

FIRST-CENTURY SOURCES ON THE LIFE OF JESUS

Thomas A. Wayment

Any discussion of the documents that were used as source materials when the authors of the New Testament wrote, whether it be the Gospels, Acts, or Epistles, must necessarily begin with the earliest sources and work forward through history. Some later authors such as Matthew and Luke evidently used earlier written sources when writing. And even though these authors borrowed from and referred to the earlier sources available to them, they also introduced new materials into their accounts that had apparently not been recorded elsewhere. No doubt, the earliest sources would seem to have the greatest historical value, whereas later sources would appear to have been susceptible to corruption and alteration for a longer duration of time. However, if a writer introduced new materials into earlier sources at a later stage, we are not required to dismiss the historical value of those additions simply because they were added later. Rather, these later materials and additions may have the same claim to historical accuracy that the earlier sources did when they were composed (see 3 Nephi 23:7–13).

Thomas A. Wayment is an associate professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University.

This approach to the study of the New Testament texts can yield important results for how we read and understand the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles. If, for example, an author used an earlier source without abbreviating or altering it, then we can suppose that the author accepted that text as a legitimate source. If, however, the author used an earlier source and altered it in any significant way, then we should consider the possibility that the new author felt hesitant to use that source in the form in which he received it. In practice, it is probable that the authors of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke relied on the Gospel of Mark when they wrote their respective accounts, and at times they were obliged to change their source while at other times they left it largely intact. Similarly, Paul and other early letter writers had to rely on earlier sources, some of which were written and others of which were transmitted orally.

Dating from the period shortly after the Jerusalem conference (AD 49), Paul's letters stand alone as the earliest surviving Christian writings. Contemporary with Paul's later epistles that were written about AD 60 is the Gospel of Mark, which was probably composed during the First Jewish Revolt against Rome (AD 66–73). Other writings, such as James and 1–2 Peter, may have been written AD 50–70, but the majority of them show very little interest in relating biographical information about Jesus and His ministry. With few exceptions, these same epistles preserve very few traces of the sources available to them or the sources they used when writing.¹ On the other hand, the letters of Paul and the Gospels both preserve to a lesser or greater extent some details of Jesus' life and therefore would have made use of similar sources when writing. Thus, the life of Jesus not only provides the focus for the text of the Gospels and some of the information found in Paul's letters, but it also provides a link to earlier sources that appear to have been very similar.

PAUL'S SOURCES

That Paul did not know of Jesus while the Savior taught in Galilee and Judea is obvious from his surviving letters. Moreover, Paul does not appear to relate any information about the life of Jesus that he may have come across in anti-Christian sources during his period as a persecutor.

In fact, in his epistle to the Galatians, he clarifies that his knowledge of the gospel came to him through “the revelation of Jesus Christ,” whereas his earthly understanding of Jesus’ life was gained through personal interviews with Peter and James the brother of Jesus (see Galatians 1:11–12, 17–19). Fortunately, Paul clearly differentiated between his sources in Galatians. He relied on oral traditions that were passed on to him through two of the men who knew Jesus best, and he received instructions directly from the Lord.

Paul’s choice of Peter and James is also telling because it shows that after his conversion to the gospel he had a desire to gain more historical information about Jesus of Nazareth. He sought that information from Jesus’ closest disciple and follower from the beginning, and from a sibling of Jesus who could relate very personal details about Him. Additionally, Paul relied on oral traditions because there were probably no written records to consult at that early date (c. AD 34).² According to Paul, the most authoritative sources of information in the decade after Jesus’ death were the eyewitnesses of the ministry. Furthermore, Paul makes it clear that before his conversion there were churches in Judea who believed in Christ who, interestingly, would also have required some access to the traditions about Jesus’ life (see Galatians 1:22–23; 1 Thessalonians 2:14).

