Are All Gospel Synopses Biassed?

From time to time it becomes necessary to re-assess the value and usefulness of the tools one uses, for the simple reason that trends and *perspectives change,* and so the demands on the *tools change* pari passu. Among other things, we ought to be aware of the limitations and deficiencies of the research tool known as the Gospel synopsis as well as its positive merits and advantages. Merits are easy to see, but deficiencies only come to light when the tool is used in new situations and is then found wanting in some respect.

The reflections contained in this article are the result of some years spent researching in the Synoptic Question. In the course of my work I have discovered certain limitations in the existing synopses, which eventually led me to construct my own. An important stage in the clarification of my ideas was the exchange of views that took place at the Griesbach Bicentenary Colloquium at Münster in July 1976, held to commemorate the appearance of J. J. Griesbach's Synopsis as a separate volume in 1776.[1] At that Colloquium some distinguished scholars expressed their conviction that the best of the current Greek synopses, e.g. those of Huck and Aland[2], were truly neutral, and that the production of another synopsis, based on some new principle, was not only unnecessary but would in fact be a retrograde step. Others disagreed with them, and the following pages give my own reflections after mulling over what was said on that occasion. Since the Greek synopsis is the commonest tool of N.T. research, the correct appreciation of its integrity is vital for progress.

Let us first define what one means by "synopsis" and by "neutral" respectively.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary's definition of "synopsis" is not very helpful: "a summary, a conspectus"; and it defines "synoptic" as "affording a conspectus or a general survey". In this broad sense one would have to include under the term such excellent works as W. Farmer's Synopticon (1969) and R. Swanson's Horizontal Line Synopsis (1975). But for our present purposes the usage of the term will be restricted to those works which place the Greek text of the Gospels in parallel vertical columns across the page in such a way that each Gospel can be read down its own column continuously from beginning to end in its own natural order, though with certain clearly defined repetitions to enable the similar passages to be seen together, i.e. synoptically, whenever it is necessary to do so. It has also become normal to divide each Gospel into pericope units (usually with descriptive headings) both in their synoptic parallel passages and also when each Gospel goes its own way, and also to put a text critical apparatus at the foot of each page or of each pericope unit.

By "neutral" is meant firstly, that a given synopsis is fully able to show forth the merits and drawbacks of each and every hypothesis that can be credibly advanced; and secondly, and conversely, that it confers no special advantage on any one particular theory of sources. Obviously, the more neutral a synopsis can be, the greater its utility.

Now we know for a fact that the majority of synopses produced during the past two hundred years have been deliberately constructed to illustrate some particular

---

[1] J. J. Griesbach, Synopsis Evangeliorum Matthaei, Marci et Lucae ... (Halle 1776).

[2] The current Greek synopses to which reference is made in this article are A. Huck, Synopse der drei ersten Evangelien (1892, 9th ed. 1936, revised by H. Lietzmann & H. G. Opitz); and K. Aland, Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum (7th ed. 1971). The former is hereinafter referred to as Huck, and the latter as Aland.

source theory.[3] Nevertheless, the claim was made at the Münster Colloquium that the two chief Greek synopses in use today were also neutral in the above sense. For Aland's Introduction (p. 11) informs us that "the synopsis can be used, however, apart from all theories of source criticism"; and Lietzmann's Foreword to Huck's 6th edition also assures us that although the first two editions were framed to illustrate H. J. Holtzmann's Handkommentar, yet ever since the third edition of 1906 it has purged itself of this bias. The question at issue is: Granted that these synopses (and others too) have honestly aimed to be impartial – and there can be no doubt about the honesty of their intentions – is it really and truly possible for any synopsis to be neutral to *all* synoptic theories? In other words, is some bias or other inevitably introduced whichever way a synopsis may be constructed? The answer to this question remains obscure since none of the existing synopsis makers have given us any clue to their method or their reasons for the crucial decisions that they have had to take at various stages of construction.

1.

The purpose of a Gospel synopsis (apart from attempting to parallel as many pericopes as possible in the natural order of each Gospel) will normally be to aid one or more kinds of criticism, whether text or source or form or redaction or historical criticism. The over-all purpose once decided, the synopsis maker must then take note of two matters: 1. He must have a clear grasp of the simple mathematics of paralleling three documents; and 2. he must make himself aware of the main options that will reveal themselves as soon as he comes to grips with the idiosyncrasies of the Synoptic Gospels.[4]

The *mathematics of paralleling* the three Synoptic Gospels is simple enough. There are six and only six different ways of setting three documents side by side. In terms of our three Gospels, we are free to set up our synopsis in any one of

---

[3] H. Greeven, The Gospel Synopsis from 1776 to the Present Day: J. J. Griesbach. Synoptic and Text Critical Studies, 1776–1976, to be published in the Monograph Series of the Stud. N.T. Soc. in 1978.

