The Characterization of 'Q':
Naming the Scribe and his Community

Abstract: After summarizing the work of John Kloppenborg and Simon J. Joseph on the characterization of the scribe and social setting of Q, this investigation moves one step further by showing that the Q scribe was familiar with the 'Parables of Enoch'. Having traced the provenance of this text (*1Enoch* 37-71), in a previous study, to an Essene settlement in the Arbel cave village, near the Sea of Galilee, which had close connections to the Essene community established in Jerusalem during the reign of Herod the Great (37–4 BCE), we propose the Q scribe was a member of the Essene community in Jerusalem, who travelled first to the Jordan Valley to hear John the Baptist and then to the Sea of Galilee to follow Jesus Son of Man, before returning to Jerusalem to join the other disciples. This profile of the Q scribe is then viewed in the context of the debate about the authorship of Matthew's Gospel. In the light of both internal and external evidence, the Q scribe is found to be *Mattias* the apostle who was elected instead of Judas (Acts 1:21-26), and not *Mattaios* the tax-collector (Mt 9:9). The implications are then discussed.

Status Questionis: 'Excavating Q'

One of the best introductions to the complexities of Q is *Excavating Q* by John Kloppenborg.[1] It is a clear and thorough presentation of the long and complex history of Q scholarship by an author who has dedicated a lifetime to the subject. In the first part, he explains how the pattern of similarities and differences between the three Synoptic Gospels ('the Synoptic Problem') has given rise to several hypotheses, of which the 'Two Document Hypothesis' is now the most widely accepted, thanks in no small part to the work of this author. The parallel passages in Matthew and Luke are derived from two main sources, either from Mark or from a lost document called Q (short for Quelle, German for 'source'), whose previous existence as a separate 'sayings source' is argued convincingly at the start of this book.

The author then presents the scholarly debate on the characteristics of the postulated document called Q (its language and date), and on its literary reconstruction (its order, wording and extent), concluding, from the literary data, that it was written in Greek, around 55-75 CE, and that it was independently used by Matthew and Luke in their Gospels, with Luke following its order more closely than Matthew. On the document thus defined, Kloppenborg applies redactional criticism, synchronically and diachronically, in order to infer its composition, compositional history and genre. Working backwards, like the archaeologists, he identifies three compositional layers (strata), which he calls Q2, Q1 and Q3. The first layer to stand out is Q2, which is the 'main redaction' of a skilful scribe, written in the style of prophetic pronouncement and identifiable by the repetition of certain themes, such as the announcement of eschatological judgment, polemic against "this generation", and the use of a Deuteronomic view of history. Untouched by these themes are six clusters, or subcollections, of instructional sayings, written in a rhetorically persuasive

[1] John Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000.

style, which cohere as a discrete redactional stratum, identified by the author as "the formative stratum", or Q1. Q1 and Q2 represent the bulk of the hypothetical document used by both Matthew and Luke, but not found in Mark. However, the final from of Q includes a few extra passages which demonstrate a more positive attitude towards the Torah and the Temple, most probably written by a different scribal hand. These last additions to Q are collectively called Q3. When considering its genre, Kloppenborg affirms that the resemblance of Q to the canonical Gospels allows it to be considered literarily as an instructional biography of Jesus, and theologically as an early Gospel, justifying the commonly used name "Sayings Gospel Q".

The most interesting outcome of Kloppenborg's presentation of Q follows in his discussion of its unexpected, and somewhat controversial, geographical, social and theological setting. Geographically, he amplifies the view of the scholars who argue for Galilean provenance, from the area around the Sea of Galilee. The author of Q1, and probably Q2 also, was a low-level scribe serving as a legal clerk for the generally illiterate inhabitants of the rural towns and villages of this area. Although there are no direct quotations from the Bible, his writing shows some familiarity with Hebrew Scripture, especially with the instructional style of Wisdom literature and with the prophetic style of Deuteronomy. He promotes the 'kingdom of heaven', while warning of imminent eschatological judgment. He is outstanding for his omission of the passion of Jesus and its salvific significance, and for his negative attitudes towards 'this generation', the Pharisees, Jerusalem and the Temple institution.

In the final part of his study, Kloppenborg discusses the influence of theological bias on the interpretation of literary analysis, and in particular the instinctive rejection of a suggestion, current in the 1990's, that the scribe who wrote Q was influenced by Cynic philosophy. While not advancing this view, he challenges theological interference of this kind, by arguing that Cynic philosophers flourished in Gadara and Tyre may have made inroads into Galilean society at the time of Jesus. In other words, the 'Cynic hypothesis' was being unfairly dismissed by scholars because of theological prejudice.

