

Dr. Robert C. Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Lecture 4, Authorship and Date

© 2024 Robert Newman and Ted Hildebrandt

How are you doing? I'm okay. Good afternoon. We're continuing our Synoptic Gospels course here.

So far, we have looked at three major topics. The Historical Jesus, the Jewish Background, Introduction to Exegesis and Narratives with a sample of the Visit of the Wise Men. And we're ready to go on to Section 4 now, Authorship and Date of the Synoptic Gospels.

We will also throw in the characteristics of the Synoptic Gospels at the end. We want to sketch the historical evidence for the Synoptic Gospels written by their traditional authors, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, all before 70 AD. We suggest that Matthew was written first, which is also traditional, and that the order of Mark and Luke is uncertain.

Traditionally, Mark is next, though we favor Luke in the late 50s and Mark in the early 60s, shortly after Matthew was translated into Greek. So, let's go have a look at these things. We'll start with the authorship of the Synoptics and go through each one of those. We will look first at internal evidence and external evidence, and then we'll come back and think about the date.

So, authorship of the Synoptics, Matthew's authorship. Internal evidence, well, except for the title, and we, by the way, never have a copy of Matthew with any other person listed in the title. The text is anonymous.

That is, the writer never indicates when he is alluding to himself in an identifiable manner. We don't know if the title was put on the autograph by the author or not. If you're familiar with the titles, we'll mention them now and again.

They're all, well, the titles on the King James are the Gospel of St. Matthew, Gospel of St. Mark, Gospel according to St. Matthew, Gospel according to St. Mark, etc. The earliest titles we have on the papyri are Gospel according to Matthew, according to Mark, according to Luke, and in the earliest parchments, some of those are shortened even to just according to where the Gospel is understood. Well, given that Matthew wrote it, it's interesting that we're still on the internal evidence; it's interesting that in his apostle list, Matthew 10:2-4, he calls himself a tax collector, which was not exactly a popular profession in New Testament Palestine.

Tax collectors have probably never been super popular with the taxpayers any time in history, but in the Roman Empire, where you had areas that had been conquered

in one way or another, Palestine at this point had not been too fiercely conquered, but the inhabitants did not appreciate paying taxes to Rome, and the Roman collection method at this point was such that it led to a great deal of corruption, and over-collecting, and things of that sort so that the tax collectors were viewed as traitors and crooks, and various other sorts of things. The Matthew, Luke, and Acts apostle lists omit this detail about Matthew being a tax collector from the apostle lists anyway. This perhaps suggests Matthew's humility and may also suggest a probable reason for all the Gospels being anonymous, namely, to keep the focus on Jesus.

That's all we know about internal evidence of the Gospel of Matthew. Consistently, the titles of all the Gospels, as we'll see, have these particular names on it, traditional names on it, and no others—external evidence.

Well, we've got a fair bit of external evidence, and we're going to walk through that, naming various writers and saying a little bit about them as well. The earliest writer we've got that makes some statement of this sort is a fellow named Papias, and he's writing perhaps around 130 AD. In his work, *The Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord*, we have this remark: Matthew wrote the oracles in the Hebrew dialect, but everyone interpreted him as he was able.

The term the oracles is the Greek *talogia*, and is rather regularly used for revelations from God. So, a rather strong-ish term. In the Hebrew dialect, the word dialect is actually a word we get, our word dialect, from *dialecto*.

So, there's a possible range of meanings of it, but the Hebrew language is certainly within that range. The original of Papias' *Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord*, is not extant. Extracts from it are cited by several ancient and even medieval authors, and the whole work was apparently still extant in the Middle Ages.

Our citation here comes from Eusebius' *Church History*, so written about 325, give or take a bit, Book 3, Chapter 39, Section 16. So, what's meant here by the oracles? Was this the gospel? Liberals who hold to the two-document theory, and we'll look at that later in our discussion of the synoptic problem, often say the oracles were the cue source, and evangelicals have often said the same thing as well. However, Papias later uses an oracle to refer to Mark, and everyone agrees that he is referring to the gospel there.

Irenaeus gives the same tradition regarding its origin but explicitly identifies it as the gospel of Matthew. What's meant by the Hebrew dialect? This could refer either to Hebrew or Aramaic language, as both were sometimes called Hebrew in antiquity. This would imply that the original Matthew was in Hebrew or Aramaic and that it was translated later.

In opposition to the above ideas, some take dialect to mean Greek written in a Hebraistic style. This theory does not fit Papias' comment either, as it is hard to see how a simple stylistic difference would make Matthew difficult to interpret. The idea of a language foreign to a Greek audience is more in keeping with Papias' remark.