[4] There is no room in this article to discuss other important preliminary questions; we can merely indicate them and suggest provisional answers. These are:

(i) The problem of the demarcation of the limits of each pericope unit, which can vitally affect the layout. In general, the main criteria would seem to be inner coherence and the use made by other Gospels.

(ii) The problem of deciding what is parallel and what is not, e.g. the Lukan and Matthean Nazareth Visits, and the Calling of the Four Fishermen. Doubtful cases can be cumbersome and misleading.

(iii) The question of the text to be used. Any critical text will do, but strictly speaking it is only necessary to include those variants that have synoptic interest or importance.

(iv) Should the Gospel of John be included? The general opinion is affirmative, but on condition that the three Synoptics are first paralleled together, and that Jn is paralleled subsequently.

these six ways. There are two ways with Mk in the middle, viz. Mt–Mk–Lk and Lk–Mk–Mt; two with Lk in the middle, viz. Mt–Lk–Mk and Mk–Lk–Mt; and two with Mt in the middle, viz. Mk–Mt–Lk and Lk–Mt–Mk. There are also only three different pairs of combinations, Mt–Mk and Mk–Lk and Mt–Lk, since Mk–Mt and Lk–Mk and Lk–Mt are only the mirror images of the former sets of pairs. The synopsis will be constituted by taking any one pair and paralleling them and then fusing that pair with any one of the remaining pairs. Thus for example we could take Mt–Mk first and then fuse it with Mk–Lk; or we could take Mt–Lk and then fuse it with Lk–Mk; in the former case the procedure is Mt–Mk:Mk–Lk, and in the latter it is Mt–Lk:Lk–Mk.

But how in fact do we decide whether to put Mt or Mk or Lk in *the middle?* Do we follow tradition? Or does it really matter at all? It could matter a great deal, because a synopsis is a visual pattern in which certain pieces are deliberately juxtaposed to indicate or to symbolize possible relationships.

The experience of the past two hundred years seems to indicate that the critics in general find themselves most at ease with Mk in the middle position. The influence of tradition is not enough to explain why, and there must be some deeper reason. Now if we take *Mk* as the *Mean,* it is clear for all to see that this order is strongly suggestive, and visually supportive of, two well known hypotheses, the Augustinian and the Markan Priority.[5]

a) The Augustinian Hypothesis:
b) The Markan Priority Hypotheses:
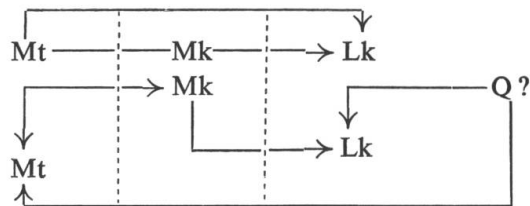
The reasons then for the continued popularity of the Markan Mean synopsis seem clear. (1) It has the support of two hundred years of tradition, going back to the days when the Augustinian view still dominated, and hence it was used by Griesbach in his Synopsis. (2) It has been found to provide the best visual presentation of Markan Priority theories. (3) The belief of most Markan Priorists that Mt and Lk knew each other only through Mk and Q is also visually suggested by Mk being set between them.

And since Markan Priority theories have dominated the German scene where most of the best synopses have been produced, it is not surprising that critics have been content with the way things are.

On the other hand, when Larfeld made *Mt* the *Mean* in his synopsis,[6] nobody followed him, though it might have been thought that its arrangement would have pleased the Markan Priorists, i.e.

---

[5] See M. D. Goulder, Midrash and Lection in Matthew (1975), pp. 452 f., for a modern variant of Markan Priority, not requiring 6.

[6] W. Larfeld, Griechisch-deutsche Synopse der vier neutestamentlichen Evangelien nach literarhistorischen Gesichtspunkten und mit textkritischem Apparat (1911).

```
              ┌─ Q ? ─┐
              ↓       ↓
Mk ─────→ Mt         Lk
   └──────────────────↑
```
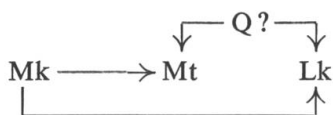
Finally, *Lk* can be the *Mean;* and though nobody has yet created such a synopsis, it would seem to suit R. L. Lindsey's hypothesis:[7]

```
   ┌─Q─┐    ┌──PN─┐      (PN = Proto Narrative)
   ↓     ↘ ↙      ↓
  Mt       Lk ─────→ Mk
   ↑                  ↑
   └──────────────────┘
```
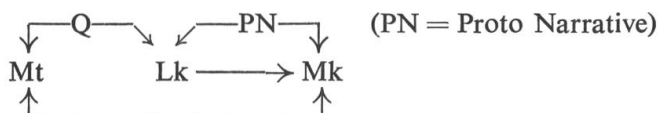
as it would undoubtedly suit the Griesbach Hypothesis:[8]

```
Mt        Lk        Mk
 └──────────────────↑
```

2.

