

Foxes, Birds, Burials & Furrows

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G In this chapter we return to the synoptic tradition with guidelines from the elaboration exercise in Hellenistic education. In chapter one, we observed basic similarities between synoptic units and chreiai, but we did not look at the dynamics and logic in those units. In this chapter, we will analyze rhetorical features in two well-known chreia-like units in Matt 8:19–22 and Luke 9:57–60 about foxes and birds and burying the dead. These units, individually, are like abbreviated chreiai. Yet, we do not find them separated from one another in the synoptic tradition. The parallel wording, the common sequence of the two units in Matthew and Luke, and the presence of the parallel missionary charge in Luke 10:1–12 and Matt 9:37–38; 10:9–16 suggest that Matthew and Luke found the units together in Q material concerned with discipleship.¹ Yet, the use and presentation of the material differ in Matthew and Luke. In Matthew, the two units stand together with an introductory sentence that establishes a context of travelling to the other side of the sea. Luke introduced the two units in a setting in which Jesus sets his face toward Jerusalem, and he added an additional unit at the end. In both Matthew and Luke, these settings provide an occasion for developing the theme of following Jesus. As the theme emerges through a series of short units, the reader encounters an embryonic stage of the rhetorical elaboration discussed in chapter two. We wish to analyze some of the

1. See the discussion in Lührmann, *Die Redaktion*, 58 and Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 408.

rhetorical steps involved at this stage, since it may help us in our other attempts to analyze synoptic tradition.

As we begin our analysis, it might be good to remind ourselves that any collection of argumentative tradition in any culture is likely to contain certain basic rhetorical features. Since the Hellenistic rhetoricians were working with actual apophthegmata which they found in the tradition, their observations are likely to help an interpreter with analysis of similar units in any tradition or culture. It is, however, their ranking of certain features above others which may be of special importance. It is too early in our analysis to know if their ranking is distinctive among all cultural traditions. But if we start with the features Hermonogenes ranked above others in his elaboration exercise, we may develop an approach which can help us to detect any special rhetorical strategies that might be present in the synoptic tradition.

1. Matt 8:18-22

We will begin with the passage in Matthew (paralleled in Luke) in which Dibelius found two units that he considered to be remarkably like chreiai:

Now when Jesus saw a (great) crowd around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side. And a scribe came up and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head."

Another of the disciples said to him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." But Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead." (Matthew 8:18-22)

This passage begins with a sentence which tells the reader that there was a great crowd around Jesus and that Jesus assumed a role of authority over some of them. The opening sentence in 8:18 begins with the participial clause *ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὄχλον περὶ αὐτὸν* ("Jesus, upon seeing a crowd around him") in a manner characteristic of chreiai.² But the clause does not lead to a finite verb that introduces direct speech by Jesus. Rather, with the initial sentence the narrator asserts that Jesus is a popular and authoritative person, without letting Jesus himself come to speech. Then two brief units occur that possess the abrupt, aggressive qualities of Cynic chreiai.³ The initial unit has a simplified chreia style as the participial *προσελθὼν* ("came up") is used with the finite verb *εἶπεν*

2. Cf. Theon, *Progymnasmata* 203,6-8; 205,22-24; 208,2-4; 209,16-210,2; 215, 14-17.

3. Ehrhardt, "Lass die Toten," 131; Wechsler, *Hellas*, 259; Droge, "Call Stories," 254-57; and Butts, "Voyage."

("he said") to introduce the statement of the scribe, and the finite verb *λέγει* ("he says") with the name *ὁ Ἰησοῦς* ("Jesus") is used to introduce Jesus' response. If we analyze these chreiai with an approach similar to the analysis of the Demonax chreia in the previous chapter, we observe a skillful use of the contrary in these units as well. The logic of the first unit emerges through the following structure.

Proposal:	Teacher	wherever	you go I will follow.
Rejoinder:	The Son of man	has nowhere	to lay his head.

Three contrasts or opposites occur. First, whereas the scribe intends to start a joint venture with a teacher, the rejoinder tells him that the person whom he has approached is "the Son of man." Second, while the scribe expects to accompany the teacher to important places, the rejoinder tells him that this person possesses no place. Third, whereas the scribe thinks the person is travelling, the rejoinder tells him that the person cannot lay down his head. This unit frustrates each part of the scribe's statement. It is not clear at the end of the unit whether the scribe should try to accompany Jesus or not. Should the scribe give up his intentions? Should the scribe try a new approach? Only one thing is clear. The prospect of wandering aimlessly around with the Son of man who has no place to relax has replaced the possibility of following a teacher who is travelling toward an established goal.⁴ The unit is like a Cynic chreia that thwarts intentions, overturns presuppositions, and at least temporarily stymies actions.

