying in the prior discourse”⁶⁶. While Fraser confined DMs to an anaphoric phenomenon, Schiffirin argued that DMs could be “both cataphoric and anaphoric whether they are in initial or terminal position.”⁶⁷ Fraser saw DMs as relationals. As

⁶³ Péter B. Furkó, *Discourse Markers and Beyond: Descriptive and Critical Perspectives on Discourse-Pragmatic Devices across Genres and Languages* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 1.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 222

⁶⁵ Laure Lansari, *A Contrastive View of Discourse Markers: Discourse Markers of Saying in English and French* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 5.

⁶⁶ Fraser, “What Are Discourse Markers?” 938.

⁶⁷ Schiffirin, *Discourse Markers*, 31.

relationals, they play a role “at the lower level of discourse, they also link sentences and paragraphs at the higher level.”⁶⁸

The next function of DMs to be highlighted here is the procedural meaning. This follows Diane Blakemore who argued that “there are discourse markers which encode procedural constraints on explicit content.”⁶⁹ It is argued that “procedural information does not contribute to the conceptual representation of an utterance, but it can inferentially enrich utterances. It is an instruction to the cognitive system to manipulate conceptual representations via inferential processes.”⁷⁰

Aware of the complexities inherent to the functions of DMs, Yael Maschler and Schiffrin state,

Discourse markers tell us not only about the linguistic properties (e.g., semantic and pragmatic meanings, source, functions) of a set of frequently used expressions, and the organization of social interactions and situations in which they are used, but also about the cognitive, expressive, social, and textual competence of those who use them. Because the functions of markers are so broad, any and all analyses of markers – even those focusing on only a relatively narrow aspect of their meaning or a small portion of their uses – can teach us something about their role in discourse.⁷¹

Laure Lansari states that “DMs cannot be reduced to management tools with merely structuring roles in communication.

⁶⁸ Guy Josia Ndombo, *Tote in the New Testament: A Linguistic and Exegetical Investigation* (Beau Bassin, Mauritius: Lambert Academic, 2018), 3.

⁶⁹ Diane Blakemore, *Relevance and Linguistic Meaning: The Semantics and Pragmatics of Discourse Markers* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 185.

⁷⁰ Regina Blass, “How Orality Affects the Use of Pragmatic Particles, and How It Is Relevant for Translation,” in *Discourse Studies & Biblical Interpretation: A Festschrift in Honor of Stephen H. Levinsohn*, ed. Steven E. Runge (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2011), 83.

⁷¹ Yael Maschler and Deborah Schiffrin, “Discourse Markers: Language, Meaning, and Context,” in *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, 2nd ed., vol. 1, ed. Deborah Tannen, Heidi E. Hamilton, and Deborah Schiffrin (Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 205.

On the contrary, they always encode subjectivity.”⁷² By saying this, she goes beyond the pragmatic approach. She follows a contrastive view and sees DMs leaning on the enunciative approach.

The definition and characterization of DMs seen above sprung in the 1980s and mostly in the English-speaking world. More recently, the enunciative approach has been defended by some scholars. Graham Ranger presents the Theory of Enunciative and Predicative Operations (TEPO) that was researched in France but not popularized for the English language. The theory itself builds from three levels of linguistic studies: mental representation, linguistic forms, and metalinguistic representation. Ranger observes that the linguist does not have access to the mental representation which is the concern of cognitive studies but the cognitive operations can be perceptible through linguistic forms or textual traces.⁷³

From these observations, Ranger proposes a study of DMs that reframes discourse marking as an operation of regulation, encompassing operations of representation and reference assignment. Different from earlier theories—he agrees with Schiffrin but disagrees with Fraser—on DMs which were pragmatic in nature, he explains that his theory “does not aim to establish a list of categories of situated values, but rather to determine the parameters that make the construction of different situated values possible.”⁷⁴ Laure Lansari clarifies that “‘énonciation’ views DMs as items reflecting the speaker’s stance. As such, DMs are intrinsically subjective units and their study does not aim to examine the functions they develop in discourse but to uncover what kind of subjectivity they encode.”⁷⁵

Perhaps, the suggestion of Furkó is preferable in front of the multifunctional description of DMs. He states,

Looking at the use of discourse markers on a case-by-case/context-by-context basis and considering the relations between various uses of a particular discourse

⁷² Lansari, *A Contrastive View*, 18

⁷³ Ranger, *Discourse Markers*, 20.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁷⁵ Lansari, *A Contrastive View*, 33

marker is a more fruitful approach to the study of discourse markers than setting up taxonomies and providing accounts of the complementary distribution of a set of discourse markers⁷⁶

Discourse Markers and Coherence in Q.

