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Synopsis

An investigation of the Beatitudes of Matthew: Between oral tradition and Greek text investigates the Beatitudes in the Gospel of Matthew. It starts with the Greek text as it is known today and works backwards to uncover the different stages of tradition. Each beatitude is reconstructed in both Hebrew and Aramaic in order to ascertain the oral tradition which gave rise to the Greek text and, ultimately, to suggest a theoretical rendering of the original words of Jesus. The results indicate that the original Beatitudes were given in Aramaic. They were subsequently translated into Hebrew and it is this Hebrew version which is the antecedent for the Greek text (which itself underwent successive modifications) known today. The value of the results of this investigation is a more accurate understanding of the words of Jesus, having obvious implications for Bible translations and commentaries. The results further give a glimpse into how the Beatitudes were understood at the different stages of tradition and assess their modern interpretation in the light of their history.

List of Key Terms

4Q246

4Q298

4Q521

11Q13

Alliteration

Allusion

Apocalyptic

Apodosis

Aramaic

Beatitude

Beatitudes, the

Chiasm

Christian Palestinian Aramaic

Conflation

Coptic

Dead Sea Scrolls, the

Galilean Aramaic

Galilee

Greek

Hebrew

Hemistich

Jewish

Jubilee

Judean Aramaic

Kaddish

Kingdom

Lord's Prayer, the

Macarism

Matthew

Memra

Midrash

New Testament

Palestine

Qumran

Rabbis

Reconstructions

Redaction

Rhyme

Rhythm

Septuagint

Stich

Syriac

Targum