The next unit in Matthew (8:21-22) achieves contrast or the opposite through a technique that skillfully rearranges words and sounds in the statement of the interlocutor in the response of the sage. It is hard to know exactly what the form of the underlying Aramaic was, though scholars have attempted to reconstruct it.⁵ The stylistic skill in the Greek version, however, is eminently clear. The statement of the disciple occurs in two clauses connected in the middle with "and" (*καί*): "Lord, permit me first to go away *and* to bury my father." The skillful use of language and sound occurs as the response of Jesus rearranges both parts. The opening statement of the disciple is: *κύριε ἐπίστρεψόν μοι πρῶτον ἀπελθεῖν*, ("Lord, permit me first to go") to which the response of Jesus is: *ἀκολούθει μοι*. ("Follow me.") In this response, Jesus has accepted only one word of the disciple, namely "me" (*μοι*). The disciple has said "Permit *me*," and Jesus has said, "Follow *me*." In addition, Jesus does not address the disciple with a title, nor does he repeat the alliterative "p" and "r" sounds in *ἐπίστρεψόν . . . πρῶτον ἀπελθεῖν* ("permit . . . first to go

4. See Crossan, *In Fragments*, 239-41.

5. See, for example, Black, *Aramaic Approach*, 207-8 and Schwarz, "Aphes tous nekrous," 272-76.

away"). Rather, Jesus' response changes the last word of the initial clause from ἀπελθεῖν ("to go away") to ἀκολουθεῖ ("follow"). The result in Greek is especially good, since the first part of ἀκολουθεῖ has replaced ἀπ- ("away") with ἀκο . . . ν, which is a combination of the first letter of ἀπελθεῖν (α), the first syllable in κύριε (κυ), and the last vowel in ἐπίστρεψον and πρῶτον (ο). Then, the last part of ἀκολουθεῖ ("follow") has replaced ἐλθεῖν ("go") with λ . . . θεῖ. This means that Jesus makes a statement which incorporates the first sounds of his title and the last sounds of the words concerning permission, priorities, and going, but he does not allow himself to repeat the sounds associated with actions he will not allow the disciple to do. This is the kind of language usage that made certain chreiai unforgettable.

But there is more. The last statement by the disciple is καὶ θάψαι τὸν πατέρα μου ("and to bury my father"), to which Jesus responds with καὶ ἄφες τοὺς νεκροὺς θάψαι τοὺς ἑαυτῶν νεκροὺς ("and permit the dead to bury their own dead"). Jesus' response produces a perfectly balanced clause with θάψαι ("to bury") in the middle:

ἄφες τοὺς νεκροὺς ("permit the dead")	θάψαι ("to bury")	τοὺς ἑαυτῶν νεκροὺς ("their own dead")
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As the first clause in Jesus' response changed ἀπελθεῖν ("to go away") to ἀκολουθεῖ ("follow"), so the second clause changes ἀπελθεῖν ("to go away") to ἄφες ("permit," or "let"). The disciple wanted permission (ἐπίστρεψον) to go away (ἀπελθεῖν) and bury his father, but Jesus directs him to permit (ἄφες) the dead to bury their own dead. Again, the use of sounds is especially clever as ἀπ(ε)- ("away") is changed into ἄφες ("permit"), and the sounds present in κυρ.ε ("lord"), . . . ωτον ("first"), and .ατερα ("father") are also present in τοὺς νεκροὺς ("the dead") and ἑαυτῶν ("their own"). With these sounds, Jesus destroys the disciple's hopes of fulfilling both obligations one after the other. Any attempt to be loyal both to "lord" and "father" must be changed into "the dead" dealing with "their own dead." Is the disciple wily enough to leave his kin and live in a Cynic mode? Or has humiliation at the butt of a joke sent him back to kith and kin? About the disciple we do not know. But what a clever fellow Jesus is.