Recently, George Howard at the University of Georgia has argued that a rather poorly preserved text of the original Hebrew Matthew has come down to us in a medieval Jewish polemical anti-Christian text called *Evan Bohan. Touchstone*. See George Howard's work, *The Gospel of Matthew According to a Primitive Hebrew Text*, published by Mercer University Press in 1987.

Irenaeus is the next author that we hear from in this regard. He's writing about 50 years after Papias, around 180 AD. In his work *Against Heresies*, he says that Matthew also published a book of the gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect while Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel in Rome and founding the church.

This comes from *Against Heresies*, Book 3, Chapter 1, Section 2, which survives to us only in the Latin, the whole of the *Against Heresies*, but pieces are quoted here and there, and the Greek of Irenaeus is quoted in Eusebius' *Church History*, Book 5, Section 8, Chapter 2. Note that Irenaeus calls Matthew's work a gospel, puts it in the Hebrew dialect, and gives it a date while Peter and Paul are in Rome. We know that Paul was in Rome in the early 60s AD, and so, presumably, that's the time period being referred to. A third witness to the authorship of Matthew is that of Pantaenus, who wrote about the same time as Irenaeus, around 180 AD.

We only have his information indirectly in Eusebius. Eusebius says in *Church History*, Book 5, Chapter 10, Section 3, Pantaenus also was one of them and is said to have gone to India, where the story goes that he found the gospel according to Matthew, which had preceded his arrival, among certain people there who had learned of Christ, that Bartholomew, one of the apostles, had preached to them, and that he had left the writing of Matthew in Hebrew letters, which also was preserved to the time indicated. Pantaenus was a Christian from Alexandria, Egypt, who was head of the catechetical school there, ahead of Clement and Origen.

Notice this is an indirect information. The story goes that, so it's, I don't know what to make of that, but not nearly as strong as the others. Pantaenus notes that Matthew is written in Hebrew letters, that could still be Aramaic or Hebrew, but couldn't very well be Greek.

The text is said to have been preserved still as of the late 2nd century. The remark about India is not far-fetched, as there was travel between India and the Roman world at this time. Our fourth testimony in this regard is Clement of Alexandria, and he's writing about 20 years later around 200 AD.

Clement was head of the catechetical school after Pantaenus. The catechetical school doesn't tell you a whole lot about what this organization was, but we don't have an exactly equivalent term. Catechetical school sounds like a Sunday school class in a church.

Well, it was kind of partly that, but it was also what we might even call a seminary, so it really covered a whole range of studies for Christians, from new converts up to fairly advanced. Clement of Alexandria was head of this catechetical school after Pantaenus. He left Alexandria during the persecution in 203 and then died sometime between 210 and 217 AD.

Here's Clement's quote. This, again, is a citation by Eusebius. Again, in the same books, and he's referring to Clement's outlines, Clement gives a tradition of the early presbyters concerning the order of the Gospels in the following manner.

He said that those Gospels that contained the genealogies were written first, but the Gospel, according to Mark, had this occasion. Okay, so what do we get there? Well, we've got the tradition of the presbyters, so Clement means that the information he has comes from leaders ahead of his time, so that would presumably go back to say Pantaenus or so, or maybe earlier than that. He explicitly states that Matthew and Luke were written first, so even before Mark.

That's actually going to be the suggested order we wind up with here when we pull everything together. A fifth witness regarding the Gospel of Matthew is Origen, and he overlaps Clement very slightly but is writing here perhaps around 240 AD, so a full generation afterward. Origen was Clement's successor in Egypt.

He later went to Caesarea after some disagreements with the officials in the church in Alexandria, and there he built up a large library, which we think was the largest Christian library in antiquity, which was eventually inherited by Eusebius, and so became the basis for a great deal of his material on church history. In Origen's commentary on Matthew, Origen says this. Again, this is Eusebius citing Origen, so he's a third person.

In the first of the books on the Gospel according to Matthew, observing the ecclesiastical canon, he, that is Origen, testifies that he knows only four Gospels, writing somewhat as follows. As he has learned by tradition concerning the four Gospels, which alone are undisputed in the church of God under heaven, that first there was written a gospel according to Matthew, the one-time publican, but afterward an apostle of Jesus Christ, who published it in the Hebrew language, and here uses Gromison letters, for those from Judaism who believed. We'll come back and quote more of Origen's statements when we get to Mark, Luke, John, etc.

Question about the order here. Is Origen giving chronological order here? It's the first of the books, according to Eusebius, quoting and observing the ecclesiastical canon. So is this first written chronologically, or first written in canonical order? I don't know.

Language, there, translated is letters, as I said, Gromison, and this is somewhat clearer than saying dialect. Well, that's the five earliest writers, if you like. The next two witnesses are important more for their access to written documents, which have not survived to today, than they are likely to have access to reliable oral tradition.