However, before making this pregnant decision, we must look more closely at the problems of *parallelization,* which we shall present in a number of *schemata.* These schemata aim to show in parallel the chief groups of pericopes found in the same relative order in each Gospel (and so indicating the passages where it is not necessary to repeat either Gospel out of its natural order).

Schema I. Parallelization of Mk and Lk (Mk–Lk).

	Mk	Lk
Nativity Narrative		ch. 1–2
Period of Preparation	1:1–22	3:1–4:30
First Healings	1:23–38	4:31–43
First Preaching Tour	1:39	4:44
Further Ministry in Galilee	1:40–3:7a	5:1–6:11
Call of the Twelve (Lk)		6:12–16
Gathering of Crowds	3:7b–12	6:17–19
Call of the Twelve (Mk)	3:13–19	(6:12–16)
The Great Sermon (Lk)		6:20–49
Material partly Special to Lk		7:1–8:3
Jesus and Beelzebul, etc	3:20–30	(11:15–23; 12:10)
Parables' Discourse	4:1–34	8:4–18

---

[7] R. L. Lindsey, A Hebrew Translation of the Gospel of Mark (Jerusalem c. 1969), Introduction, p. 44.

[8] It was in 1789/90 that J. J. Griesbach offered a full exposition of his thesis that the author of Mk when composing his Gospel had before him the Greek texts of Mt and Lk, in his Pfingstprogramme entitled, Commentatio qua Marci Evangelium totum e Matthaei et Lucae commentariis decerptum esse monstratur.

	Mk	Lk
Galilean Ministry (cont.)	4:35–6:7	8:19–56
Commissioning Discourse	6:8–11	9:3–5
Herod seeks Jesus	6:14–16	9:7–9
Death of the Baptist	6:17–30	(3:18–20)
Feeding of the 5,000	6:32–44	9:10–17
Special to Mk	6:45–8:26	
Galilean Ministry (cont.)	8:27–9:32	9:18–45
Discourse on True Greatness	9:33–37	9:46–48
Unauthorized Exorcist	9:38–41	9:49–50
Discourse (cont.)	9:42–50	
Jesus leaves Galilee	10:1	9:51
Central Section (Lk)		9:52–18:14
Judean Ministry	10:2–52	18:15–19:28
Jerusalem Ministry	11:1–12:37	19:29–20:44
Condemnation of Scribes	12:38–40	20:45–47
Widow's Mite	12:41–44	21:1–4
Eschatological Discourse	13:1–37	21:5–38
Passion Narrative	14:1–16:8	22:1–24:12
Resurrection Appearances	(16:9–20)	24:13–53

Schema II. Parallelization of Mt and Lk (Mt–Lk). There are three main alternatives here: either to parallel Lk 6:12–19 with Mt 12:15–21 and so (with Huck) to place Lk's Great Sermon at this point in Mt's outline; or to put Lk's Great Sermon after Mt 4:24–5:2 (= Lk 6:12–19), and here there are two possibilities, b) and c):

Schema IIa (so Huck):

	Mt	Lk
Birth Narrative	ch. 1–2	
Birth Narrative		ch. 1–2
Period of Preparation	3:1–4:22	3:1–4:30
First Healings	(8:14–17)	4:31–43
First Preaching Tour	4:23	4:44
Gathering of Crowds (Mt)	4:24–25	
Call of Disciples (Mt)	5:1	
The Great Sermon (Mt)	5:2–7:27	
Miraculous Catch		5:1–11
Healing of a Leper	8:1–4	5:12–16
Further Ministry in Galilee	9:1–17	5:17–39
Commissioning Discourse (Mt)	10:1–11:1	(9:1–6)
Further Ministry in Galilee (Baptist's Envoys)	11:2–30	(7:18–35)
Controversy and Healing	12:1–15a	6:1–11

	Mt	Mk
Call of the Twelve (Lk)		6:12–16
Gathering of Crowds	12:15b–21	6:17–19
Great Sermon (Lk)		6:20–49
Partly Special to Lk	(8:5–13; 11:2–19)	7:1–8:3
Parables' Discourse	13:1–52	8:4–18
Commissioning Discourse (Lk)		9:1–6
Herod seeks Jesus	14:1f.	9:7f.
See Schemata I and III for continuation		

Schema IIb (so Aland). As above except for the following:

	Mt	Lk
Call of the Disciples	(5:1)	6:12–16
Gathering of Crowds (Mt)	4:24–25	(6:17–19)
Occasion of Great Sermon	5:1–2	(6:12–16)
Great Sermon (Mt)	5:3–7:27	(6:20b–49)
Gathering of Crowds (Lk)	(4:24–25)	6:17–19
Great Sermon (Lk)	(5:2–7:27)	6:20–49
Continued below as IV (ii)		

Schema IIc (so the New Griesbach Solution). As IIa except for:

	Mt	Lk
First Preaching Tour	*4:23*	*4:44*
Galilean Ministry	(4:15–22; 8:1–4; 9:1–17; 12:1–15)	5:1–6:11
Gathering of Crowds (Mt)	4:24–25	(6:17–19)
Call of the Disciples	*5:1*	*6:12–16*
Gathering of Crowds (Lk)	(4:24–25)	6:17–19
Great Sermon (Mt, Lk)	*5:2–7:27*	*6:20–49*
Continued below as IV (iii)		

Schema III. Parallelization of Mt with Mk (Mt–Mk).