Although the response of Jesus leaves the disciple reeling, it is also so cryptic that interpreters disagree over its meaning. To the first part of the disciple's request about the burial, the rejoinder means either "let the real dead do it," "let the spiritually dead do it,"⁶ or "let the gravediggers do it."⁷ If the statement means "let the real dead do it," it probably is a paradoxical way of saying, "That business must look after itself."⁸ If it

means "let the spiritually dead do it," it implies that those who do not follow Jesus have missed the life associated with the kingdom.⁹ If it means "let the gravediggers do it," it implies that the obligation of following Jesus requires a person to leave tasks that would otherwise be his to fulfill. The last interpretation, that the burial is to be left to gravediggers, removes much of the scandal of Jesus' saying. It is, moreover, based on a reconstruction of the underlying Aramaic which has doubtful value for understanding the meaning of the saying in Matthew and Luke. Our present texts say that "the dead" (not "the gravediggers") are supposed to do the burying. The first part of the saying, therefore, either introduces a paradox or refers in a metaphorical manner to the spiritually dead.

If the first part of the saying is difficult, the last part is disturbing. Jesus tells the disciple that a dead father is not the possession of a person called to follow Jesus. No matter what particular nuance of meaning an interpreter gives this part of the saying, its implications are unsettling. The burial of one's father was a serious religious obligation for a Jew,¹⁰ and this saying asks this disciple to disregard this duty. He must not go now, and it would be impossible to wait until later to bury his father. Jesus' statement opposes both the beginning and the end of the disciple's statement to Jesus, therefore, and it is likely that the implications were scandalous in Jewish society.¹¹

There is, however, another dimension to the interchange. When we ask what the disciple should do, the answer is clear: he should follow Jesus without delay and without compromise. In contrast to the first unit, where Jesus changes "Teacher," which the scribe used to address him, to "Son of man," the second unit shows Jesus accepting "Lord" as his correct title of address. Jesus responds with the command "Follow me," like a lord commands a servant. This unit, therefore, does not leave the disciple motionless. It is directive, like deliberative speech (τὸ συμβουλευτικόν, Aristotle, *Rhet.* I.iii.7). When these two units follow one another in a sequence, the first unit stands as an initial exhibition of the authoritative ἦθος ("ethos") of Jesus in a pointed statement that destroys the presuppositions of the one who approaches him. The second unit contains a deliberative dimension (giving advice) along with the statement that destroys the disciple's presuppositions. Even though the disciple's basic hopes have been frustrated, Jesus has accepted the role of lord over his actions. Jesus gives the disciple direct advice, and he has to decide only if he will or will not act according to the injunction placed before him.

6. Hengel, *Nachfolge*, 8 and Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 411.

7. Schwarz, "Aphes tous nekrouς," 272-76.

8. Manson, *Sayings of Jesus*, 73 and Klemm, "Das Wort," 73.

9. Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 411.

10. See, for example, the statement in Gen 50:5 and Tobith 4:3 and 6:15. See also the references collected in Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, I:487-89 and II:1:578-92.

11. Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 411.

On the basis of guidelines presented in the previous chapter, we have a new way to understand this sequence in Matthew. The internal logic of the sequence here opens with a narrator's positive comments about a person, then presents an example of the direct speech of the person, then reworks the speech of the person so that it presents a theme or thesis. The introductory sentence functions like a statement of praise which Hermogenes says a person should put at the beginning of an elaboration. With this sentence, Matthew asserts that Jesus is so popular that a great crowd of people throngs around him, and he embodies such authoritative qualities that he issues commands to people as a natural part of his activity. With his introductory comment, therefore, the narrator recommends Jesus to the audience on the basis of his popular appeal and his exercise of authority. After the introductory sentence, the narrator presents a chreia in which the authoritative character of the speaker is embodied in the first words he speaks. These words present a person who overturns the presuppositions of those who approach him and who refuses to offer images of solace and comfort either to them or to himself. After this chreia, a superbly well-constructed unit sets a deliberative thesis before the reader in the unforgettable form of "Follow me and leave the dead to bury their own dead." This sequence, then, has qualities of the first steps in a chreia elaboration. The arrangement of these abbreviated chreiai admirably set the stage for Jesus to deliver a deliberative thesis in a poignant, directive manner at the end of the unit. The authority of the advice at the end comes from the $\eta\theta\omicron\varsigma$ ("ethos") of the speaker that both the narrator and the direct speech of Jesus have established. The sequence, then, has a rhetorical logic. The introductory comment and the first chreia establish an appropriate relationship between the speaker and the audience before the speaker launches his particular thesis about the demands of life and death.