The analysis of DMs in this section begins with Q 3. From the outset, one observes that καὶ is used eight times in that unit, one in sentence-initial position (Q 3:22). Οὖν is used twice, once in sentence-initial position (Q 3:8). Δὲ occurs three times, once in sentence-initial position (Q3:9). The text also evidences several asyndeta.

The conjunction οὖν is an inferential marker with an additional “constraint of close continuity with what precedes.”⁷⁷ It marks the fact that what follows is closely inferred or concluded from the preceding utterance. In our text (Q 3:8), the use of οὖν by the speaker shows that he infers the call to repentance from the fact that the people similar to vipers try to flee the wrath by merely coming for baptism.

The next DM, δὲ, is in Q 3:9. This conjunction is a discontinuity marker,⁷⁸ marking a development: “The use of δέ represents the writer’s choice to explicitly signal that what follows is a new, distinct development in the story or argument, based on how the writer conceived of it.”⁷⁹ In our text, after making a series of propositions in Q 3:8—namely the imperative to produce fruits of repentance (ποιήσατε ... καρπὸν ἄξιον τῆς μετανοίας), the proscription to not deceive themselves of being children of Abraham (καὶ μὴ δόξητε λέγειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς· πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ.)—the speaker moves to the new idea that there is already an axe at the root of the tree (ἦδη δὲ ἡ ἀξίνη πρὸς τὴν ῥίζαν τῶν δένδρων κεῖται·).

⁷⁶ Furkó, *Discourse Markers and Beyond*, 222.

⁷⁷ Steven E. Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2010), 43.

⁷⁸ Furkó, *Discourse Markers and Beyond*, 228

⁷⁹ Steven E. Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 31.

Indeed, the use of $\delta\epsilon$ here is the speaker's choice; the movement from the theme of the production of fruits and being children of Abraham to the theme of the axe at the root of the tree in itself is enough to see a thematic shift. The use of $\delta\epsilon$ is a specific intention to mark the new development while the same conjunction points backward to guarantee that the new development is tied with what precedes. There is therefore coherence in the substructure Q 3:7-9.

As a whole, the coherence of the unit Q 3 needs to be assessed by comparing the use of DMs with the asyndeta found in the text. One notices that Q 3:2-3, 7, 16-17, and 21 are asyndetic. Steven E. Runge explains that the asyndeton "is the option used when the writer judges that the implicit relation between the clauses is sufficiently clear."⁸⁰ It means that it is used when the author knows that the utterance is coherent enough to create a complete mental representation. The question arises at this level whether the concentration of asyndetic utterances in Q 3:0-22 specifically indicates a text that is clear enough to dispense the use of conjunctions or other DMs. This would be the case if the number of thematic propositions is reduced but the text would seem abrupt if the number of thematic shifts is increased.

The result from the text shows that the level of coherence in Q 3:7-9 is high. The topic is John's address to the crowds coming to him for baptism. In the address, he blames them as a race of vipers (v.7) and consequently asks them to produce the fruits of repentance, a mark of Abraham's children (v.8), without which they may face the judgment (v.9). The level of coherence is minimal between Q 3:9 and Q 3:16b and inside Q 3:16-17. Indeed, between Q 3:9 and Q 3:16b, one observes that the topic of baptism encountered in verse 7 is resumed in verse 16b where the speaker contrasts his baptism by water with the baptism by the Spirit and fire from the one coming after him. While this topic shows some coherence, it is observable that verse 9 closes on the topic of warning while, without a proper transition (such as a developmental conjunction), the speaker moves to the distinction between the two baptizers. This shows some abruptness. It is visible that verse 17 continues

⁸⁰ Ibid., 20.

the description of the one baptizing with the Spirit and fire since fire serves to burn the chaff. Basic coherence is therefore attested.

However, the level of chaos increases between Q 3:17 and Q 3:21. First, the incomplete words [..Ἰησοῦ.. βαπτισθε... νεφχθη...ο...οὐρανο...,] are bracketed as probable but uncertain. When there is no text to consult, the reader should try to complete the reconstruction by guessing which words could be there. After the words are reconstructed, one notices that the theme has shifted with the introduction of a new participant (Ἰησοῦς) and a new event (the opening of heaven). This shift is done without any developmental marker, heightening the level of chaos. Finally, the number of themes inside the whole chapter is also high, suggesting that the many asyndeta used betray a lack of cohesive ties, making the coherence of the unit more difficult to be achieved. For the text to be coherent, the addition of extratextual elements is necessary and many gaps have to be filled.