Already by Origen, we're out 200 years after the ministry of Jesus. Eusebius is the major historian of the ancient church, and Jerome is one of its best scholars. The sixth testimony here is from Eusebius of Caesarea, writing about 325, so we're now about 300 years out from the ministry of Jesus.

Eusebius here was bishop of Caesarea, you remember that's over on the Palestine coast, but this is after the end of the Roman persecution, so this has not been a Jewish territory for a long time now, but he had access to the library of Origen. Eusebius says in his church history, book 3, section 24, chapters 5 and 6, chapter 24, section 5 and 6. Yet of all the disciples of the Lord, only Matthew and John have left us memoirs, and they, it is reported, had recourse to writing only under the pressure of necessity. Matthew, who preached earlier to Hebrews, when he was about to go to others, also committed his gospel to writing in his native tongue, compensated by his writing for the loss of his presence to those from whom he went away.

One interesting comment here is the use of the term memoirs; of the disciples, only Matthew and John left us memoirs. That's an ancient genre, a genre for famous people thinking back over events in their own lives and writing them up. Matthew and John, he says, according to his quotation here, had not planned to write, but when they saw the need arise, as they were leaving Palestine, they did so.

Now we move to Jerome, and he's writing another couple of generations after Eusebius, about 400, in his Lives of Illustrious Men. Matthew is the fifth of the illustrious men, so this is in Lives of Illustrious Men 5. Matthew, who is also called Levi and who changed from a publican tax collector to an apostle, was the first one in Judea to write a gospel of Christ in Hebrew letters and words for those from the circumcision who believed. Who translated afterward into Greek is not sufficiently certain.

So, that's a kind of quick tour of seven testimonies, and we have no contradictory testimony to these from antiquity. And they allow us to give this summary on the authorship of Matthew. First, that Matthew wrote the gospel ascribed to him is the unanimous opinion of tradition and, but perhaps not independently, of the titles on the extant manuscripts.

This is consistent with the title and content of the first gospel. No other names are associated with it. The early church knew of fake gospels and rejected them.

Secondly, Matthew's gospel, which was the first written, is also given several times in the tradition. This is frequently disputed today, as most liberals and many conservatives think Matthew's gospel uses Mark. Third, Matthew's gospel was written in Hebrew or perhaps Aramaic, which is a regular feature of the tradition.

This, too, is often disputed today because the extant Greek gospel does not look like a translation of Greek from a Semitic language. By translation Greek, we mean a translation in which a lot of the Hebrew syntax and vocabulary range is carried over into Greek. The Septuagint, for example, is a translation of Greek in much of its text, though it varies from book to book in that regard.

It, of course, could be that the translation tried to give it a more fluent Greek style. Some of the Old Testament translations into Greek were concerned about style. For instance, Symmachus and Theodotion used a good Greek style, whereas Aquila gave a very literal translation of Greek, even more so than the Septuagint, which is kind of intermediate between those.

If we try to think of English examples, the NASB is something like English translation, and of course, the English of an interlinear is even more like English translation, whereas the NIV or such perhaps has a good English style. Who made the translation? Well, we don't know. Perhaps Matthew made a free translation at a later time.

We don't know for sure if it was a translation, although I think the testimony we've looked at points that way, nor if it is who made it. What effect would it have on inspiration if Matthew, as we have it, was a translation? Of course, no problem. If Matthew translated it, we'd perhaps be more concerned if it was done by somebody besides an apostle or a trusted associate.

After all, Mark and Luke are responsible for two of the Gospels. However, the church has been without the Bible and the original language for long periods in church history. The Western church had only Latin through the Middle Ages, and even today, most Americans don't know the biblical languages at all.

So, most Christians, probably through most of history, have not had the Bible and the original languages. What languages were used in Palestine in New Testament times? Well, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek were all used in the Bar Kokhba materials. Remember, Bar Kokhba was the one who led the rebellion 132-135 AD in our Jewish background.

Bar Kokhba materials have recently been found in some caves in Israel. Latin, Greek, and Hebrew or Aramaic were used in the sign over the cross. We don't know how many people were multilingual since several of Jesus' New Testament statements are in transliterated Aramaic.

Lama Lama, Eli Eli, Lama Sabachthani, Talitha kum, and such. This was probably Jesus' native language. Well, that's a fast tour of the authorship of Matthew.

Look secondly at Mark's authorship. Internal evidence, like Matthew, except for the book title, Mark is Anonymous in its text. Some have suggested that the style seems to fit Peter's personality.