One suspects that these scholars had failed to articulate their theological rationale clearly. Far from being an instinctive reaction arising from personal theological prejudice, the opposition may have been based on a theological understanding of the Jewish people at the time we are considering. Although there would have been commercial interactions, the Jews of Galilee and elsewhere would have maintained strict social separation from the gentiles, in order to adhere to Biblical laws and customs, especially to the laws of purity. Strongly committed to uphold these obligations, the idea that a particular pagan philosophy gained traction amongst the Jews does not make sense. Although the situation changed dramatically with Jesus and the apostolic preaching of unity in Christ, there is no evidence for subsequent compromise with pagan religion or philosophy. In fact, any attempt to compromise was vehemently opposed by the Early Church.

Nevertheless, the seriousness of the suggestion that the scribe of Q was influenced by Cynic philosophy cannot be denied. We therefore propose it is interpreted as a pointer to some radical counterpart in the diverse religious landscape of the Jews. In other words, there is indeed a need to look harder, within contemporary Jewish society, to explain the rural, ascetic, peripatetic, anti-establishment, working-class orientation of the scribal author of Q. At this point another scholar, Simon J. Joseph, has taken up the challenge.

‘Q’ and Qumran

In his *Jesus, Q and the Dead Sea Scrolls*,[2] Joseph sets the scene for his probe into the Jewish background of Q by comparing Q with the Qumran library and finding many general similarities. In his chapter on “Reconstructing Q”, Joseph covers much the same ground as Kloppenborg, but he does so with a compelling emphasis on the Judaean ethnicity of the author of Q and the community he represents. His point is that Galilean provenance is only one possibility among many and may be only one aspect of the story of origins. Apart from his explanation of Jesus’ ‘Son of Man’ title as a post-Easter accretion, which does not adequately explain its pattern of use in the New Testament (see later), Joseph’s discussion succeeds in establishing Judaea, Jerusalem and the Essenes as significant components of Q’s provenance. After a useful update on the debate about “Qumran, the Essenes and the Dead Sea Scrolls”, Joseph concludes that “The Qumran-Essene hypothesis remains the dominant solution to the identity of the Qumran community and those who collected, copied, and composed the (sectarian) Dead Sea Scrolls. The Qumran community was a part of a larger Essene movement that was related to and influenced by the early Enoch traditions. These interrelated movements and traditions were characterized by a heightened sense of eschatology, apocalypticism and messianism”.[3]

In the light of the Essene expectation for two messiahs, priestly and royal, Joseph moves on to consider Q’s account of John the Baptist, which would be the oldest witness to John in the New Testament. Whilst affirming John’s affinity with the Essenes, but without specifically identifying him with the Qumran community, Joseph makes the case for reading Q’s presentation of John as the anticipated priestly messiah (of Aaron), who atones for the people. Not only does this interpretation place Jesus in the role of the expected royal messiah (of Israel), but more significantly it implies that John and Jesus performed equal and complementary messianic roles in a way that was not acceptable to the Early Church, which then had to clarify John’s subordination to Jesus. One insurmountable objection to this interpretation is that John’s Baptism did not, per se, bring about the atonement and forgiveness for sins, as stated unequivocally by Josephus (*Antiquities* 18.117). Another messianic model must be sought to explain the relationship of John and Jesus.

The final two chapters in Joseph’s book home in on literary parallels between Q and the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran, in particular between Q’s instructional verses and the 4Qinstruction, Q’s Beatitudes (Q 6:20-23) and 4QBeatitudes (4Q525) and, most compellingly, between Jesus’ reply to the Baptist, when the latter questioned his messianic credentials (Q 7:22-23), and “4QApocalypse messianique” (4Q521), which is actually composed like a psalm, and is dated to the formative period of the Essene new-covenant community (150-100 BCE). The comparison allows Simon Joseph to affirm that the scribe of Q “represents an individual intimately familiar with the wisdom traditions of Israel, but adapting them to the eschatological context”.[4] His thorough analysis of the direct and unique relationship between Q 7:22 and 4Q521 allows him to go further and postulate literary dependence of the former on the latter, composed as an authoritative assertion of Jesus’ messianic credentials.

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[2] Simon J. Joseph, *Jesus, Q and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (WUNT series 2, vol. 333), Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012.

[3] S. J. Joseph, *Jesus, Q and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 129.

[4] S. J. Joseph, *Jesus, Q and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 162.

Although Joseph's study has focused on correlating Q and the Dead Sea Scrolls, the author is not identifying the Q scribe with the Qumran community in particular, but rather with the broader Essenic movement, for which the Qumranic literature, which he refers to, provides the best available evidence. This work brings him to conclude that "There is a need for further research on the relationship(s) between this broader Essene movement and the early Jewish tradition. Such research could not only provide a new lens for looking at the Christology of Q, it could also provide the cultural context within which to locate the "historical Jesus," his spiritual development, the early socio-political formation of the early Jesus movement, and the origins and background of early Jewish Christianity".[5]

Joseph reaches very similar conclusions in his more recent publication 'The Quest for the "Community of Q"': "The present exploration of Q's literary and sociological profile has not required delimiting its provenance to Galilean scribal-life but has yielded different results. Theoretically, Q could have been composed and circulated by a Judean scribe in Galilee, a Galilean disciple in Judea collaborating with a Judean scribe, and/or a Galilean scribe collaborating with a Judean follower of Jesus".[6] Furthermore, "Q's key themes and traditions… are particularly consistent with an early Judean provenance of themes and traditions, and represent literary-social intersections and analogical *comparanda* with Essene motifs, indicating that the scribes responsible for Q were more familiar, conversant and inter-related with the Palestinian Essene movement than we have previously recognized".[7] In brief, Joseph has now narrowed down the 'Q community', i.e. the home of the Q scribe, to the presence of the broader Essene movement in Galilee and in Judea.