Recently, advocates of the theory that Christianity began as a series of fractured communities that were brought together through the suppression of divergent forms of faith have championed the idea that the writings of Paul preserve only a single view among many thriving and competing forms of Christianity in the first century and that each relied on a different textual tradition. Therefore, the sources used by Paul would represent only a fraction of the sources available to early Christian communities.³ However, this hypothesis begins to crumble when we realize that Paul, our earliest Christian author, is not aware of such divergent forms of the faith. Instead, Paul denounced “false brethren” (Galatians 2:4), the “dissimulation” of Peter and Barnabas (Galatians 2:13), fellow Christians whom he refers to as “dogs” (Philippians 3:2), and “false apostles, deceitful workers” (2 Corinthians 11:13). But nowhere does Paul denounce Christians who worship a human Jesus, a semi-divine Jesus, or a form of Christianity that entirely

removes Jesus from the faith.⁴ Paul does denounce those who preach “another Jesus” and bring with them “another gospel,” but these false brethren are not advocating a human Jesus (2 Corinthians 11:4). Instead, he denounces those who try to corrupt “the simplicity that is in Christ,” which should be understood as a corruption of the doctrine and not the nature of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:3).

Another indication of the content of the sources that Paul used when writing is preserved in his sporadic references to details from the life of Jesus. For example, he taught that Jesus was crucified on a cross (see 1 Corinthians 1:23; Philippians 2:8), that He was betrayed on the night He administered the sacrament to the disciples (see 1 Corinthians 11:23–26), that He was resurrected after three days (see 1 Corinthians 15:4), that some Jews were involved in taking His life under the governor Pontius Pilate (see 1 Thessalonians 2:14–15; 1 Timothy 6:13), and that Jesus was crucified at the time of the Passover celebration (see 1 Corinthians 5:7).⁵

Mistakenly, some may assume that these details represent all that Paul knew concerning Jesus. To those who had gathered together to follow Jesus, however, such passing references invoke a more profound understanding than such a cursory reference might suggest.⁶ As examples, superficial references such as “the King Follett Discourse” or “I am going like a lamb to the slaughter” invoke not only deep feelings and emotions but also words and biographical details from the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith. The Savior’s life was deeply sacred to the first generation of Christians, and although they may not have had written records in the first two decades after His death, when they met together they discussed those details that had been taught to them by the eyewitness generation. Paul needed only to remind them of what they had discussed when he was with them!

SOURCES USED BY THE EVANGELISTS

Perhaps the most explicit mention of earlier sources in the New Testament is found in Luke’s prologue to his Gospel: “Forasmuch as *many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word*”

(Luke 1:1–2; emphasis added). Luke knew of “many” who wrote, and perhaps retold orally, the stories of Jesus’ life before his time. He also reports that these writings conform to the traditions passed on by the “eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word.” To mention such a detail explicitly betrays Luke’s uneasiness that he himself was not an eyewitness to the events that he was about to report from Jesus’ lifetime. He wanted his audience to know that his account would be in accordance with the established eyewitness tradition and the many who had also written on the subject.

Inserted into this disclaimer is a subtle hint providing the reason why Luke felt it necessary to write another account of the life of Jesus. He reports further, “It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, *to write unto thee in order*, most excellent Theophilus” (Luke 1:3; emphasis added). What Luke implies is that he has a more accurate (*akribos*) understanding and therefore intends to present the story anew “in order” (*kathexes*). Although he left the specific implications of his claim unstated, he certainly meant to indicate that (1) his account would conform with the eyewitness tradition and (2) he planned on making some changes to the order of events presented in the accounts that predated his own retelling.

For centuries Luke’s sources have remained hidden. But beginning in the eighteenth century, scholars began to realize that a genetic literary relationship existed between Luke’s Gospel and the Gospel of Mark.⁷ When compared side by side, the wording of these two Gospels is markedly similar in many instances. In other instances, there is a wide divergence in both the sequence and wording. Unfortunately, recognition of the fact that these two Evangelists (Mark and Luke) borrowed from one another does little to explain the direction of borrowing. It is possible that Luke borrowed from Mark or that Mark borrowed from Luke, although Luke’s declaration that he used sources would predispose us to think that he borrowed from Mark. The following example may further clarify the direction and nature of borrowing between the two sources.