And we'll see in a moment there's a tradition that Peter is a source of Mark's gospel. So, yes, I think Westcott suggested that the style of Peter is impressionable rather than reflective, emotional rather than logical, and gives many details, including Jesus' emotions and looks and gestures, Peter's own thoughts, and this would suggest a close contact with Peter but Luke 9.33 also gives Peter's response at the Transfiguration so that's not quite unique to the gospel of Mark. Mark's outline is close to Peter's talk at Cornelius' house in Acts 10.

Both start with John's baptism rather than with Jesus' birth or pre-existence, like the other gospels. The standpoint of Mark's narrative is consistent with Peter's as an author. What do we mean by the standpoint of a narrative? Well, we don't mean that the author refers to himself in the first person but rather that he structures the narrative so that a reader tends to identify with him or his group.

And we see that rather like the way the birth narratives in Matthew and Luke seem to be written from Joseph's or Mary's viewpoint. To take a modern sample if you've read the Harry Potter series, with only a few exceptions, they're all written from the standpoint of Harry; that is the reader knows what Harry knows but doesn't know what Dumbledore knows or what any of the other characters Hermione knows or something of that sort unless they say something to Harry and then the reader knows it. So that would be what's going on in that direction.

For example, if we compare Mark 5:37 and Luke 9:23 raising Jesus' of the daughter, Matthew tells little of what happened in the house. Mark gives much more detail, including the age of the girl, Jesus' remark to give her some food, and the people put out of the room. This is consistent with the idea that Matthew remained outside and got a few details later while Peter went in and saw all the action, which is, in fact, what we're told happened. Another item that we could probably put under external evidence that might relate to authorship is Mark 14:51, which is about the young man who loses his sheet at the arrest of Jesus. That makes the best sense as a brief sketch of Mark himself, pretty much like how sorry I lost that thought. I'll come back to it makes best sense as a brief sketch of Mark himself; otherwise, it's strange to

introduce someone with no explanation, especially when they have no connection with the narrative. I always think of Alfred Hitchcock movies; that's what I was thinking of, I couldn't come up with Alfred Hitchcock, where he always has a little vignette of himself stuck in the movie somewhere.

You're inside a store or something, and there's kind of a pan across to the front window, and here's this guy looking in the window, and he wanders away, or something like that would be an example of what we perhaps have in mind here. So that's the internal evidence regarding Mark and authorship. It looks like it might reflect Peter's personality, and then maybe this little sketch could be of Mark himself.

External evidence for the authorship of Mark, we've got an even more extensive statement by Papias than we did for Matthew Papias remembers is writing about 130 AD, and he says this and this the presbyter used to say Mark indeed since he was the interpreter of Peter wrote accurately but not in order the things either said or done by the Lord as much as he remembered for he heard neither heard the Lord nor followed him but afterward as I've said Peter who fitted his discourses to the needs of his hearers but not as if making a narrative of the Lord's sayings. Consequently, Mark's writing of some things, just as he remembered, erred in nothing, for he was careful of one thing: not to omit anything of the things he had heard or falsify anything in them. That's exposition to Oracles Lord here cited in Eusebius church history book 3, chapter 39, section 15. This is the most complete statement from Papias regarding any gospel.

The brackets I have in my printed text here have after Presbyter Apostle John question mark and the things either said or done by the Lord as much as he and in brackets, Peter Mark remembered, etc. are either explanatory material added by the translators to clarify statements, or they are my comments. Papias is citing information that goes back before him. The presbyter elder is most likely the author of 2nd and 3rd John, who calls himself the elder. There's some argument over who that is, but my guess is it's the Apostle John. Irenaeus notes that Papias studied under the Apostle John. There's a problem here of where the quotation from the elder ends and where the comment of Papias picks up but my suggestion is it goes here not in order the things either said or done by the Lord as much as he remembered, and then we begin to get after that point not the elders statement which Papias remembered but now Papias explanation for he neither heard the Lord nor followed him but afterward as I've said heard and followed Peter etc. I think that's a good suggestion for the break because the next sentence is in the first person Mark is here called the interpreter of Peter and that might refer to a language which Peter did not know Peter probably knew Greek as he wrote 1st and 2nd Peter but perhaps Mark translated into Latin however Mark could be called an interpreter of Peter just because he wrote Peter's memoirs for him so that could be straightforward the phrase accurately but not in order is a little strange since many