According to Josephus, members of the Essene movement were accustomed to travel to other Essene communities in the country, where they could depend on full and free hospitality (*Jewish War* 2.124-125). It is therefore quite possible for an Essene scribe from Judaea to be found in Galilee and a scribe from Galilee to be found in Judea, and for the same scribe to work with the disciples of Jesus, or even to become a disciple of John and/or of Jesus. One wonders if the Q scribe is not speaking of himself in Q 9:57: "A scribe approached and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus answered him, "Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head"." (Mt 8:19). In stressing the costs of discipleship, Jesus was not only hinting at the lack of home comforts, but showing, perhaps, an awareness of the hospitality enjoyed by members of the Essene Party. Essenes would have been recognizable by their plain and worn linen clothing (*Jewish War* 2.126).

Whatever the case, this is the point at which the research we have presented in *The Essenes of Mount Arbel and Jerusalem*[8] can help to locate the author more precisely. We have identified the remains of a large Essene settlement in the Arbel cave village, carved into the cliffs of Mount Arbel in Eastern Galilee, and a sister community on Mount Zion in Jerusalem.[9] The Essene scribe who wrote Q could have been resident at Mt. Arbel, before moving to Jerusalem with the disciples of Jesus, or he could have been resident in Jerusalem,

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[5] S. J. Joseph, *Jesus, Q and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 188.

[6] Simon J. Joseph, 'The Quest for the "Community of Q": Mapping Q Within the Social, Scribal, and textual Landscape(s) of Second Temple Judaism', *Harvard Theological Review*, 111:1 (2018), 90-114, quote from 114.

[7] S. J. Joseph, 'The Quest for the "Community of Q"', 114.

[8] John Ben-Daniel, *The Essenes of Mount Arbel and Jerusalem: Origins, History and Influence*, Qumranica Mogilanensia Series, vol 20, Mogilany, Krakow: Enigma Press, 2023.

[9] J. Ben-Daniel, *The Essenes of Mount Arbel and Jerusalem*, 7-36; 37-72. The same articles have been published in *The Qumran Chronicle*, vol 30, nos. 1-4, 2022; 43-117.

before travelling to the Jordan Valley and Galilee to report on the ministries of John and Jesus. As these are precisely the combinations mentioned above by Simon Joseph, our identification of these Essene settlements may provide some confirmation for his careful analysis of the literary data. However, as a check, it is desirable to locate the Q scribe, and the Q community, independently of Joseph's study.

'Q' and the Parables of Enoch (*1Enoch* 37-71)

Since our work has also identified the Arbel cave village as the home of the author of the Parables of Enoch (*1En* 37-71),[10] one way to verify, independently, that the scribe of Q was a member of the same community, or of the sister community in Jerusalem, would be check for specific allusions and parallels to the Parables of Enoch in the Q document. Accepting the consensus on the date of the Parables of Enoch at around the turn of the era (c. 1 CE), we argue in our book that its messianic prophecy was not initially circulated among the public, but only among Essene members and their trusted guests and followers.[11] More than anyone else at the time, the Essenes and their scribes would have had a vital interest in its fulfilment by John and Jesus and, as we have discussed in the book, it is quite possible that John the Baptist was a member of the Essene community in Jerusalem or nearby,[12] and that Jesus may have been a visitor to the Arbel community in his teens.[13] Granted that both Jesus and John were aware of their complementary roles in the fulfilment of this messianic prophecy, it is fair to expect that every Essene scribe would also have been familiar with the same prophecy, which had been communally recited and contemplated for at least 25 years. Furthermore, every Essene scribe would not only have been enthusiastic for its fulfilment—for the success of John and Jesus—but would also have had considerable insight into the minds of its protagonists, placing the scribe in a good position to interpret, shape and record their words and deeds. As an Essene scribe familiar with the Parables of Enoch, he would also have known that the phrase 'son of man', occurring 17 times in the text, referred to the human figure at the centre of its messianic prophecy, otherwise called the Anointed One or Messiah (2 times), Chosen One (16 times) and Righteous One (2 times).

So, returning to the search for traces of the Parables of Enoch in Q, the most obvious starting point is Q's frequent use of "Son of Man" as the title that Jesus employs when referring to himself and his messianic ministry of salvation and judgment. Its association with the final judgment distinguishes its use in the Parables of Enoch from its earlier use in the book of Daniel (Dn 7:9-28). It is significant that "Son of Man" is the only title used by Q for Jesus, and that he uses it without explanation, on the assumption, perhaps, that his disciples knew the Parables of Enoch and were informed about its messianic significance.