“And they were exceedingly afraid and said to one another, ‘What kind of man is this that even the wind and sea *obeys* him?’” (Mark 4:41; author’s translation; emphasis added).

“And he said to them, ‘Where is your faith?’ But they were afraid and amazed, saying one to another, ‘What kind of man is this that he commands and even the winds and water *obey* him?’” (Luke 8:25; author’s translation; emphasis added).

Mark’s account of the story uses a plural subject (wind and sea) but a third-person singular verb (obeys), which is grammatically incorrect but nonetheless preserves the sense of the passage. Luke, on the other hand, transmits the story in nearly verbatim language but corrects the third-person singular conjugation of the verb to a plural (obey), thus preserving both the sense and grammar of the passage.⁸

Two points are evident in the above example. First, Luke corrected Mark’s wording or the wording of Mark’s source. That Mark borrowed from Luke and then corrupted his grammar and syntax would be a difficult position to maintain. Perhaps in a single instance this type of corruption would be possible, but Luke’s consistent correction of Mark’s grammar is clear evidence that Luke is later.⁹ Second, Luke almost certainly borrowed from Mark rather than a source used by Mark because of the verbatim language between the two Gospels.¹⁰ In some instances, as in the example provided above, the verbatim material suggests direct borrowing. But in other instances, the degree of verbatim overlap is less significant and may therefore result from access to a common written or oral source. The tendency in scholarship today has been to posit that if Luke used Mark as a source in some instances, then he likely used him in all instances of parallel material, even when there is very little verbatim overlap in language.

If Mark provided source material to Luke when the latter composed his Gospel, then a significant percentage of his material can be traced back to its original source. However, Luke also preserves a substantial amount of material in common with the Gospel of Matthew. Like the material he borrowed from Mark, some of the material Luke has in common with Matthew is also preserved in markedly similar language. Thus, we may logically conclude either that Luke used Matthew or vice versa or that they shared a common earlier source. Perhaps the following example will provide a clue concerning how these two Gospels are related textually:

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. (Matthew 6:24)

No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. (Luke 16:13)

In this example, there is only a single difference in wording and order for the entire twenty-seven-word phrase in Greek. Such direct overlap is consistent with direct textual borrowing, either from a similar source or one from the other.

Traditionally, the answer to this question has been to suggest a hypothetical document to which both Matthew and Luke had access. Sometimes called *Q*, an abbreviation of the German word *Quelle* (source), this hypothetical document became the subject of intense scrutiny and interest in the twentieth century.¹¹ Today, scholars are more critical of the hypothesis and any definitive conclusions that can be drawn from it; however, it remains the most accepted way to make reference to the verbatim material shared by Matthew and Luke.¹² Hypothetical sources are in reality rather useless for reconstructing the history of Christianity, because they can be made to say almost anything, their content cannot be verified, and all results based on such documents will always remain tentative.

Reference to an earlier source does not explain why Luke has the word “servant” in his account and Matthew does not. Many scholars have proposed that Luke consistently preserved the wording of *Q* more accurately while Matthew often abbreviated their common source, both unverifiable suppositions. Another solution to this complex problem is that Matthew used Luke as a source or vice versa, and that there is no prior hypothetical source *Q*. Both of these propositions are being defended with increasing frequency and vigor.¹³ It seems wise to move on to those areas where definitive answers can be reached rather than narrowly focus on a hypothetical source that can never be verified. Therefore, we should remain open to the possibility that there was a

primitive, written Gospel source used by both Matthew and Luke from which they drew sparingly and also willingly altered, thus suggesting that they were somewhat hesitant to quote freely from this source.¹⁴ Equally possible is the proposition that one borrowed from the other.

Before settling the issue, it will be important to explore whether there is a genetic literary relationship between the Gospels of Matthew and Mark. Returning to the story of the stilling of the storm, the following example demonstrates that, like the Gospel of Luke, the Gospel of Matthew also used the Gospel of Mark as a source.