	Mt	Mk
Birth Narrative	ch. 1–2	
Period of Preparation	3:1–4:22	1:1–1:22
(? Great Sermon)		
First Healings	(8:14–17)	1:23–28
First Preaching Tour	4:23	1:39
(? Great Sermon)		

	Mt	Mk
Galilean Ministry	(8:1–4)	1:40–45
(? Great Sermon)		
Galilean Ministry contd	(12:1–15a; 9:1–17)	2:1–3:7a
Gathering of Crowds	4:24–25	3:7b–12
Call of Disciples	5:1	3:13–19
(? Great Sermon)	5:2–7:29	?
Healing of a Leper	8:1–4	(1:40–45)
Healing of Centurion's Slave	8:5–13	
Jesus' Supporters' Anxiety		3:20–21
Galilean Ministry	8:14–9:38	(see above)
Commissioning Discourse (Mt)	10:5f.	(6:8–11)
The Baptist's Envoys	11:2–19	
Galilean Ministry	11:20–12:15a	
Crowds gather again	12:15b–21	(cf. 3:7b–12)
Jesus and Beelzebul etc	12:22–30	3:22–30
Jesus' True Brethren	12:46–50	3:31–35
Parables' Discourse	13:1–52	4:1–34
Galilean Ministry	(see above)	4:35–6:6
Commissioning Discourse (Mk)	(10:5f.)	6:8–11
Herod seeks Jesus and further Galilean Ministry	14:1–17:27	6:14–9:32
Discourse on True Greatness	18:1–5	9:33–37
Unauthorized Exorcist		9:38–41
Discourse contd	18:6ff.	9:42–50
Jesus leaves Galilee	19:1–2	10:1
Judean Ministry	19:3–20:34	10:2–52
Jerusalem Ministry	21:1–22:46	11:1–12:37
Condemnation of Scribes	23:1–36	12:38–40
Widow's Mite		12:41–44
Eschatological Discourse	24:1–25:46	13:1–37
Passion Narrative	26:1–28:8	14:1–16:8
Resurrection Appearances	28:9–20	(16:9–20)

Schema IV. The paralleling of the parables' and commissioning discourses. Here again there are three solutions: (i) to parallel in natural order in the Triple Tradition the Parables' Discourse; (ii) as above, but to parallel similarly also the Baptist's Envoys Pericopes; (iii) to parallel in natural order in the Triple Tradition the Commissioning Discourse.

(i) The Huck Solution:

	Mt	Mk	Lk
Great Sermon (Mt)	5:2–7:27		(6:20–49)
Healing of a Leper	*8:1–4*	*1:40–45*	*5:12–16*
Centurion's Slave	8:5–13		(7:1–10)

	Mt	Mk	Lk
Galilean Ministry	*9:1–17*	*2:1–22*	*5:17–39*
Commissioning Discourse	10:5–15	(6:8–11)	(9:3–5)
Baptist' Envoys	11:2–19		(7:18–35)
Galilean Ministry (cont.)	11:20–30		
Controversy and Healing	*12:1–14*	*2:23–3:6*	*6:1–11*
Gathering of Crowds etc	*12:15–21*	*3:7–19*	*6:12–19*
Great Sermon (Lk)	(5:3–7:27)		6:20–49
Partly Special to Lk	(8:5–13; 11:2–19)		7:1–8:3
Jesus and Beelzebul etc	12:22–50	3:20–35	(11:14f.)
Parables' Discourse	*13:1f.*	*4:1f.*	*8:4f.*
Commissioning Discourse	(10; 5–15)	(6:8–11)	(9:3–5)
Herod seeks Jesus	*14:1f.*	*6:14f.*	*9:7f.*

(ii) The Aland Solution:

	Mt	Mk	Lk
Great Sermon (Mt)	*5:2–7:27*		(6:20–49)
Great Sermon (Lk)	(5:2–7:27)		*6:20–49*
Centurion's Slave	8:5–13		7:1–10
Galilean Ministry	8:14f.		(ch. 5–6)
Commissioning Discourse	10:5f.		
Special to Lk			7:11–17
The Baptist's Envoys	*11:2–19*		*7:18–35*
Galilean Ministry (cont.)	11:20–12:21		
Special to Lk			7:36–8:3
Jesus and Beelzebul etc	12:22–50	3:22–35	(11:14f; 8:19)
Parables' Discourse	*13:1f.*	*4:1f.*	*8:4f.*
Herod seeks Jesus etc	*14:1f.*	*6:14f.*	*9:7f.*