There has been some debate on whether the title "Son of Man" was added secondarily, as a post-Easter elaboration, but this is untenable in the context of Jesus' evident preference for this enigmatic title. Not only was "Son of Man" unknown previously as a title for the Messiah (it appears to have been the innovation of Jesus himself, based on its referent

[10] J. Ben-Daniel, *The Essenes of Mount Arbel and Jerusalem*, 89-120.

[11] J. Ben-Daniel, *The Essenes of Mount Arbel and Jerusalem*, 154-156, 163-164. Not only did the Parables of Enoch contain damning threats and warnings against the most powerful leaders of the Jews, but also the Essenes were sworn to withhold their teachings from outsiders (Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.141). The eventual realization that John and Jesus were fulfilling this messianic prophecy would have increased the determination of the authorities to eliminate them, together with the text of the prophecy (cf. Mk 14:61-64).

[12] J. Ben-Daniel, *The Essenes of Mount Arbel and Jerusalem*, 132-140.

[13] J. Ben-Daniel, *The Essenes of Mount Arbel and Jerusalem*, 140-145.

in the Parables of Enoch), but also because its use as an everyday idiom (for 'a man') helped to create ambiguity and thus preserve the so-called 'messianic secret', upon which Jesus himself insisted. It is highly unlikely that, after Easter, his followers would retrofit Jesus with a title that would only serve to obscure his messianic identity, and this would explain why, according to the New Testament, his disciples used other titles for Jesus, such as Son of God, Christ, Lord or Saviour, but never "Son of Man"—the one used by Jesus himself.

In the same way Q's liberal use of "Son of Man" as the title used by Jesus corresponds to its frequent use and messianic significance in the Parables of Enoch, so also Q's avoidance of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus indicates familiarity with that Enochic prophecy. Although arguments from silence are usually the least persuasive, Q's failure to mention the Passion and Resurrection, and its salvific effects, is more than a little odd and can be best explained as a reflection of the silence on these events in the Parables of Enoch. As they were not a part of the prophetic script, Q clearly felt no need to mention them, or worse, he may have felt obliged not to mention them. According to the scenario prophesied in the Parables of Enoch, the Messiah saves the righteous and judges the wicked in the same single operation, as a farmer separates the wheat from the chaff (cf. Q 3:16b-17). Messianic salvation and judgment are not described as two successive operations, separated by the death and Resurrection of the divine agent, and for this reason these events may have been deliberately omitted by the scribe of Q, whose writing moves on to warn of a sudden and dramatic judgment in the near future, as envisaged in that prophecy. In his dramatic depiction of judgment, as the sudden removal of the wicked by mysterious means, just as in the days of Lot and the destruction of Sodom, Q accurately reflects the expectations of John the Baptist, and raises the suspicion he may have been a disciple of John before becoming a follower of Jesus. This would also have the virtue of explaining why Q starts his account with John's mission and highlights its connection to that of Jesus.

Related to Q's warnings of impending eschatological judgment is his comparison of the coming of the Son of Man in judgment to the suddenness of the flood in the days of Noah (Q 17:23-24). Although this comparison could have been evoked by the Biblical context (Gen 6–9) and its elaboration in *1Enoch* 6–11 (esp. 10,1-3), *1Enoch* 89:1-9, or *1Enoch* 106–107, it is more likely to have been inspired by the lengthy passage in the Book of Parables, where the two judgments are juxtaposed, that of the flood in the past (*1En* 65:1–69:1) and that of the Son of Man in the future (*1En* 62–63, 69:26-29). Since the Noachic material is generally regarded as an interpolation into the original, stand-alone text of the Parables, Q's comparison with the flood in Q 17:23-24 indicates contact with the later, interpolated text. Assuming the interpolation was added when the Book of Parables was integrated into the compilation nowadays called *1 Enoch*, we can infer that Q is more or less contemporary with the *1 Enoch* collection, making Q our first known witness to this new edition of the Parables. In his commentary on the Parables, George Nickelsburg concurs: "Our earliest evidence for the Noah material in the Parables appears to be the middle of the first century C.E. The parallel between "the days of Noah" and "the days of the Son of Man" in the "Q" tradition in Matt 24:37-39 || Luke 17:26-27 points to the Parables in a form that included the Noachic interpolations".[14]

Q's image of "the Son of Man sitting on the throne of his glory" (Q 22:28-30, as in Mt 19:28) is another expression directly and uniquely traceable to the judgment scene in the

[14] George W.E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch Chapters 37–82*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012; 279.