feel that the chronology or order of events in Mark is quite good this might however refer to Mark's original note taking that is Peter did not give the data in chronological order but rather as Papias himself said here fitted it to the needs of his hearers as he gave the messages in various Christian churches in this case Mark's compilation is in order but the data given to him by Peter is not in order how about as much as he remembered that probably also refers to Peter but not to Mark accurate first occurrence is within the direct quote from the elder we suggested John probably Papias is following what we might think of as rabbinic usage here the student memorizes exactly a teacher's statement the Mishnah we might say and then gives an explanation of that statement the Gemara so the quotation up there before our asterisk which would read this way Mark indeed since he was the interpreter Peter wrote accurately but not in order the things either said or done by the Lord as much as he remembered that would be the elder's statement and then the remarks after that would be Papias explanation well that's our first testimony regarding Mark the second comes from a source that we didn't mention in connection with Matthew and that's Justin Martyr he is writing just 10 or 20 years after Papias so 140 to 150 and we have two works preserved from him his dialogue with Trypho which took place apparently shortly after the Bar Kokh for war so perhaps 140 and then his first apology which might be rather later than that after speaking several times in the dialogue with Trypho of the memoirs of the apostles called Gospels and having just mentioned Peter Justin said it is written in his memoirs that he changed Peter's name as well as the sons of Zebedee Boanerges well if you look up Boanerges you'll realize it's an allusion to Mark 3 verses 16-17 occurs nowhere else and so the natural reading of it is it's written in Peter's memoirs that he Christ changed Peter's name as well as the names of the sons of Zebedee Boanerges the assumption that his memoirs refers to Peter's author and not to Christ is I think reasonable because Justin never refers to them as Christ's memoirs but always to the memoirs of the apostles.

A third testimony regarding Mark is Irenaeus writing now about a generation after Justin Martyr 180 A.D., and we've already looked at the beginning of this statement, but I'll pick that up again. Matthew published while Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel in Rome and founding the church. After their departure, Mark, Peter's disciple and interpreter, also handed down to us the things preached by Peter in writing.

The ambiguous element in this particular quotation is the word departure. It's exodos, and exodos is used rather commonly in Greek for two different things. Physical departure and as a euphemism for departure from this life. So is Irenaeus speaking of after the death of Peter and Paul or after they left Rome? As I say, both of those constructions are common, so we'll not get the answer to that by just looking in a lexicon if you like.

The fourth testimony is from Clement of Alexandria, and we're looking at the same citation of Clement and outlines that we looked at a little bit earlier where he said the gospels with the genealogies were written first, and then he goes on to say in that sentence the gospel according to Mark had this occasion when Peter had preached the word publicly in Rome and had declared the gospel by that spirit those who were present, there were many sought Mark since he had followed him for a long time and remembered the things that had been spoken to write out the things that had been said and when he had done this he gave the gospel to those who asked him. When Peter learned of it later, he neither obstructed nor commended it. Those outlines are cited in Eusebius Church History Book 6, chapter 14, section 5. Note that in this citation by Clement Peter is still alive when the gospel is written because he reacts to it afterwards.

Peter is not sure what to do with the writing. His puzzlement somewhat resembles what he experienced when the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles at Cornelius' house, not to mention the time when Jesus was transfigured with Elijah and Moses, and he wasn't quite sure what to do. He was suggesting building some tabernacles or something.

Peter, as you recall, is one who is fast with the mouth and not always so fast with thinking it through. Outspoken, I think we call that.

The fifth testimony is from Tertullian. Tertullian is in the Latin part of the Roman Empire, North Africa, and he's writing around 200 AD. He says in his work against Marcion, Chapter 4 Book 2 Books 4 Chapters 2 or Chapter 4 Section 2, That the apostles John and Matthew instill in us the faith of apostolic men, Luke and Mark, to renew it. Is Tertullian referring to the order of writing here? Well, I doubt it.

I suspect he only has in mind, you might say, the strength of the witnesses regarding their proximity to Jesus. So, apostles are people who spent three years with Jesus, John, and Matthew. Apostolic men people who spent years with apostles Luke and Mark.

I think that's probably what he's saying there. Origin writing about 225 AD We'd already seen the gospel Matthew written first, etc. This continues on in that same sentence.

Secondly, there was written a gospel according to Mark, who made it as Peter instructed him that is, Peter acknowledges his son in the Catholic epistles in these words: the church in Babylon elect together with you and Mark, my son salutes you a quotation of 1 Peter 5. Well, secondly, Mark would most naturally refer to chronological order but perhaps in the context only to canonical order. Remember, there was a remark about according to the ecclesiastical canon back in the previous sentence. Summary on authorship First, that Mark wrote the gospel ascribed to him

is a unanimous opinion of tradition, as is the belief that it gives us Peter's preaching. Mark's authorship is supported by extant manuscript titles. There is less argument over Mark's authorship compared to Matthew's or John's.