(iii) The New Griesbach Solution, with Lk as the mean:[9]

	Mt	Lk	Mk
Great Sermon (Mt, Lk)	5:2–7:27	6:20–49	
Centurion's Slave	8:5–13	7:1–10	
Special to Lk		7:11–17	
The Baptist's Envoys	(11:2–19)	7:18–35	
Special to Lk		7:36–8:3	

[9] It is necessary to speak of the New Griesbach Hypothesis or Solution in order to distinguish this modern development from the original Griesbach Hypothesis, because Griesbach himself paid almost no attention to the question of the nature of Lk's dependence on Mt, which has recently been considerably expanded. See J. B. Orchard, Matthew, Luke and Mark (1976), and John Drury, Tradition and Design in Luke's Gospel (1977).

	Mt	Lk	Mk
Jesus and Beelzebul etc	(12:22–50)	(8:19f.; 11:14f.)	3:20–34
Parables' Discourse (Lk, Mk)		8:4–18	4:1–34
Galilean Ministry	8:14–22	(4:38–41)	(1:29–34)
Stilling of the Storm	*8:23–27*	*8:22–25*	*4:35–41*
Gadarene/Gerasene Demoniac	*8:28–34*	*8:26–39*	*5:1–20*
Healings etc in Galilee	9:1–17	(5:17–39)	(2:1–22)
Jairus' Daughter	*9:18–26*	*8:40–56*	*5:21–43*
Special to Mt	9:27–38		
Commissioning Discourse	*10:5–15*	*9:3–5*	*6:8–11*
The Baptist's Envoys	11:2–19	(7:18–35)	
Galilean Ministry (cont)	11:20–50		
Parables' Discourse	13:1–52	(8:4–18)	(4:1–34)
Herod seeks Jesus etc	*14:1f.*	*9:7f.*	*6:14f.*

3.

Now that we have seen in the above Schemata the various *main options* available, it is time to weight them up. There are three fundamental options:

(1) Is Mt or Lk or Mk to be the *Mean*?

(2) Where is the *Great Sermon* to go?

(3) How do we arrange the paralleling of the *Parables'* and *Commissioning Discourses*?

(1) It seems fairly certain that when Griesbach first published his synopsis, he chose Mark to be in the middle column simply because the traditional order of the Gospels had always been Mt–Mk–Lk. And as support for the Priority of Mark began to grow, the order in his synopsis was found to be equally serviceable for this theory. Why then did neither Griesbach nor any of his students attempt to construct a special synopsis with *Luke* in the middle column as the *Mean*? So far as Griesbach himself was concerned, his major interest in the synopsis was always as a tool for text criticism, although he undoubtedly found his way to his own special theory by means of its use. In any case his critics found it no obstacle to explaining Markan Priority.[10] Nevertheless, the failure of his followers to restate the Griesbach Hypothesis by means of another synopsis having Lk as its Mean may well have been one of the root causes for its virtual disappearance by the end

---

[10] The suggestion has been made that J. J. Griesbach composed his Synopsis of 1774/6 in the light of his own source theory published in embryo in 1783/4 and fully expounded only in 1789/90. So far as I know, however, there is no evidence that he arrived at his revolutionary hypothesis until some years after the publication of his Synopsis, and there is no sign of it in the Synopsis itself. And if it be asked why he did not re-work his Synopsis in the light of his new theory, the sufficient answer seems to be that not only were his main interests in other directions, but there was no call from his publishers for any such re-formulation, since it continued to sell well throughout the first half of the 19th century.

of the 19th century. For there can be no doubt that while the Markan Mean synopsis which he sponsored and pioneered is fully compatible with, and best illustrates all Markan Priority theories, yet by a curious paradox it fails to do justice to his own mature hypothesis, at which he subsequently arrived.

For the Griesbach Hypothesis holds that in the order of reality Lk knew Mt and that Mk knew both Lk and Mt; and hence anyone wishing to construct a synopsis to illustrate it would of course apply Lk to Mt and then apply Mk to the product in order to give Mt–Lk–Mk. And this order of application leads to a concentration on the parallels in Mt 4:24–5:2 = Lk 6:12–20a = Mk 3:7–19 as providing the correct location for the Great Sermons, to the exclusion of the other possibilities in the Markan and Lukan schemata. However, since the Markan Priority and the Griesbach Hypotheses are irreconcilable,[11] no one synopsis can adequately represent them both. Hence in accordance with the views of the synopsis maker, in the final analysis no decision will be taken that is contrary to the Priority of Mk on the one hand, and on the other hand no decision will be taken that is contrary to the view that Mk knew both Lk and Mk. And the result of following such diverse guide-lines will be two quite different types of synoptic plan. It seems quite possible that the actual domination of the Markan Priority Hypotheses has been not a little assisted by the pro-Markan character of the synopses available, which do not inhibit the effective illustration of these Hypotheses, though they do in fact inhibit the presentation of the converse theory.