Parables of Enoch (*1En* 61:8; 62:2,35; 69:27,29), confirming that Q was familiar with this messianic prophecy. Of note, the parallel version in Luke (Lk 22:28-30) does not contain this description of the Son of Man seated on his glorious throne in judgment, although it does mention the twelve Apostles seated on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. The absence of the messianic ruler's glorious throne in Luke's version is odd and indicates that it was Matthew who followed Q's original script more closely. It appears that Luke has deliberately edited this passage to omit its reference to "the Son of Man seated on his throne of glory".

The reasons for Luke's editing are contained in a perceptive article by Chaim Milikowski entitled 'Which Gehenna? Retribution and Eschatology in the Synoptic Gospels and in Early Jewish Texts'.[15] In this paper, Milikowski shows that, in contrast to the eschatological scheme of Matthew, Luke's eschatology has no place for a general resurrection on a day of judgment, but instead conforms to the notion of a resurrection of the just:

> "It is also worth comparing Luke 10,10-15 with Matt 10,10:14-15 and 11,20-26, passages which deal with denunciations of wicked cities. All the relevant verses in Matthew refer to the 'day of judgment' when these cities will be punished. The two denunciations in Luke disagree with Matthew and also with each other: one has 'that day' with the referent being the coming of the kingdom of God and the other simply 'judgment'. Luke rejected the phrase 'day of judgment' because it implies a single day of judgment for everyone, not a post-mortem judgment, which is of course a prerequisite if retribution is a function of the souls immediately after death".[16]

After comparing the two Gospels for differences in eschatological beliefs, Milikowski summarizes them as follows:

> "In Luke then, we find explicit mention of 1) an immediately post-mortem reward and punishment, and 2) the resurrection of the just. Man is thus faced with an immediate post-mortem judgment. After this judgment, the wicked are sent to hell (called in Luke either Hades or Gehenna) while the righteous enter Paradise from which they are resurrected with Jesus at the time of his Coming."
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> "Matthew on the other hand, knows of 1) a general day of judgment, 2) a general resurrection, and 3) a corporeal Gehenna: there is no indication that he knew of either reward or punishment in any intermediate state immediately after death. Thus, according to Matthew, after the general resurrection comes the great day of judgment, and only then will Gehenna receive the wicked for retribution. This scheme follows the early Jewish pattern very closely, only Matthew adds that the resurrection and judgment are dependent upon the Coming of Jesus."
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> "Note how internally consistent each Gospel is. Though each made use of various and sundry sources, the authors of the Gospels, especially Luke, shaped and changed these sources so they would conform with their belief system".[17]

Apart from their general importance, Milikowski's findings have considerable significance for the interpretation of at least some of the differences between Matthew's and Luke's versions of Q. They also raise the suspicion that Luke may have omitted entire sections of Q, in order to 'airbrush' the day of judgment out of his Gospel. One such passage is the 'Judgment of the Nations' described in Mt 25:31-46, which is typical of Q in its

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[15] Chaim Milikowski, 'Which Gehenna? Retribution and Eschatology in the Synoptic Gospels and in Early Jewish Texts', *New Testament Studies*, vol. 34, 1988; 238-249.

[16] C. Milikowski, 'Which Gehenna?', 243.

[17] C. Milikowski, 'Which Gehenna?', 244.

reference to the final Coming of the Son of Man in glory (using the same expression as in Mt 19:28), on the 'day of judgment', to separate, conclusively, the righteous and the wicked. Like many of Q's narratives it also employs agricultural metaphors with good effect. It also finalizes the theme of eschatological reversal in favour of the lower strata of society, and against the self-seeking rich. Although this passage has many of Q's characteristics, it is not attributed to Q because Luke has omitted it completely. Nevertheless, knowing that Luke has no place for the 'day of judgment' in his eschatology, and has shaped his writings to exclude it, there is a strong case for including it in Q's portfolio, in spite of Luke's omission. Other 'Matthew only' passages may have been excluded by Luke for the same reason.

So, returning to the evidence for Q's acquaintance with the Parables of Enoch, this passage on the final judgment (Mt 25:31-46) is highly relevant, for it is well recognized to have been significantly influenced by the Parables of Enoch.[18] It is also recognized to be an earlier source reworked by the Matthean scribe.[19] With or without it, the evidence presented above for Q's familiarity with the Parables of Enoch, though incomplete,[20] is sufficient to make the point: Q was from the same non-Qumranic Essene group as the author of the Parables of Enoch and seems to have been well acquainted with this messianic prophecy. It is therefore to be expected that he interpreted and described the missions of the Baptist and Jesus as the fulfilment of that prophecy.[21] If accepted, the messianic prophecy expressed in the Parables of Enoch should now replace the dual messianic model of the Dead Sea Scrolls, based on the expectation for a priestly and a royal messiah, as the closest parallel to the complementary missions of John the Baptist and Jesus Son of Man.

The Social Background of the Q Scribe

As independent confirmation of Simon Joseph's hypothesis, which situates Q in an Essene environment that shares both Judean and Galilean perspectives, our work has argued that the Q scribe was familiar with the Parables of Enoch, whose provenance we have traced to an Essene settlement in the Arbel cave village, at Mt. Arbel near the Sea of Galilee, which flourished during the late Second Temple period.[22] This settlement had close connections to the Essene community established in Jerusalem during the reign of Herod the Great (37–4 BCE), in the area now called Mt. Zion.