There is, however, considerably more resistance in liberal circles to the idea that he gives us Peter's preaching. Secondly, these traditions are consistent with the nature of the gospel itself in a somewhat stronger and more obvious way than was the case for Matthew. The linkage to Peter is not explicit in the manuscripts but is consistent with the tone of the gospel as seen above under our internal evidence and also that little vignette of 1451 and 52.

Thirdly, some see a contradiction in the tradition regarding the date of Mark and the time of writing relative to Luke. Irenaeus is interpreted as saying that Mark wrote after Peter's death, whereas Clement of Alexandria clearly implies that Mark wrote before his death. Contradiction, however, is not necessary here as Irenaeus may be referring to Peter and Paul leaving Rome alive literal exodus rather than to their death figurative exodus.

It appears that Paul at least did leave Rome after his first imprisonment, according to Acts 28 and Tradition. Another alleged contradiction relates to the relative order of Mark and Luke. Many traditions give the order Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, but Clement says that the gospels with the genealogies Matthew and Luke were written first, so we have something like Matthew, Luke, then Mark, John.

We'll need to come back and think about that when we look at the date of the gospels. That brings us to consider Luke's authorship and, again, internal and external evidence. Well internal evidence except for its title the gospel text is anonymous.

However, the prologue of Acts links Acts to Luke, and internal features in Acts suggest the author of Acts was a companion to Paul, either Luke or Jesus. The prologues of Luke and Acts both mention Theophilus. Acts prologue refers to a previous account, which is clearly the gospel we call Luke. Also related to internal evidence, the vocabularies of Luke and Acts are similar and indicate a well-educated author with an unusual knowledge of medical terms. The classic work on this is William Kirk Hobart's *The Medical Language of St. Luke*, where this evidence is organized and presented for you.

Well, that's the internal evidence of Luke's authorship. External evidence. We have fewer early references to Luke than we do for Matthew and Mark. Perhaps no one saw fit to report Papias' comments on this gospel if he made any since we don't have Papias in its entirety, only scattered quotations.

We really don't know. The earliest source we have, actually two of them about tied for the earliest, is what we call a Muratorian Canon, written apparently late in the 2nd century, so say 180 approximately, and written apparently from Italy. Muratorian Canon is a list of books belonging to the New Testament that's why it's called Canon.

That was a term used for a list at that time but named for its discoverer, Muratori, in 1740 rather than for its author. The discovered piece is a fragment with the end and the beginning missing in the manuscript. We've got possible evidence that some of the middle was missing from one of its ancestors. We cannot tell that here.

It survives in a single 8th-century manuscript, which one scholar describes as written in barbarous Latin by a careless and ignorant scribe. I'm not qualified to respond to those sorts of things. It's clearly a translation of a Greek original that's in Latin translation of Greek.

Translation Latin, I guess, is what we call that. From internal evidence, it dates back to the late 2nd century and was written in or near Rome, which it calls the city. It refers to one of the early popes in our own times, so it suggests that the author's life overlaps with his.

I think it's a pious early 2nd-century pope, and it refers to Hermas as the brother of Pius, who was apparently bishop of Rome in the author's own lifetime. The canon starts out this way, but he was present among them, and so he put. The third book of the gospel is that according to Luke Luke, the physician after the ascension of Christ when Paul had taken him with him as a companion of his traveling after he made an investigation, wrote in his own name, but neither did he see the Lord in the flesh and thus as he was able to investigate so also he begins to tell the story from the nativity of John.

As only Luke begins with the birth of John the Baptist, the correct gospel is in view. No other known gospel, including apocryphal ones, begins with John's nativity. Mark about traveling companion fits with the testimony of Acts. So that's the Muratorian canon.

Second, Irenaeus from around the same time in the Muratorian canon, we think from Italy somewhere Irenaeus wrote from France but grew up in Asia Minor, and we'll jump into his sentence again, which we had already looked at. Now, Matthew published while Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel in Rome and founding the church after their departure. Mark, Peter's disciple interpreter, handed down to us in writing the things preached by Peter. Luke, also the follower of Paul, put down in a book the gospel preached by that one and then afterward John, so that's what Irenaeus has to say.

Irenaeus seems to be giving the general chronological order of writing, although there's one interesting quirk in it. He puts Luke third but he doesn't quite say that Luke is written third, so after their departure, Peter and Paul's departure Mark handed down to us, etc., and then Luke also put down in a book, and afterward John so Mark is clearly put after Matthew and John is put after Luke but Luke is just put Luke also so it might be intended chronological which is certainly reasonable but it doesn't quite say so.

The third testimony is Clement of Alexandria writing here about 208 from Egypt, and this is Eusebius again. Again, in the same books, Clement gives a tradition of the early presbyters concerning the order of the gospels in the following manner: he said those of the gospels which contained the genealogies were written first, but the gospel according to Mark, had this occasion. So, notice that the chronological order of Clement seems different than Irenaeus in that Luke precedes Mark.