Our conclusion is therefore that a synopsis with Mk as the Mean will therefore best illustrate Markan Priority while inhibiting the presentation of the Griesbach Hypothesis; and on the contrary, a synopsis with Lk as the Mean will best illustrate the Griesbach Hypothesis, and will correspondingly inhibit the presentation of the Markan Priority theories.[12]

(2) The three Schemata, I, II, III, show that there are twelve (i.e. $4 \times 3 \times 1$) main possibilities for variously placing the *Great Sermon*.

We have seen that Huck prefers to relate Lk 6:12–19 with Mt 12:15b–16a, so that Lk's Great Sermon will come after Mt 12:21 and Mt's Great Sermon after Mk 1:39. The reasons seem to be first of all the likeness between the situation of Mt 12:15b–16a and Lk 6:12–19, and secondly these positions permit the maximum number of parallel verses in natural order in the Triple Tradition between Mt 3:1–

---

[11] The Hypotheses are irreconcilable. (a) Markan Priority Hypotheses agree that Greek Mt and Lk are dependent on Mk and that Lk and Mt did not know each other directly but were dependent on the common source Q. For a partial qualification in the case of the Hypotheses of M. D. Goulder and R. L. Lindsey, see Notes 5 and 7. (b) The Griesbach Hypothesis asserts the dependence of Mk on both Mt and Lk, and of Mk's dependence on Lk as well. It denies the need for a Q source.

[12] To illustrate the New Griesbach Hypothesis, Luke must be placed as close as possible to Matthew; and since the order of literary dependence (as well as the chronological sequence) according to this Hypothesis is Mt–Lk–Mk, this column order will be the most illuminating arrangement. And although Mark is then no longer next to Matthew, the disadvantage is minimal since the Griesbach Hypothesis always considers Luke in relation to Matthew without Mark in the first place, and then Mark in relation to Luke-with-Matthew both together in the second place.

13:58 and its parallels.[13] However these reasons are not altogether convincing, because (1) the maximum number is not by any mean sure to be the optimum number; (2) because the likeness between Mt 12:15b–16a and Lk 6:12–19 is not as close as that between the latter passage and Mt 4:24–5:2. In fact there is a strong case to be made out that there is a close literary relationship between Mt 4:24–5:2 and Lk 6:12–20a and Mk 3:7–19; and if so, then it greatly strengthens the already strong case that the two Great Sermons are directly related. In fact the chief reason offered today against this relationship would be that they are related only indirectly through the Q source. If on other grounds Q can be dispensed with, then there is every reason for seeing the two Great Sermons as directly connected by some literary dependence of Lk on Mt.

Aland on the other hand has placed Mt's Great Sermon after Mk 3:19 = Lk 6:16, and then goes on to place Lk's Great Sermon quite independently after Lk 6:19 (and before Mk 3:20), thus basing his schema on a meticulous dependence on the order of Mk. If however Aland had regarded Lk's reversal of Mk's order of events (i.e. Lk places the Call of the Disciples *before* the Gathering of the Crowds) as a literary or stylistic variation, he could have justly placed both Sermons in full parallel in a much simplified schema. That is to say, instead of Aland's complicated pattern in which Mk is the Mean, viz.:

	Mt	Mk	Lk
Healings by the Sea	(4:24–25)	*3:7–12*	(6:17–19)
Call of the Disciples (Mk, Lk)	(10:1–4)	*3:13–19*	*6:12–16*
Occasion of Great Sermon	*4:24–25*	(3:7–13a)	(6:17–20a)
Great Sermon (Mt)	*5:2–7:27*		(6:20–49)
Effect of Great Sermon (Mt)	*7:28–29*	(1:21–22)	(4:32; 7:1a)
Occasion of Great Sermon (Lk)	(4:24–25)		*6:17a–20*
Great Sermon (Lk)	(5:2–7:27)		*6:20b–49*

Aland might have given us a much simpler form that assumes some direct literary relationship between the Great Sermons, viz.:

[13] It is sometimes thought to be a special merit if a synopsis has a greater number of parallel verses in natural order in the Triple Tradition than another. But this by no means follows. We cannot know the optimum number of such verses until we have a synopsis constructed on an agreed solution of the Synoptic Problem. However, for what it is worth, the Table given below shows the respective number of verses paralleled in their natural order in the Triple Tradition between the crucial points, viz., Mt 3:1 with par. and Mt 13:58 with par.:

	Mt	Mk	Lk
Total number of verses	405	205	282
Paralleled as indicated above			
Huck	90	81	81
Aland	54	35	40
New Griesbach	63	74.5	74

The table shows that Huck, who basically follows the original arrangement of Griesbach, has contrived to register a maximum number of such parallels in this section of the Gospels.