The Q scribe could therefore have been a member of the Essene community at Mt. Arbel, who later moved to Jerusalem or, alternatively, he could have been a member of the community in Jerusalem, who travelled first to the Jordan Valley to hear John the Baptist, and then to Galilee to follow Jesus Son of Man. Near the Sea of Galilee, he would have been welcomed as a guest by the Essenes of Mt. Arbel.

In deciding between these two possibilities, the following observations must be taken into account: the Q scribe's informed diatribe against the Pharisees *en masse* (they were not

[18] Cf. Leslie Walck, 'The Son of Man in the Parables of Enoch and the Gospels', *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man*, ed. G. Boccaccini, Grand Rapids MI/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2007; 328-331, 'The Parables of Enoch and the Synoptic Gospels', *Parables of Enoch: A Paradigm Shift*, eds. D. Bock and J.H. Charlesworth, London/New York: Bloomsbury, 2013; 257-258.

[19] Leslie Walck, *The Son of Man in the Parables of Enoch and in Matthew*, London/New York: Bloomsbury, 2011; 194-203, 215-221; Grant Macaskill, 'Matthew and the Parables of Enoch', *A Paradigm Shift*, 218-220.

[20] For a comprehensive comparison and list of parallels, see Simon J. Joseph, *The Nonviolent Messiah: Jesus Q, and the Enochic Tradition*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014; 145-165.

[21] For further evidence of this fulfilment by John the Baptist and Christ the Son of Man, see J. Ben-Daniel, *The Essenes of Mount Arbel and Jerusalem*, 121-170.

[22] J. Ben-Daniel, *The Essenes of Mount Arbel and Jerusalem*, 89-120.

so numerous in Galilee), his negative attitude concerning Jerusalem and the Temple (probably a resident at some stage), his personal interest in John the Baptist and the relationship between John and Jesus (reveals sympathy for John as a fellow Judaean, or even a member of the same community), and above all his total silence on the activities of Jesus and his fishermen disciples upon the Sea of Galilee. This last point suggests the Q scribe had a fear of water and an aversion to sea travel, which would have been unusual in someone brought up by the lake or living nearby (bathing in the lake was effective in cleansing from ritual impurity). As noted by various scholars, the profusion of rural and agricultural imagery in Q suggests the scribe had a rural upbringing, though this could have been either in Galilee or in Judaea. Cumulatively, these observations favour the second possibility: the Q scribe was raised in a rural Judaean village before joining the Essene community in Jerusalem, where he received a comprehensive scribal education.

After his sojourn in Galilee, the Q scribe returned to Jerusalem where he joined the other disciples of Jesus and eventually wrote the Q document (c. 50-60 CE). This was only one of his contributions to the nascent Church, but we should not discount other contributions of a literary and scribal nature.

Naming the Q Scribe

The postulated Q source is defined as the content that is common to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, but is not found in that of Mark. Above we suggested that at least one pericope in Matthew's Gospel, "the Judgment of the Nations" (Mt 25:31-46), appears to have been written by Q, but was rejected by the author of Luke's Gospel, because of differing beliefs about the final judgment. It is highly probable that there are other passages in the Gospel of Matthew, 'the Parable of the Weeds' (Mt 13:24-30, 36-43) for example, that can also be understood as the work of the Q scribe, but rejected by Luke for the same reason.[23] It would therefore be reasonable to assert that the Q material in Matthew's Gospel is more extensive and original than it is in Luke's Gospel, for Luke censored and removed the aspects that he did not agree with. The Q material forms a more significant part of Matthew's Gospel than previously recognized, not only quantitatively, but also qualitatively according to Ulrich Luz, who identifies the centrality of final judgment, Son of Man Christology and conflict with Israel as common theological themes, and then concludes, "Between Q and the Gospel of Matthew there is not only a linguistic and theological continuity but also a sociological and historical one".[24]

Although, "there was, as far as we know, no challenge in early Christian times to the Matthean authorship of the First Gospel",[25] there are good reasons for doubting that Matthew's Gospel was written by the apostle whose name, in Greek, was '*Mattaios* the tax-collector.' His name is mentioned only twice in the Gospel, once in a description of his call to apostleship (Mt 9:9) and again in a list of the twelve (Mt 10:3). More suspiciously, the

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[23] In *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary* (Eng. trans. James E. Crouch, Hermenea Series, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2007) 42, n. 169, Ulrich Luz lists several other passages with a strong affinity to Q: Mt 13:41; 16:28; 24:30; 25:31. Keeping in mind these passages could also have been written by the Q scribe, but rejected by Luke, Luz describes them as follows, "Matthew has created four new Son of Man sayings that speak of the future judgment of the Son of Man. As in Q, with Matthew also the words of Jesus are at the same time those of the future World Judge", op. cit. 42.