Two last testimonies regarding Luke. Tertullian, writing about 215 from North Africa. That same quote we had before.

So then, of apostles, John, Matthew, and Syllas, with faith, apostolic men, Luke, and Mark renewed it. For Luke's gospel, men are used to ascribe to Paul similarly. And then finally, Origen wrote about 225 from Egypt.

Whoops, sorry, I've got another example after him. Page split in my notes. Origen, writing from Egypt.

And thirdly, according to Luke, the gospel was praised by Paul, who made it for those from the Gentiles who believed. The remark about the gospel praised by Paul is probably referring to 2 Corinthians 8.18, but most commentators doubt that this is what Paul had in mind. He says that, according to my gospel, most writers today think he's referring to his message rather than a written work about Jesus.

Lastly, Eusebius, writing about 330, his church history. Book 3, chapter 4, sections 6 and 7. Luke, in regard to race being of those of Antioch, but by profession a physician, since he had been very much with Paul and had no mean association with the rest of the apostles, left us examples of the therapy of souls, which he acquired from them in two inspired books. The gospel, which he testifies to, he also wrote according to what those handed down to him were eyewitnesses from the beginning and ministers of the word, all of whom he also says had followed even from the beginning.

He had followed even from the beginning. And the Acts of the Apostles, which he composed from what he had learned, not by hearing but with his eyes. But men say that Paul was accustomed to refer to his gospel whenever writing, as it were, about some gospel of his own, he said, according to my gospel.

Eusebius may be drawing inferences from New Testament passages, as my gospel probably refers to Paul's message. Many of Paul's references to my gospel probably predate the writing of Luke. Well, that's our quick tour there.

Summary on authorship here. Luke, a follower of Paul and a physician, wrote the gospel ascribed to him as a unanimous opinion of tradition, though we have no remarks quite so early as those of Papias from Matthew and Mark. By 200 AD, we have information from all of the geographical areas of early Christianity agreeing that Luke is the author.

This implies that the title has been on the work a long time or that early Christians had access to common knowledge. That the author was a physician who traveled with Paul is consistent with the internal vocabulary of the third gospel and with its linkage to Acts. Thus, based on internal evidence, Luke is most likely to be the author.

The gospel is frequently mentioned third, perhaps preserving a tradition regarding the order of authorship. Alternatively, this could be an early binding or canon order. In the Muratorian canon, Irenaeus and Origen all cite Luke as third.

If Luke is really written third and after Paul's death, then Clement is in error, and some internal problems develop regarding the date of Acts. So, we turn to consider the date of these gospels. So, we've looked at the authorship, and it's interesting, I think, in retrospect, to point out that we have no titles on any of the surviving manuscripts that give any other authors.

And you ask yourself, would these be the authors that people would naturally have gravitated to? And I think the answer would be, well, John maybe, but Mark and Luke, not. And Matthew is not a major character among the apostles. This is really a major thing he's noted for.

So, my suggestion is this really does go back to real knowledge, and that's seen in the lack of disagreement on these things. Let's look at the date of the Synoptic Gospels. And we'll do again the date of Matthew's gospel, the date of Mark's gospel, and the date of Luke's gospel.

And we're going to look at internal evidence and external evidence. So, date of Matthew's gospel, internal evidence. Internal evidence is of very little help here.

Two remarks suggest that the gospel was not written immediately after the resurrection, like in the 30s. And that is Matthew 28.8. The place is called the Field of Blood to this day. Suggests there's some space between the event in which Judas hung himself and the event of the writing of the gospel.

And then Matthew 28:15, regarding the claim of the soldiers that the body was stolen, this story is widely spread among the Jews to this day. So, both imply significant time interval between event and writing, but they don't say how much.

Liberals tend to date Matthew after 70 AD, partly to place it after Mark, which they date just before 70, and partly to post-date Jesus' predictions. In Matthew 21.41, we have the parable of the tenant farmers who kill the son, which implies the destruction of the nation. Israel for killing Jesus.

And so, after 70 AD, the story being made up to fit what happened. But, of course, if Jesus knows the future, that's not really a strong argument. And then, in Matthew 22:7, in the wedding banquet, the Jews refused to come and beat on his servants, so the king destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire.

If it's Jerusalem, so written after 70 is their argument, huh? And then, Matthew 23:38, your house is being left to you desolate. Either Jerusalem, their house, or the temple, their house, destroyed, so after 70. Matthew 24, the Olivet Discourse, describes the fall of Jerusalem, which was written afterward.