	Mt	Mk	Lk
Gathering of Crowds (Mt, Mk)	*4:24–25*	*3:7–12*	*(6:17–19)*
Call of Disciples	*5:1*	*3:13–19*	*6:12–16*
Gathering of Crowds (Lk)			*6:17–19*
Great Sermon (Mt, Lk)	*5:2–7:27*		*6:20–49*

The first thing to note here is that the synopsis-maker's presuppositions dictate the pattern of the synopsis. Secondly, the size and shape of the pericope-unit can effectively modify the pattern. In the above instance, all depends on whether the Call of the Disciples and the Gathering of the Crowds is to be regarded as one unit or two, and this will in turn depend on the synopsis-maker's estimate of the literary relationship between the elements of the pericope. Thirdly, it is to be noted that Aland has carefully avoided paralleling the two Great Sermons directly. In consequence, the Aland pattern becomes compatible with the acceptance of the Q source theory, whereas the simpler schema virtually rules out Q by illustrating what amounts to a direct literary relationship between the two Great Sermons and the adjoining material. This solution is the only one that illustrates the theory that Lk knew Mt and that Mk knew both.

Huck and Aland have chosen from the other alternative patterns available, and selected their options accordingly.

(3) With regard to the paralleling of the *Parables* and the *Commissioning Discourses* we have set out above three Schemata, IV, i, ii, iii. In the first Huck parallels only the Parables's Discourse in the natural order of all three Gospels. In the second Aland by means of a different arrangement does the same but also contrives to parallel the Lukan and Matthean Baptist's Envoys pericopes as well. The third alternative – the New Griesbach one – is to parallel instead only the Commissioning Discourse material of the three Gospels.

Huck and Aland contrive to arrange the pericopes so that in all three Gospels the Parables' Discourse appears in the natural order of all three. Yet there is an unresolved contradiction here, because in his own Gospel Matthew's Parables come after his Commissioning Discourse, whereas the reverse is the case with Lk and Mk. Is there then a right and a wrong way of paralleling these pericopes? Both views are possible, but one way attaches more importance to paralleling the Parables and the other to paralleling the Commissioning Discourses. According to the New Griesbach Hypothesis, there is a question of principle involved here. This theory implies that Lk has for a long time been following the general order of Mt, while at the same time transferring systematically a number of units (Lk 4:38–41; 5:12–6:11) into a new order of his own with which Mk concurs. However, having got down to Mt 12:21, Lk breaks off at 8:3, and here Mk picks up Mt at the point where Lk left off, viz. at Mt 12:22–30 = Mk 3:22–30, and goes on until Lk joins up with him again at Mk 4:1f. = Lk 8:4f. In other words anyone constructing a synopsis on the Griesbach Hypothesis will follow the lead of Mk here when Lk

leaves off. This means that only the Parables Discourses of Mk and Lk will be in direct parallel in their natural order in this synopsis. Yet, in compensation, not only will the Commissioning Discourse come into Triple Tradition parallel but also the Stilling of the Storm, the Gerasene Demoniac and the Raising of Jairus' daughter (see the Appendix below, p. 162).

*

Enough has been said to make it possible to put forward the following *conclusions:*

1. The existing synopses are understandably arranged principally for the visual presentation of the Augustinian and Markan Priority Hypotheses, since the three vital decisions that have to be taken in the course of construction, viz. the choice of the Mean, the placing of the Great Sermon and the placing of the Parables' Discourse, appear to have been chosen so as not to conflict with the assumptions of these Hypotheses.

2. Precisely because the Griesbach Hypothesis is the reverse of the Markan Priority Hypotheses the options chosen for the existing synopses are incompatible with the assumptions of the Griesbach Hypothesis. It is impossible for any one synopsis to be neutral to rival hypotheses constructed on contradictory principles; for they have no common set of options.