“And they were exceedingly afraid and said to one another, ‘What kind of man is this that even the wind and sea *obeys* him?’” (Mark 4:41; author’s translation, emphasis added).

“The men were amazed, saying, ‘What kind of man is this that the winds and the sea *obey* him?’” (Matthew 8:27; author’s translation, emphasis added).

Similar to the parallel between the Gospels of Mark and Luke, the parallel with Matthew also shows that Mark’s incorrect grammar has been corrected but that the sense has again been preserved. Matthew also contains the verb “to be amazed,” replacing the idea that the disciples were “afraid.” The negative connotations of the disciples being afraid of Jesus are obvious, but the disciples can be respectfully amazed without any negative implications. Again, it appears that the Gospel of Matthew used the Gospel of Mark for some of its material. When seen together, it appears that the logical conclusion would be that Mark wrote first, that Matthew borrowed from Mark, and that Luke borrowed from both, as is evident in his cumbersome phrase “the disciples were afraid (from Mark) and amazed (from Matthew).” This conclusion may, however, give a false sense of security because it implies that the direction of borrowing between the three Gospels will be consistently obvious and in the same direction as the above example. Unfortunately, this is one of the most obvious and clear examples in the Gospels.

To summarize what we know today, it is quite certain that, after Paul, Mark is the earliest existing source on the life of Jesus. Subsequent to him, the authors of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke used the Gospel of Mark in many instances. Not only did they respect the

Gospel of Mark as a source for information concerning the life of Jesus, they also preserved intact most of his language. However, they often felt it necessary to reorder the sequence of events and to correct the grammar of the Gospel of Mark. Additionally, both the author of the Gospel of Matthew and that of the Gospel of Luke had access to other materials that they used when composing their accounts. These sources are difficult to trace, but hints still remain. Like Paul, these authors were strongly influenced by the written and oral traditions about Jesus, and each felt comfortable that his information was not only significant enough to warrant the writing of another Gospel but also valid enough to warrant a reordering of earlier accounts of the life of Jesus.

THE SOURCES OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

It is unfortunate that in a discussion of the sources used by the Evangelists there is no means of authenticating the sources used by the Gospel of John, or whether it was written early or late. Generally, any dating of the fourth Gospel relies on presuppositions about its doctrines or structure. And there is a weak scholarly consensus today that the Gospel of John should be dismissed as a historical source.¹⁵ Three important points might be marshaled in support of an early dating for the Gospel and its accuracy as a historical source for information on the life of Jesus. First, the author associates himself with the eyewitness tradition of John the Beloved, and although he does not explicitly mention that he is John the Beloved, a later author added a final epilogue making the connection more obvious (see John 21:24).¹⁶ Our impression of the credibility of this author is therefore at least a personal affirmation of the earliness or lateness of this Gospel and/or the traditions it contains. Second, unlike the other Gospel authors, the author of the fourth Gospel implies that he was the unnamed disciple of John the Baptist who followed Jesus early on, thus making him the earliest follower of Jesus to write a Gospel (see John 1:35–40). This suggestion might be a subtle hint left by the author to establish the authority of his work. Third, the author is definitely not in a discussion with the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), nor does he correct them in any way, as both Matthew and Luke do to the Gospel of Mark. The author relies on extensive and independent information about

Jesus, both historical narrative and the words of Jesus. Whether the date of the fourth Gospel can be ascertained or not, there is no historically compelling reason to dismiss the association that John the Beloved wrote the Gospel of John from a personal eyewitness perspective. Some evidence remains that a later editor may have introduced at least minor changes (see John 21:24–25), but that does not compromise the integrity of the core of the Gospel.

OTHER SOURCES ON THE LIFE OF JESUS

References outside the New Testament preserve some limited information about Jesus that is independent of the Gospels and Paul (Josephus, Tacitus, and Suetonius). Josephus, a Jewish author and military leader who later became a Roman sympathizer, chronicled many events from the first two centuries. Although he is patently pro-Roman in his work *War*, his later work *Antiquities* shows signs of his continued affection for his people, the Jews. Two of these sources—Tacitus and Suetonius—were written after the turn of the first century but report information from the mid-first century AD. Therefore, these sources preserve the earliest historical biographical information about Jesus outside the New Testament.