The next DM to be analyzed is τότε. It occurs six times in the whole corpus of Q (6:42; 11:24, 26; 13:26; 14:21; 16:16), five of them representing occurrences in Luke. Only the occurrence in 11:24 is taken from Matthew (Matt 13:44) and it is even bracketed to indicate an element that is probable but uncertain for Q constructors. The same word is bracketed in the critical edition of Nestle Aland indicating where the editors prefer the word in the text while textual critics are not completely convinced of its authenticity. Among the earliest manuscripts, τότε is omitted in \mathfrak{P}^{45} , the first correction of Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Alexandrinus, Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, Codex of Bezae, and Codex Washingtonianus. It is present in \mathfrak{P}^{75} , the second correction of Codex Sinaiticus, and Codex Vaticanus among the earliest. The textual decision is difficult: the word may stand based on an external decision but the threat of being a harmonization from Matthew heightens the doubt of its authenticity.

In any case, both the editors of Nestle Aland and Q decided to include τότε. Its inclusion, therefore, prompts its analysis. In the two cases of Q 11:24, 26, τότε is conjunctive and sentence-initial,

the same as in Luke.⁸¹ Stephen Levinsohn shows that “the presence of τότε both signals divisions of an episode into subsections and provides cohesion between them by indicating continuity of time and other factors.”⁸² Τότε used as conjunction at the lower level of discourse is therefore mostly cohesive, though “it retains some adverbial characteristics in the sense that it can mark the time of the subsequent utterance, it can introduce a consequential utterance, or indicate that there has been an undefined passage of time between two utterances.”⁸³

This understanding of τότε applied to Q 11:24, 26 means that this device was used for cohesion in the substructure. This conjunctive usage is definable though it is difficult to see the adverbial characteristics retained. Here, τότε marks the development in time from the moment the spirit wanders and finds no resting place to the moment he decides to return to his former house (τότε λέγει· εἰς τὸν οἶκόν μου ἐπιστρέψω), and to the subsequent action of going and taking seven wicked spirits with him (τότε πορεύεται καὶ παραλαμβάνει μεθ’ ἑαυτοῦ ἑπτὰ ἕτερα πνεύματα).

Two more occurrences of conjunctive τότε are found in Q (13:26; 14:21). They also retain adverbial characteristics wherein τότε is indexical in both cases with the additional element of (con)sequence in Q 14:21. For this case, the master is consequentially angry and speaks to his servant (τότε ὀργισθεὶς ὁ οἰκοδεσπότης εἶπεν τῷ δούλῳ αὐτοῦ·) because of the negative report. In Q 13:26, τότε indexicalizes the time those who reply to the Lord will begin to say (τότε ἄρξασθε λέγειν) that they ate and drank in his presence and he taught them in the streets. In Q 14:21, τότε also indexicalizes the time the master gets angry and speaks to the servant: it is after the report of the servant.

All these cases of conjunctive τότε indicate coherence at the low levels of discourse. Strangely, they appear in paragraphs that begin *asyndetically* in the text of Q. This furthers the remark that

⁸¹ See Ndombo, *Tote in the New Testament*, 131.

⁸² Stephen H. Levinsohn, *Discourse Features of New Testament Greek: A Coursebook on the Information Structure of New Testament Greek*, 2nd ed. (Dallas: SIL, 2000), 96.

⁸³ Ndombo, *Tote in the New Testament*, 67.

there is coherence in the substructures of the critical text of Q, but such linguistic coherence is reduced or lost at higher levels of Q discourse.

Boundaries in the Text of Q

Notion of Boundary.

Boundaries refer to the seams of a given text. Two main questions are asked here. Firstly, what are the indications of a boundary? Secondly, what indicators at the boundaries make a text coherent or chaotic?

In answering the question of what criteria help to delineate larger units, John Beekman and John Callow, say that

The basic criterion is that a section, or a paragraph, deals with one theme. If the theme changes, then a new unit has started. There are many types of details, grammatical and semantic, to be drawn on to reach a decision, but what gives a section or paragraph its overall coherence as a semantic unit is the fact that one subject matter is being dealt with.⁸⁴

Christoph Unger also discusses the claim that discourse connectives are best treated as indicators of coherence relations between hierarchically organized units of discourse. He claims that coherence relations cannot be seen as real cognitive entities since he sees no evidence for the hierarchical organization in discourse. He proposes that the intuitions underlying the notion of hierarchical discourse structure should be explained in terms of consequences of processing a text in search of optimal relevance.⁸⁵

Discussing what happens at paragraph boundaries, he suggests, based on relevance theory, that particles used at paragraph boundaries should be seen as semantic constraints on relevance

⁸⁴ John Beekman and John Callow, *Translating the Word of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 279.