3. Hence the Griesbach Hypothesis ought to be illustrated by a new synopsis built up according to its own presuppositions, and with Lk as the Mean.[14]

---

[14] F. Neirynck, The Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel Synopsis: Eph. Theol. Lov. 72 (1976), p. 357, argues that the Two-Source Hypothesis and the Griesbach Hypothesis "concur in their statement on the place of the Sermon on the Mount in the relative order of the Gospels", and that the actual place for Matthew's Great Sermon in both Hypotheses ought to be after Mk 1:21. This claim that a synopsis ordered in this way would also best suit the Griesbach Hypothesis is however not valid because the reason given for it has no force. The reason given is that "Griesbach's basic argument on the order of the Gospels was that Mark followed Matthew up to Mt 4:22/Mk 1:20; then in order to avoid the Sermon on the Mount he went over to Luke at Lk 4:31/Mk 1:21; he came back to Matthew at Mt 12:15/Mk 3:7". It is true that for Griesbach himself Mark knew both Matthew and Luke and followed them alternately, but it is to be carefully noted that Griesbach never explained the literary relationship of Luke to Matthew, though he admitted Luke's dependence, and this relationship is the crux of the whole synoptic problem. According to the Griesbach Hypothesis, Luke followed Matthew before Mark existed, while the New Griesbach Hypothesis develops its implications (which Griesbach himself never did). In any case, Neirynck's argument loses all its force by ignoring this factor, which allows an alternative, namely, that Luke followed Matthew while at the same time changing his order freely between the two Nazareth Visits (Mt 4:12–13:58 = Lk 4:16–9:6), and all this before Mark ever saw Luke. Then later, according to the New Griesbach Hypothesis (and in the absence of evidence to the contrary, we may assume the concurrence of the original Griesbach), Mark accepts Luke's alterations of Matthew's order with two minor exceptions (Mk 1:16–20; 3:7b–19). Hence, only subject to this vital proviso is it legitimate to say that Mark alternately follows Matthew and Luke. And it now follows that the same synoptic arrangement for the Great Sermon does not suit the Two-Source Hypothesis and the Griesbach Hypothesis (and a fortiori the New Griesbach Hypothesis). It is at least to some extent Griesbach's own failure to interest himself in the exploration of the Luke–Matthew relationship that has led Professor Neirynck to make a claim that cannot be substantiated.

4. The value of such a synopsis would be that it would enable critics to have a visual presentation of the Gospel text according to the Griesbach Hypothesis which has hitherto been lacking; and by counter-balancing the inevitable one-sidedness of the existing synopses would make a considered judgement of their respective merits easier to achieve. The basic structure of such a Lukan-Mean synopsis is contained in the Appendix below.[15]

5. In future, every synopsis-maker should be required to "declare his hand" with regard to the reasons governing his choice of the three major options at least.

6. Appendix: Schema for a Lukan-Mean Synopsis.

This schema has been developed according to the assumptions of the Griesbach Hypothesis. Hence the following decisions were taken:

(1) Lk is the Mean, and first Lk is applied to Mt and then Mk to Lk-with-Mt.

(2) Lk's Great Sermon is placed directly parallel to Mt's after Mk 3:19 for the reasons given above.

(3) After Lk has left off following Mt at 12:21, Mk begins to do so at Mk 3:20–30 = Mt 12:22–30, and leading on to the Parables' Discourses in Mk and Lk. One of the consequences of this is that Mk's and Lk's Missionary Discourse material becomes parallel to Mt's in the natural order of all three at Mt 10:5–15 = Lk 9:3–5 = Mk 6:8–11, instead of the Parables's Discourse.

	Mt	Lk	Mk
Nativity Narrative	ch. 1–2	ch. 1–2	
Period of Preparation	3:1–4:22	3:1–4:30	1:1–20
Preaching in Galilee		4:31–43	1:21–38
First Preaching Tour	*4:23*	*4:44*	*1:39*
Galilean Ministry		5:1–6:11	1:40–3:7a
Gathering of Crowds, and Call of Disciples	4:24–5:2	6:12–19	3:7b–19
The Great Sermon (Mt, Lk)	5:2–7:27	6:20–49	
The Baptist's Envoys	(11:2–19)	7:18–35	
Special to Lk		7:36–8:3	
Gathering of Crowds again	(12:15b–21)	(6:17–19)	
Jesus and Beelzebul etc.	(12:22–30)	(8:19f.; 11:14f.)	3:20–30
Parables's Discourse (Lk, Mk)	(13:1–52)	8:4–18	4:1–34
Stilling of the Storm	*8:23–27*	*8:22–25*	*4:35–41*
Gadarene/Gerasene Demoniac(s)	*8:28–34*	*8:26–38*	*5:1–20*
Jairus' Daughter	*9:18–26*	*8:40–56*	*5:21–43*
Commissioning Discourse	*10:5–15*	*9:3–5*	*6:8–11*
The Baptist's Envoys	11:2–19	(7:18–35)	
Parables' Discourse (Mt)	13:1–52	(8:4–18)	(4:1–34)
Herod seeks Jesus	*14:1–2*	*9:7–9*	*6:14–16*
Discourse on True Greatness	*18:1–5*	*9:46–48*	*9:33–37*
Jesus leaves Galilee	*19:1–2*	*9:51*	*10:1*

The remainder is as in the other Schemata (above, pp. 153, 155).

Bernard Orchard, London

15 It is hoped to publish the first synopsis on these lines in 1979.