

**THE Q-RECENSION HYPOTHESIS  
SOME REFLECTIONS IN DIALOGUE WITH ULRICH LUZ**

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**Abstract.** The essay is a revised version of a paper that was read at the SBL Annual Meeting in Atlanta in 2003, to which Ulrich Luz gave a response. It discusses the Q-recension hypothesis, which was suggested already in the mid-19th century by C. Weizsäcker, but picked up by only a few scholars, until U. Luz gave it more prominence and a wider readership in his influential commentary on Matthew. The essay is divided into three parts that deal, in a critical way, with the problems in defining and delineating the recensions used by Matthew and by Luke, the criteria that should be met for demonstrating the existence of Q recensions, and the benefits that can possibly be gained from it according to its adepts.

**Keywords:** Synoptic Problem, Sayings Source Q, History of exegesis.

In 2003, I was asked to give a paper on the Q-Recension Hypothesis for the Q seminar at the SBL Annual Meeting. My respondent was Ulrich Luz. The paper was not published and appears here in a slightly adapted version without any ambition of being fully up-to-date, but in the hope the honouree will take some pleasure in being reminded of our encounter.

Ever since it became the dominant hypothesis for solving the Synoptic Problem at the end of the 19th century, the Two-Source Hypothesis (TSH) has appealed to many because of its uncomplicated character and straightforwardness. But there has also always been a minority group of scholars who have argued that “things cannot be that easy”. The Synoptic Problem is more complex than the TSH seems to suggest or to acknowledge and therefore cannot be solved with such a “simple” solution. Some have gone to the extreme in complicating the literary relationships between the three Synoptics and their sources. Others have taken a more restrained position and contented themselves by offering some refinements while basically keeping to the TSH framework. But even behind these latter solutions hides the same conviction, though less outspoken, that TSH is misleadingly simple and that things are more complicated than this hypothesis is ready to admit. One such position is the Q-recension Hypothesis (QrH).

When looking closer into the question, however, it appears that a lot hangs on impressions. The “straightforwardness” of TSH is indeed to a considerable degree only “apparent”. To make the hypothesis “work” one has to reckon with a great deal of authorial, compositional, and redactional interests and strategies on the part of the two evangelists who are supposed to have made use of Q. These