Josephus wrote: “Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works—a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.”¹⁷

Farther, “Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ.”¹⁸

Tacitus wrote: “Therefore, to scotch the rumour, Nero substituted as culprits, and punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty, a class of men, loathed for their vices, whom the crowd styled Christians.

Christus, the founder of the name, had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilatus.”¹⁹

And Suetonius recorded: “Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he expelled them from Rome.”²⁰

Although these sources amount to little more than historical recognition that Jesus lived and had followers in the first century, they are some of the earliest sources on the life of Jesus.

OTHER POTENTIAL FIRST-CENTURY SOURCES

Attempts to date other noncanonical writings as early as the Gospels in the New Testament have proven to be problematic. The most common suggestion is that the document entitled the Gospel of Thomas dates to the latter half of the first century. Its contents are clearly influenced by a deviant form of Christianity and are largely independent from the writings in the New Testament. This independence has led many to suppose that it is as early or earlier than the Gospel of Mark.²¹ The fallacy of this conclusion is that independence does not require it to be early or late but only separate from the canonical writings. Independence may equally be an argument for corruption and lateness. Therefore, the majority of scholars today are hesitant to use it as a historical source for information about Jesus of Nazareth.²²

CONCLUSION

Remarkably, the letters of Paul and the four Gospels together remain the earliest sources for information about Jesus. Informed by oral traditions and perhaps some earlier written sources, Paul and the Evangelists provide us with their understanding of Jesus beginning around AD 50 and stretching forward into the next three or four decades. Assuming that what they wrote represents what was passed on to them in the two decades after the death of Jesus, we are very close to having sources that date from the life of Jesus. No other collection of sources can make an equal claim to authenticity or originality. That is not to say that the four Gospels or the letters of Paul have not suffered corruption but only that they are our earliest sources.

Moreover, it is likely that both the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke used the Gospel of Mark as a historically reliable source.

They carefully corrected both his grammar and ordering of events, thus implying that they had access to what they felt were more accurate sources, but they maintained in most instances the wording of Jesus' teachings as Mark reported them. That Matthew and Luke relied on other sources shows that there was authoritative information about Jesus in the first century that was of similar value to the Gospel of Mark. They used these sources, whether written or oral, to rewrite Mark in a positive way. Sometime during this process, the Gospel of John also presented an account of the life of Jesus from an eyewitness standpoint, perhaps the only author in the New Testament to do so. The date when he wrote cannot be confirmed, but we have good historical reasons for trusting his information. Finally, first-century references to Jesus outside the New Testament provide some historical perspective.

All other "gospels" and accounts of the life of Jesus outside the New Testament date from the second century or later. That does not always indicate that someone writing in the second century would not have had access to reliable historical information about Jesus, but they were certainly written after the close of the New Testament record.

NOTES

1. The exception to this would be the direct borrowing that took place between the epistles of Jude and 2 Peter. Although we are uncertain of the direction of borrowing, it appears that the epistle of 2 Peter borrowed from the epistle of Jude. The reason for suspecting that 2 Peter used Jude as source is that Jude presents the material in a single sustained sermon whereas 2 Peter breaks up the material with commentary. For example, see 2 Peter 2:10–11/Jude 1:8–9 and 2 Peter 2:12–13/Jude 1:10–12.

2. The conversion of Paul most likely dates to the second year after the Resurrection (see Rainer Riesner, *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology*, trans. Doug Stott [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998], 59–74; Thomas A. Wayment, "The Birth and Death Dates of Jesus Christ," in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ: From Bethlehem through the Sermon on the Mount*, ed. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005], 383–94).

3. The two most notable advocates are John Dominic Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1998), and Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost*

Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

4. Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 136.

5. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, "Early Accounts of the Story," in *From the Last Supper through the Resurrection*, ed. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 401–21.