2. Luke 9:51-62

Analysis of the parallel material in Luke 9:51-62 shows further development of the logic in the Matthean unit. In Luke 9:51-56, as in Matt 8:18, the introduction features the narrator telling the reader about Jesus. The introduction in Luke, however, is much longer, since it sets the stage not only for the chreiai which immediately follow but for Jesus' entire journey to Jerusalem.¹² The introductory unit summarizes events that characterize Jesus as a person who acts on the basis of controlled, reflective thoughts and disciples as people who respond on the basis of natural or traditional inclinations:

12. Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 403-4.

When the days drew near for him to be received up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him; but the people would not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to bid fire come down from heaven and consume them?" But he turned and rebuked them. And they went on to another village. (Luke 9:51-56)

In this introduction, disciples speak to Jesus, but direct speech is not put on the lips of Jesus. Rather, the narrator tells the reader that Jesus set his face toward Jerusalem (9:51), sent two messengers ahead (9:51) who went into a Samaritan village and met rejection (9:52-53), rebuked James and John (9:55), and went into another village (9:56). The narrator has characterized the intentions, actions, speech, and relationships of Jesus and his disciples, skillfully preparing for direct speech by Jesus. We observed earlier how the introductory verse in Matt 8:18 began like a chreia but ended by describing Jesus' speech rather than letting Jesus exhibit his authority through direct speech. Luke's introduction maintains a similar approach to Jesus' speech. This kind of composition is appropriate for an introduction, since it creates anticipation within the reader for the direct statement of the theme (cf. Quintilian IV.i.5). The reader wants to hear direct speech by Jesus himself, and the reader hears it in the next units. Both the scribal tradition and scholarly interpretation reveal the manner in which these verses set the stage for direct speech by Jesus. Later scribes actually provided direct speech, some filling in Luke 9:55 simply with "You do not know to what kind of spirit you belong," and others adding to this the rationale "for the Son of man did not come to destroy human lives but to save them."¹³ Also, Dibelius posited the existence of a tradition with a response by Jesus.¹⁴ Probably the original verses in Luke, however, simply characterized the disciples' inclination to retaliate in the manner of a man of God (2 Kgs 1:10, 12) and Jesus' self-control as he followed a position of "no retaliation."¹⁵

The final verses, then, introduce alternative attributes of character for Jesus and for those who follow. James and John respond on the basis of traditional ideas of powerful messiahship associated with Elijah,¹⁶ and Jesus responds with deliberate resolve based on a reformulation of past tradition. The direct speech of the two disciples influences the reader's attitude toward the people, in the subsequent units, who talk to Jesus about becoming his disciples. The unfulfilled chreia at the end of the introduction provides an excellent transition to the statement of the

13. For a full discussion of these verses, see Ross, "Rejected Words."

14. Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*, 47-48.

15. Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 408.

16. Flender, *St. Luke*, 33-34.

theme in the next unit. This is precisely the kind of approach the rhetoricians recommended in an *exordium*.¹⁷ The verses at the end of the unit build anticipation for direct speech by Jesus and create a point of view for the reader to evaluate the ensuing dialogue between Jesus and potential followers. This point of view guides the presentation and elaboration of the theme, and it establishes the overall framework for controlling the meaning of the chreia in their new rhetorical setting.

After the introduction, a unit occurs in which Jesus comes to speech. But Jesus is not the first to speak. In the mode of the introduction, a person comes to Jesus and addresses him, and Jesus responds with aggressive, picturesque words:

As they were going along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head." (Luke 9:57-58)

This unit, in contrast to the Matthean version (8:19), does not say that the person is a scribe and does not feature the person addressing Jesus as "Teacher." Rather, the introduction features James and John addressing Jesus as "Lord" (*κύριε*, 9:54), and the person in this unit indicates by his willingness to follow Jesus "wherever he goes" that he also accepts Jesus as Lord. The absence of the use of the title "Lord" creates a sequence in which a form of *ἀκολουθεῖν* ("to follow") is the first word of direct speech in three successive units (9:57, 59, 61) as "someone" (*τις*, 9:57), "another" (*ἕτερος*, 9:59), and "another" (*ἕτερος*, 9:61) approach Jesus. The absence of the title of address, therefore, helps to highlight the theme of "following" that the unit elaborates.