[24] Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 49.

[25] Quoted from W.D. Davies and Dale. C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Matthew*, Vol.1, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988; 14.

description of his call by Jesus seems to have been copied from that of Levi, Son of Alphaeus, as recounted in Mark (Mk 2:14), for it is unlikely they are the same person.[26] The aim of this substitution would have been to highlight the apostolic credentials of *Mattaios* and confirm his authority to write the Gospel to which his name is attached. However, if *Mattaios* were the author, he would have described his own call-up, without stooping to copy Mark (Mk 2:14). Also, as an eyewitness himself, he would not have needed to include a second-hand account like Mark's in his Gospel. So, the impression conveyed is that *Mattaios* the tax-collector was not the author, but was identified as such at a later stage in the redaction of the Gospel, by matching the name tag on an early manuscript with an apostle of the same name in the text.[27]

In the meantime, though not mentioned in this Gospel, a disciple with the same name in Hebrew/Aramaic (*Matityahu/Mattiyah* in Hebrew, or *Mattiya* in Aramaic) had been elected as an apostle to replace Judas the betrayer, because he was an eyewitness of the events from the beginning (Acts 1:21-26). In Greek his name is rendered as *Mattias*, differing very slightly from that of *Mattaios* the tax collector. Could there have been some confusion,[28] and the apostle called Matthew originally denoted *Mattias*, rather than *Mattaios* the tax collector? We suggest there was.

Firstly, *Mattias* was an eyewitness from the beginning (Acts 1:21-22), which would make him better qualified to write a Gospel than *Mattaios* the tax-collector, whose call by Jesus is described relatively late, after the other apostles (Mt 9:9; cf. 4:18-22). Secondly, unlike Joseph (Justus) Barsabbas, the author of Acts saw no need to provide further identification of *Mattias*' name—no patronym, Latin name or nickname—implying that he was already well known to the readers (Acts 1:23). Thirdly, it appears from later, external sources that the author of Matthew's Gospel was a trained scribe.[29]

In a famous quote from Papias in the *Church History* of Eusebius, we read that the author of Matthew's Gospel wrote a 'sayings document' in Aramaic, which was then translated into Greek by various hands: *"Matthew compiled the sayings in the Aramaic language and everyone translated them as well as he could"* (H.E. III. 39.16).[30] In another report by Eusebius, from an unnamed source, Matthew's writing is described as a Gospel: *"Matthew had begun by preaching to the Hebrews, and when he made up his mind to go to others*

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[26] It was very rare for a person to have two first names in Hebrew, Levi and Matityahu in this case, cf. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017; 108-109.

[27] Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 112. It should also be said that a Gospel authored by a tax-collector would not have been acceptable to a Jewish audience, given that the witness of tax-collector was not even accepted in court, due to their reputation for dishonesty and fraud. These negative attitudes seem to have persisted in the Early Church, judging from the warning at Mt. 18:17 (cf. John R. Donohue, 'Tax Collectors and Sinners: An attempt at Identification', *CBQ*, Vol. 33, No. 1, 1971; 41, 57-58).

[28] A patronym, or nickname such as 'tax collector', was added precisely to prevent confusion when there were two or more people in the same social group, cf. Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 107.

[29] In general, scribes were lawyers and judges familiar with the law, and would have avoided tax-collectors even more keenly than the Jewish populace. One should not assume that these two professions were exchangeable, such that a scribe would become a tax-collector, or vice versa.

[30] Quoted from Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, Eng. trans. G.A. Williamson, London: Penguin Books, 1989; 104. The present writer shares the view of Ulich Luz: "If we want to take seriously the testimony of Papias, the only alternative is to understand it as a tradition he takes over and to interpret it in his original statement as referring to an earlier collection of Jesus' "logia", perhaps to the Sayings source, Q" (*Matthew 1-7*, 46).

too, he committed his own Gospel to writing in his native tongue, so that for those with whom he was no longer present the gap left by his departure was filled by what he wrote" (H.E. III. 24.6).[31]

With this additional information, we propose the following explanation: the original 'Sayings Gospel' in Aramaic was circulated at a fairly early date and tagged, in Aramaic, as the Gospel of *Mattiya* (Aramaic for Matthew).[32] When the text was subsequently translated into Greek for the first time, the author's name, *Mattiya*, was translated into *Mattaios*, the form associated with the tax-collector and listed among the twelve apostles in the Gospel (Mt 10:3). However, for the reasons given above, we propose the real author of the 'Sayings Gospel' was the apostle *Mattias*, who is not mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew, but only in the Acts of the Apostles.[33]

A fuller profile of *Mattias* can now be obtained on the basis that he wrote the 'Sayings Gospel' mentioned by Papias and reported by Eusebius. Although this was clearly not the completed Gospel, for it was in Aramaic and the completed Gospel was in Greek, it was undeniably used as a source. Modern research identifies only three main sources of Matthew's Gospel: the 'Sayings Gospel' called Q and written by the Q scribe,[34] most of the Gospel written by Mark, and a later component written in good Greek by an unknown author/redactor ('special M'). At this point Ockham's razor comes into play, prohibiting the multiplication of literary entities and prompting the identification of the 'Sayings Gospel' called Q with the original 'Sayings Gospel' written by the apostle *Mattias*.[35] *Mattias* is therefore the Q scribe.