6. James D. G. Dunn, *Christianity in the Making: Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 173–86.

7. Heinrich J. Holtzmann is generally credited with being the first to propose what would later be termed the Synoptic theory, see *Die synoptischen Evangelien: Ihr Ursprung und geschichtlicher Charakter* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1863). Compare John S. Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 9–54, who provides the most complete discussion of the Synoptic theory.

8. The verbatim language in the passage is restricted to "one to another, 'What kind of man is this that even the wind/winds . . . obey him.'"

9. Some of the most obvious examples of Luke's corrective tendency when borrowing from Mark can be seen in Mark 5:1–20/Luke 8:26–39; Mark 5:21–43/Luke 8:40–56; Mark 9:14–29/Luke 9:37–43. At times Luke's corrective tendency has been obscured through translation because very few modern translations are willing to preserve the grammatical infelicities of the Gospel of Mark.

10. It is possible that Mark reproduced a source verbatim and therefore Luke's wording may reflect the wording of the Gospel of Mark and his source.

11. The most comprehensive treatments of the subject remain Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q*, and Robert H. Stein, *The Synoptic Problem: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1987).

12. Dunn, *Christianity in the Making*, 147–58; Hurtado, *Lord Jesus*, 217–56. For a recent survey of the hypothesis, see Thomas A. Wayment, "A Viewpoint on the Supposedly Lost Gospel Q," in *Religious Educator* 5, no. 3 (2004): 105–15.

13. See Mark Goodacre, *The Case Against Q: Studies in Markan Priority and the Synoptic Problem* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 2002); Martin Hengel, *The Four Gospels and the One Gospel of Jesus Christ* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 2000), 169–207; Michael D. Goulder, "Is Q a Juggernaut?" in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115, no. 4 (1996): 667–81.

14. I feel that the most compelling examples of borrowing are Matthew 3:7–10/Luke 3:7–9; Matthew 3:12/Luke 3:17; Matthew 6:24/Luke 16:13; Matthew 6:25–33/Luke 12:22–31; Matthew 7:1–5/Luke 6:37–42; Matthew 7:7–11/Luke 11:9–13; Matthew 8:19–22/Luke 9:57–60; Matthew 11:2–11, 16–19/Luke 7:18–19, 22–28, 31–35; Matthew 11:21–27/Luke 10:12–15, 21–22; Matthew 12:39–45/Luke 11:29–32, 24–26; Matthew 13:33/Luke 13:20–21; Matthew 24:45–51/Luke 12:42–46. Others include substantially longer lists. See John S. Kloppenborg Verbin, *Q Parallels: Synopsis, Critical Notes, and Concordance* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1988).

15. The most ardent proponent to dismiss the Gospel of John as a historical source was Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, ed. Robert A.

Kraft and Gerhard Krodel, 2d ed. (Mifflintown, PA: Sigler, 1996). A later, and quite successful, counterattack was launched by C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963).

16. That the author of the final two verses is not the same as the author of the entire Gospel is seen in the statement, "We know that *his* [i.e. John's] testimony is true" and "there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, *I suppose* that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen" (John 21:24–25, emphasis added). The "we" of verse 24 is distinct from the "I" of verse 25 and thus reveals the work of an editor or compiler.

17. Josephus, *Antiquities*, 18.63–64, trans. William Whiston, in *The Works of Josephus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987). This reference may have been massaged by a Christian scribe who was sensitive to Josephus's wording. Many scholars have suggested that the following phrases were added by a well-meaning Christian scribe, "If it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works. . . . He was [the] Christ." Josephus' second quotation is universally recognized as original.

18. Josephus, *Antiquities*, 20.200, trans. Whiston, *The Works of Josephus*.

19. Tacitus, *The Annals of Tacitus*, 15.44, in *Tacitus: Annals XIII–XVI*, trans. John Jackson, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

20. Suetonius, "The Deified Claudius," 25.4, trans. J. C. Rolfe, *Suetonius, The Lives of the Caesars*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).

21. See, for example, Stephen J. Patterson, *The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1993), 110.

22. Dunn, *Christianity in the Making*, 161–67.