After the introduction, the reader encounters three brief units rather than two as in Matthew. The first unit recaptures the determination of Jesus to go to Jerusalem by indicating that they were "on the road" (*ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ*, 9:57). Then the interlocutor introduces the central theme of the elaboration with the statement "I will follow you wherever you go." When Jesus thwarts the intentions of the one who approaches him, the reader knows that Jesus is thinking about the severe problems associated with going to Jerusalem. The people in Jerusalem will not accept him, even as the Samaritans, who do not accept Jerusalem, do not accept him. Also, the reader knows that the person who approached Jesus has spoken out of a naive, uninformed perception of Jesus' mission and its consequences. In the Lukan version, then, a specific framework of meaning guides the reader's interpretation of the Son of man's wandering around with no place to lay his head. If neither the Jews in Jerusalem nor the Samaritans will accept Jesus, where can he and his

followers turn for relaxation, comfort, or basic needs? It is obvious that the person who approached Jesus has no understanding of the marginal relationship he will have to established society and its benefits if he becomes a follower of Jesus.

Whereas an established framework of understanding about Jesus and his disciples controls the meaning of the initial chreia, the next unit takes Jesus' speech even further into an organized system of religious thought. Jesus opens the unit with a command to a person to follow him. To this the person responds, "Let me first go and bury my father," and Jesus counters with, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." In Luke, as in Matthew, this unit features deliberative speech. But now our author has formulated the unit even more like the elaboration of a chreia. With Jesus' initial statement, he makes the first person's offer to follow him the theme of his own speech. Then the question by the interlocutor allows Jesus to restate the theme in terms of going out and proclaiming the kingdom of God. A different ordering of the words supports the approach in Luke. Instead of *ἐπίστροφόν μοι πρῶτον ἀπελθεῖν καὶ θάψαι* ("permit me first to go away and to bury," Matt 8:21), Luke 9:59 reads: *ἐπίστροφόν μοι ἀπελθόντι πρῶτον θάψαι* ("let me go away first to bury"). The Lukan ordering of the words sets the stage for a double saying which makes a statement about burying in the first clause and about going away in the second clause:

leave the dead to bury (*θάψαι*) their own dead,
but you go away (*ἀπελθών*) and proclaim the kingdom of God.

Now the answer to the man's request has two parts, and the second part reiterates a form of *ἀπερχεσθαι* ("to go away"). This results in a word-pattern whereby the threefold repetition of *ἀκολουθεῖν* ("to follow," 9:57, 59, 61) establishes a framework for elaborating the theme of following, and the threefold repetition of *ἀπερχεσθαι* ("to go away," 9:57, 59, 60) provides an avenue for instruction about the kingdom of God. The second chreia, then, restates the first chreia in terms of two related themes: following and going away. An exhortation at the beginning by Jesus gives prominence to the theme of following in the sequence, and a statement at the end about going away fills the theme with didactic content about the kingdom of God. This arrangement domesticates the second chreia within a historical framework that presents Jesus on the road to Jerusalem and a didactic framework that presents instruction about the kingdom of God. The Matthean version, in contrast, leaves the abrupt saying, "Follow me and leave the dead to bury their own dead" at the very end of the unit. In Luke, the final comment is "you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." With the modifications in Luke, the aggressive chreia has become part of a program of instruction not only concerning Jesus' journey to Jerusalem (introduced in Luke 9:51) but also

17. See, for example, Quintilian, *Inst. Orat.* IV.i.26.

concerning proclamation of the kingdom of God, which is an explicit part of Jesus' activity in the Lukan account (4:43; 6:20; 8:1; 9:2,11).

In Luke, therefore, the first two chreiai introduce Jesus as an authoritative speaker, present the theme "Follow me," and restate the theme in terms of a set of actions associated with Jerusalem and the kingdom of God. But the sequence does not end here. An additional unit stands in Luke as follows:

Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." And Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:61-62)

This unit features "another" person repeating the first part of the person's statement in the first chreia ("I will follow you," 9:57) and the first part of the person's statement in the second chreia ("Lord, let me first . . .," 9:59). Then the person makes a request related to family attachments which is milder than the request in the second unit. The situation does not have the characteristics of a crisis, like the unit before it that features the death of the person's father. Rather, the situation is like Elisha's request to Elijah simply to bid his parents farewell before he leaves them (1 Kgs 19:20). These features suggest that Luke has carried the *ἦθος* ("ethos") of Jesus and the theme of following into even more domesticated and traditional settings.