⁸⁵ Christoph Unger, "The Scope of Discourse Connectives: Implications for Discourse Organization," *Journal of Linguistics* 32 (1996): 403-438.

whereby a connective is used to facilitate context change without much processing effort. As such, they should not be seen as paragraph markers but as facilitators of context change.

Stephen Levinsohn concurs that “a paragraph or section is a semantic or pragmatic unit characterized by having a single theme, not by the presence of certain surface features.”⁸⁶ He indicates that the existence of a point of departure is of specific value for identifying the presence of a paragraph or section because it signals some sort of break and indicates the primary basis for linking what follows to the context. He further indicates that when the primary genre of a book is narrative, “many sections of the book subdivide on the ground of changes of temporal setting.”⁸⁷

If the change of topic for a paragraph or section is the major indicator of a boundary, it is necessary to trace the continuity of a text in order to discover its coherence. Tracing continuity and discovering discontinuities is mostly based on the typology of Talmy Givón.⁸⁸ He sees continuity whenever there is a unity of time, place, action, and participants. Givón’s observation is that boundaries of higher-level discourse units will exhibit “more breakages or discontinuities in the four unities than lower-level discourse boundaries.”⁸⁹ Thus, Runge argues that “a new paragraph might be triggered by two or perhaps three discontinuities, while a cluster of three or more discontinuities will most likely be found at higher discourse boundaries such as the pericope or other macrostructural unit.”⁹⁰ This means that the coherence of a discourse made of multiple sections or paragraphs will be recognized by a single theme running from one unit to another of the same discourse. On the contrary, a text may be chaotic.

⁸⁶ Levinsohn, *Discourse Features*, 271.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 275.

⁸⁸ Talmy Givón, *Syntax: A Functional-Typological Introduction* (Amsterdam: John Benjamin, 1984), 245.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Runge, “Where Three or More are Gathered there is Discontinuity: The Correlation between Formal Linguistic Markers of Segmentation and the Masoretic Petûhâ and Setûmâ Markers in Genesis 12-25,” in *Greeks, Jews, and Christians: Historical, Religious and Philological Studies in Honor of Jesús Peláez del Rosal*, ed. Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta and Israel Muñoz Gallarte (Córdoba, Spain: Almendro, 2013), 15.

Boundaries and Coherence in Q.

The previous observations help to identify where the text of Q is linguistically incoherent. Besides the notorious example of abruptness in Q 11:33-35, there are several other places where rude interruptions are noticed. One of those places is Q 9. The whole chapter is made of four verses. The episode is about the interaction with people who faced difficulties to follow Jesus, one to whom Jesus replied that the Son of Man does not have where to lay his head and the other who wanted to go and bury his father before he follows Jesus.

The internal coherence of the chapter is perceptible. However, the transitions from the previous chapter to the next are accidental. One notices that the transition here is not done with the change of temporal setting. Since there is no indication of a change of time and participants, there should normally be continuity. But one notices that the topic of the preceding verses is different from the one that follows. The abruptness in those conditions is perceptible.

Even the use of the conjunction καὶ at the beginning of Q 9 is difficult. Levinsohn argues that “the conjunction δέ et τότε and asyndeton often occur at paragraph and section boundaries, whereas καὶ and τέ are less frequently found at such boundaries.”⁹¹ Alone, it could be argued that the rule does not prohibit καὶ at boundaries. However, the cumulative effect of indicators of continuity while the topic has changed and a conjunction that is not meant to stand in paragraphs displays some level of incoherence.

Many other places illustrate the difficulty of reading an incomplete text while the text of Q is reputed to have been recovered in almost its totality. Such is the case with the first verses Q 3:0-3. For this text to be translated, many gaps need to be filled. Such is also the case with Q 14:18, 19, 20. Except for the word ἀγρόν, there is no other word for these possible verses. Here, like in many cases, the mental representation is rendered difficult.

⁹¹ Levinsohn, *Discourse Features*, 275.

Conclusion

This study purposed to analyze the structure of the Greek text of the Critical Edition of Q by studying various DMs and boundaries with the aim to detect possible areas of incoherence. To achieve that goal, a general presentation of Q was performed followed by an analysis of some DMs and boundaries. The general presentation of Q mainly showed how a theory that was meant to explain the synoptic problem, and more especially the double tradition, has evolved to become a document that scholars place before the canonical Gospels. This part also presented some difficulties with the Q hypothesis and the danger that it represented for the Christian faith.

The analysis consisted of a linguistic analysis of DMs and boundaries, each followed by an exegetical application in the text of Q. The results show that there is coherence in the lower levels of discourse while there is some level of incoherence at higher levels. While such a finding in itself is not an explanation for the non-existence of Q, it is an indicator that the redactors of the Q text constructed a text that is not fully coherent.

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