Mattias, then, was not only an apostle, but also an Essene scribe from Jerusalem, who would have introduced Essene practices, discipline, literature and eschatological worldview into the early Christian community. The first Christian church was a neighbour of the Essene community on Mt. Zion and may have shared the same property.[36] The presence of this

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[31] Quoted from Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, 86.

[32] Or Matityahu, if in Hebrew. To prevent confusion, and the invention of different titles for the same work (for which there is no evidence), Martin Hengel argued that, from an early date, written works circulated with individual labels indicating title and author; cf. Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 536.

[33] It should be noticed that the mix-up, here, is explained by an inaccurate Greek translation of the ascription in Aramaic, and this is consistent with the existence of an original Aramaic version of the Sayings Gospel, as stated by Papias and Eusebius. Much effort has been dedicated to refuting the existence of an original Aramaic version, but it seems to ignore the slow evolution of Q from a 'Sayings Gospel' in Aramaic (c. 50-60 CE), up to a lengthy composition in Greek (c. 80-85 CE), whose apostolic and authoritative origin was indeed the 'Sayings Gospel' (cf. John S. Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of The Sayings Gospel*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000; 72-80).

[34] 'Sayings Gospel' is the label applied to Q by John S. Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q*, 403.

[35] See n. 30 above, quoting Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 46. See also Davies and Allison, *Commentary*, Vol. 1, 17: "An early form of Q could have been both apostolic and composed in Hebrew or Aramaic, and a later form of it taken up into Matthew. Certainly the conjecture… gives us a reason for what is otherwise without explanation, namely, the association of the First Gospel with the relatively obscure apostle Matthew. To be sure, we are, as indicated, trading here in the realm of speculation, Nevertheless, the proposal has the great virtue of taking seriously the external evidence while at the same time being consistent with the conclusion of many modern scholars. It could very well be correct".

[36] Rainer Riesner, 'Jesus, the Primitive Community and the Essene Quarter of Jerusalem', *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. J.H. Charlesworth, Anchor Bible Reference Library, New York: Doubleday, 1992; 198-234; Bargil Pixner, 'Mount Zion, Jesus and Archaeology', *Jesus and Archaeology*, ed. J.H. Charlesworth, Grand Rapids MI/Cambridge UK: Eerdmans, 2006; 309-322; Pixner, *Paths of the Messiah, And Sites of the Early Church from Galilee to Jerusalem*, ed. R. Riesner, Eng. trans. Keith Myrick, Sam and Miriam Randall, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010; 192-219, 369-79.

accomplished Essene scribe at the heart of the Early Church would explain how the apostle John, Son of Zebedee and younger brother of James, learnt basic scribal skills and acquainted himself with the Essene library, including *1 Enoch*, *Jubilees* and the *Temple Scroll*. These skills would have equipped him, in later life, to establish a scribal manuscript-copying school (the so-called 'Johannine school') in Ephesus (c. 70-80 CE) and, while exiled on the Isle of Patmos (c. 95-96 CE), to write his divinely revealed prophecy (The Apocalypse, or Revelation, of St. John) in the apocalyptic style, which is characteristic of Essene compositions (especially *1 Enoch*).[37]

Mattias would also have been the Church's apostle to the Essenes, preaching to his fellow members in their community on Mt. Zion and bringing many to baptism, including priests (Acts 2:41; 6:7). Before leaving Jerusalem to preach elsewhere, perhaps to other Essene communities, he wrote his 'Sayings Gospel' in Aramaic and left it with the Church to disseminate.[38] How his life ended is not known, although it would be unusual for such a productive member of the Jerusalem Church to have died without a mention. Josephus reports that James, the Head of the Jerusalem Church and brother of Jesus, was stoned along with some companions, in 62 CE (*Ant* 20.200). We dare to suggest that the apostle *Mattias* was one of James's companions in martyrdom.

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September 2024

[37] For further discussion, see John and Gloria Ben-Daniel, *Saint John and the Book of Revelation: From Essenes to End-Times*, Jerusalem: Beit Yochanan, 2019; 43-91.

[38] Our interpretation, in parentheses, of the information relayed by Eusebius: "*Matthew had begun by preaching to the Hebrews* (the Essenes on Mt. Zion), *and when he made up his mind to go to others too* (other Essene communities), *he committed his own Gospel to writing* (the Q Sayings Gospel) *in his native tongue* (Aramaic), *so that for those with whom he was no longer present* (the Jerusalem Church) *the gap left by his departure was filled by what he wrote*" (H.E. III.24.6).