The role of the final Lukan unit in an elaboration of the theme is evident from the repetition of the phrase "kingdom of God." But there is another rhetorical dimension at work in the unit. Jesus' response is a maxim. A maxim, according to Aristotle (*Rhet.* II.xxi.2), is a general statement about the objects of human actions and what should be chosen or avoided with reference to them. The statement "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God" is a general statement about human action directed toward the kingdom of God. There are, of course, different kinds of maxims. This one is representative of the kind that "are clear to those who consider them" as soon as they are uttered (Aristotle, *Rhet.* II.xxi.5). In other words, Jesus' maxim is like the one cited by Aristotle (*Rhet.* II.xxi.5): *οὐδείς ἐραυτῆς ὅς τις οὐκ ἀεὶ φιλεῖ* ("He is no lover who does not love always."). The content of the saying itself is clear, with the result that its meaning is evident.

When the third unit in Luke ends with a maxim, an important rhetorical sequence has occurred. Maxims are important parts of rhetorical syllogisms (which Aristotle calls "enthymemes"). According to Aristotle (*Rhet.* II.xxi.2): "Maxims are the premises or conclusions of enthymemes without the syllogism." The meaning of Aristotle's assertion can easily be seen in the famous syllogism:

First premise: All men are mortal.

Second premise: Socrates is a man.

Conclusion: Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

The first premise of this syllogism is a maxim. The conclusion, which is specific, results from the application of the maxim ("All men are mortal.") to a specific premise ("Socrates is a man."). In a rhetorical setting, in contrast to a logical demonstration, the speaker regularly presents the maxim in the form of a rationale after the conclusion.¹⁸ For example, a speaker could state the preceding logical syllogism as a rhetorical enthymeme: "Socrates is mortal, because all men are mortal." There is no need to state the second premise, since the hearers will presuppose that Socrates is a man. In a rhetorical setting, then, it is customary to introduce the conclusion first, to provide a rationale in a maxim which follows, and to omit the second premise.

In the sequence in Luke, the maxim in the third unit provides a general premise (a rationale) for the deliberative exhortations before it. It provides a reason why a disciple who follows Jesus must "leave the dead to bury their own dead and go, proclaim the kingdom of God," as well as why a disciple cannot return to say farewell to his family. Prior to the maxim, the only basis for the exhortation was Jesus' authoritative *ἦθος* ("ethos"). The disciple should go because the authoritative personage whom he approached said that he should go. But the third unit introduces an argumentative reason why he should leave all attachments and go: "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." This rationale suggests that the disciple should act uncompromisingly because people who turn aside from a task that requires straightforward concentration are unfit for the task they began. With such a rationale, the unit has moved to another form of logic, namely, deductive logic. In contrast, the logic of *ἦθος* ("ethos") is the logic of induction. Jesus is an authoritative person, because it is possible to tell about exemplary occasions in which various people recognized his authority. The logic of *ἦθος* ("ethos") supports itself through examples that illustrate its truth. When Jesus' speech moves beyond the exhibition of *ἦθος* ("ethos") in cleverness and exhortation to the exhibition of *ἦθος* ("ethos") in a maxim, it has interwoven inductive and deductive reasoning.

The third unit in the Lukan version, therefore, introduces an underlying syllogism. When it is possible to reconstruct such a syllogism, deductive logic is present in the argumentation. The syllogism is as follows:

18. Aristotle makes this point in *Rhet.* II.xxi.2.

First premise: No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.

Second premise: You wish to be fit for the kingdom of God.

Conclusion: Therefore, leave the dead to bury the dead, and go, proclaim the kingdom of God.

The three units in Luke have successfully established a thesis with a rationale. This rhetorical move has set the stage for an elaboration that could present a complete argument. In this setting, however, we do not get a complete elaboration. We simply get the establishment of a deliberative thesis (a disciple should go uncompromisingly and proclaim the kingdom of God) supported by a rationale.

Before we leave the Lukan unit, we should notice two more characteristics of the maxim. First, the maxim provides a rationale which has strong support in Mediterranean tradition. The situation evoked by this maxim goes back as far as Hesiod's *Works and Days*, where the plowman is defined as:

he who attends to his work and drives a straight furrow and no longer gapes after his comrades, but keeps his mind on his work. (l. 443)

A plowman must devote himself entirely to his work without allowing his interest in other people to interrupt him. Hesiod indicates that the sower (l. 445) and the one who covers the seed by harrowing (*ἐπισκαφεύς*, l. 470) are most likely to cause the distraction. In an Egyptian plowing scene available to us,¹⁹ a plowman has submitted to the temptation to stop, turn around, and converse with another man who is standing with his arms folded.²⁰ But this was not a desirable situation, since the plowing and planting needed to be completed within as short a period as possible, customarily ten days,²¹ in order for the crop to receive proper moisture and be ready at the appropriate time for harvest. According to Homeric tradition, the press of time meant that the plowman had to keep going throughout the day without eating until nightfall, though he might get a drink at the end of the furrow (*Iliad* 18.544–47). Homer's *Odyssey* refers to the necessary commitment of the plowman and the plowman's eagerness for the day to end in a scene that is informative for the interpretation of Luke 9:62:

But Odysseus would ever turn his head toward the blazing sun (*πολλὰ πρὸς ἥλιον κεφαλὴν τρέπε παμφανόωντα*), eager to see it set, for verily he was eager to return home. And as a man longs for supper, for whom all day long a yoke of wine-dark oxen has drawn the jointed plow through fallow land, and

19. Wilkinson, *Popular Account*, ii.13.

20. West, *Hesiod*, 271, note 444.

21. For the details, see the "Instruction of Ninurta," 34–40 cited in West, *Hesiod*, 5 and 271, note 444.

gladly for him does the light of the sun sink, that he may busy him with his supper, and his knees grow weary as he goes; even so gladly for Odysseus did the light of the sun sink. (*Odyssey* 13.28–35)

Odysseus continually turned his head toward the sun as he longed for the sunset, but he did not turn his head and look back (*βλέπων εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω*, Luke 9:62). Clearly, a good plowman could turn his head momentarily to the side without ceasing his work or plowing unsatisfactorily. If, however, a person turned to look behind him, he had either stopped his plowing, as in the Egyptian scene, or he would have changed the angle of the plow so that the furrow would be shallow or crooked or both. The situation evoked in the rationale in Luke 9:62, then, is well known in Mediterranean tradition and would provide rich guidelines for understanding the ramifications of becoming a disciple and proclaiming the kingdom of God.

Second, this maxim moves the reader from the arena of wildlife in the initial chreia (foxes and birds of the air) to domestic life (plowing a furrow). The association of plowing with domestic life is obvious from the Homeric passage where Odysseus longs for the comfort of supper. Hesiod's discussion of the things needed in advance of the plowing, which include a house, a woman, and an ox,²² also supports plowing's association with domestic life. Plowing is part of domestic living where a home offers the comforts of food and rest. The analogy of plowing, therefore, establishes contact with a different arena of life than the analogy with foxes and birds. Consequently, we have a sequence that domesticates the chreia both logically and metaphorically. The domestication occurs through repetition, restatement, ellipsis, and metaphor. Repetition of the themes of following, going away, and requesting permission establishes continuity. Restatement provides the setting for instruction to go out and proclaim the kingdom of God. Ellipsis provides efficient composition, especially in the last unit when Jesus' response omits exhortation and reversal of the person's statement in order to present a rationale for the exhortations. Metaphor provides the occasion for moving from a state of existence even more primitive than birds' and foxes' ("wandering around" without even their comforts) to a state of existence associated with the activities that produce food for a secure and comfortable life at home.

In the three units in Luke, we have the beginning steps of an elaboration containing an introduction, the statement of a theme, a restatement of the theme to associate it with the kingdom of God, and a rationale that grounds the theme in a well-known situation in domestic life. With this elaboration, the two abrupt chreiai from Q tradition that reflect a critical, untamed approach to society have located a home

22. *Works and Days*, 458–92.

within an account which portrays Jesus as a person who has quietly calculated the costs of his activity and has carefully reworked previous tradition to understand it. His responses, therefore, come out of an educational program designed to move people away from their natural or traditional inclinations into a system of understanding informed by the history of Jerusalem and Samaria, and the renewal of that history in the ministry of Jesus and the church. The elaboration of these chreiai has domesticated them within a didactic, historical framework that presents a series of events which led Jesus to Jerusalem and the church out of Jerusalem into the world. In this framework, untamed chreiai have become poignant, picturesque challenges to the person who is weighing the pros and cons of joining Christianity, which is now perceived as a movement that explains itself to others through an account of the events that led to its formation (Luke 1:1-4).

Before ending the analysis of these units, it will be instructive to return to the Matthean unit for an additional observation. There is, in fact, another unit in Matthew that is part of the rhetorical sequence elaborating the theme of following. The introductory verse (8:18) in which Jesus commands his disciples to go to the other side of the sea sets the stage not only for the two chreia-units but for an additional unit in which the disciples follow Jesus into a boat (8:23). The Matthean sequence, then, elaborates the theme of following in a way that is different from Luke. In the introductory verse, the narrator tells us that Jesus issued a command to go to the other side. In the first chreia-unit, a scribe tells Jesus he will follow him (8:19), in the next unit Jesus tells a disciple to follow him (8:22), and in the final unit the narrator tells us that Jesus' disciples followed him into a boat (8:23). Several scholars have explored the final unit well through modern methods of criticism.²³ The unit features the disciples during the time of the church with its eschatological tremors (*σεισμοί*, 8:24; cf. 24:7; 27:51, 54; 28:2). When the disciples encounter difficulty, they cry out in a ritualistic manner, "Lord, save (us), we are perishing" (8:25). Jesus' response distinguishes between little faith and much faith, a distinction that is appropriate in a gathered community of faith rather than in a mission setting where initial belief is being sought. At the end, a congregation of "men" marvel that Jesus' power controls not only humans but also forces within the cosmos. The story, then, presents the church in the midst of its challenges in the world.

From the perspective of rhetorical criticism, the final Matthean unit presents a model of Jesus as lord over the church and the disciples as obedient but never sufficient believers in the church. In other words, the third unit elaborates the difficulties of following through argument from

23. Van Iersel and Linmans, "Storm on the Lake."

example. Here is a significant difference from the Lukan approach. In Luke, the introduction established the nature of the *ἦθος* ("ethos") of Jesus and the disciples. Then, the paradigmatic nature of the chreiai is presupposed as the narrator uses the thought and action in the chreiai to set forth a thesis about following and proclaiming the kingdom that is supported by a premise (i.e., a rationale) about plowing a furrow. This approach interweaves inductive and deductive logic, and it represents an embryonic stage of elaboration that could lead to a complete argument as exhibited by Hermogenes. Matthew's version, in contrast, remains in the realm of inductive argumentation. The chreiai present a scribe being told he will not be able to do what he thinks he can do (8:19-20), a disciple being told to respond uncompromisingly to a command to follow (8:21-22), and all of Jesus' disciples being insufficient for their task but appropriately petitioning the lord of the church (8:23-27). This sequence presents examples of appropriate and inappropriate approaches to discipleship. It does not satisfactorily set the stage for a complete elaboration as Hermogenes exhibited it, since it does not attempt to provide a rationale for the imperative or declarative statements in the units. Without a rationale, the argumentation remains inductive. It argues on the basis of *ἦθος* and example, but not on the basis of deductive logic. Only if inductive logic is interwoven with deductive logic will there be an opportunity to develop the unit into a complete argument.

3. Conclusion

Analysis of the development of the theme of following with two chreiai customarily attributed to Q tradition reveals different uses of these traditions in Matthew and Luke. Matthew stays in the realm of inductive logic, developing the theme through *ἦθος* and example in a setting of crossing the sea. Luke, in contrast, prefaces the chreiai with a unit that characterizes the intentions, actions, speech, and interrelations of Jesus and his disciples as Jesus sets his face toward Jerusalem. Then he composes the chreiai in a manner that introduces the theme of following and restates the theme before he presents a rationale at the end. The rationale introduces deductive logic into a rhetorical sequence based on inductive logic, grounding the assertions in a well-known situation in domestic life in Mediterranean society.

The difference between the presentation of the chreiai in Matthew and Luke is significant rhetorically. The issue is whether it is sufficient in the Christian community to ground certain assertions simply in the *ἦθος* ("ethos") of Jesus, or whether it is advantageous to provide one or more rationales from the arena of common experiences in life. When the reasoning establishes a basis for one or more assertions through a rationale

that moves outside the arena of the $\eta\theta\omicron\varsigma$ of Jesus, it moves into the realm of elaboration as discussed by Hermogenes. It is probably natural for any apophthegmatic tradition to contain the initial moves illustrated by these sections in Matthew and Luke. It remains to be seen, however, if parts of the synoptic tradition contain forms of elaboration beyond these initial stages.