Liberals say Mark could be written just before the fall of Jerusalem, since that gospel does not include these details as clearly. Obviously, this is no problem for believers since all of these are in prediction contexts, and Jesus can predict the future. External evidence on the date of Matthew.

Well, Matthew is obviously written before the earliest surviving manuscripts. The papyri P64 and P67, which are actually the same papyrus, but got numbered differently before it was realized by looking at the manuscripts that they were the same, and P77 represent two manuscripts from about 200 AD. So, the gospel was written before 200.

Well, probably nobody's denied that, except a few early atheists who felt that it was all written by monks in the Middle Ages. The Epistle of Barnabas, probably written around 132 AD, cites Matthew 22.14, many called but few chosen, by saying, as the scripture says, but doesn't name Matthew. Liberals say Matthew was written by then, but Pseudo-Barnabas misremembered the quote as an Old Testament scripture.

My spot would be that Barnabas, like Christians at the time, viewed Matthew as scripture. Tradition on the authorship would require that it be written within Matthew's lifetime. We don't know how long he lived, probably no later than 100 AD.

The information we do have from tradition is that John outlived everybody else and that he lived just into the time of Trajan, I guess it is. So generally, it's given as around 100 AD. So, Matthew probably died no later than 100, probably much earlier.

This is obviously limited by Matthew's age. Since Matthew was an adult with some authority, he was a tax collector by about 30 AD; it's presumed that he was probably at least 30, and maybe older than that in 30 AD, so it is doubtful he was living after 100. Thus, the traditions imply that Matthew was written in the first century.

Allusions in other apostolic fathers, including Clement, about 95 AD, would agree with this. Irenaeus's tradition would date it to 61-68 AD, while Peter and Paul were in Rome preaching the gospel. Several other traditions make Matthew's gospel the first one written, so it might conceivably be even earlier.

Luke, as we'll suggest below, was probably written in the late 50s, so Matthew's date would thus be somewhat earlier than that. Some various proposals for Matthew's date. These range from AD 37, whoever made the note in the old Schofield Reference Bible, to 125 AD, the latest I've run into by my teacher Robert Craft, a liberal at the University of Pennsylvania.

37 is probably too early for the To This Day references. 125 AD seems to be far too skeptical of historical sources. It doesn't explain why Christians and even heretics accepted it and used only the four Gospels.

My suggestion for the date looks like this: it's got some speculation to it, and that is that Irenaeus is slightly mistaken on the Peter and Paul thing and suggests that Matthew wrote a Hebrew gospel in the 40s or perhaps early 50s before he left Jerusalem. Note when Paul visits Jerusalem, he finds only Peter and John there. Matthew later made a Greek edition in the 60s for wider use.

Thus, Irenaeus is correct about the author and language but mistakes its publication in Greek for its original Hebrew composition. No way to prove that. That's a proposal.

Papias' statement implies that for some time, Matthew was the only written gospel available and was in demand even in its Hebrew form, as apparently no Greek translations had been made yet. That would seem to me to fit that. This model is proposed to fit the tradition of Matthew being the first gospel written, with to the evidence of pre-60 date of Luke.

We'll come back to that when we get to the date of Luke. Date of Mark's gospel. Internal evidence.

Nothing direct. Liberals like to date by post-dating predictions, so they tend to put it late. A solution to the synoptic problem is going to have a bearing here, depending on whether we see Mark as written before or after Matthew and Luke.

External evidence. See the various fathers that we cited above. Based on a count of surviving manuscripts and citations by church fathers, Mark was considerably less popular than Matthew in the early church.

That's of some interest, given particularly that it's got the tradition that Peter is the source behind it. It would probably make the best sense if Matthew had already been circulating for a while. There are several dating schemes for Mark.

There's, first of all, what we might call the concordant dating scheme, that is, the conflict-minimizing scheme. That interprets the testimony of the church fathers in such a way that Mark's date is set in the 60s, before the death of Peter. Remember, Clement dates the gospel during Peter's lifetime.

Irenaeus is referring to Peter leaving Rome and not to his death in this type of interpretation. So, Exodus, Peter is in Rome but then leaves Rome for some reason. In that sense, then we can date Mark between Paul's arrival in Rome, narrated in Acts, and looks like about 61-63 AD, and 68 AD when the persecution ended with Nero's death.

Some scholars, on the other hand, reject Clement of Alexandria's testimony and interpret Irenaeus' Exodus remark so as to date the gospel after the death of Peter. This is a common liberal view with Mark dated after 68, perhaps in the early 70s. Some extreme liberals date Mark as late as 115 AD.

Thirdly, many conservatives reject old traditions and put Mark back in the 50s so that Mark can predate Matthew and Luke. This view throws out a lot of data. In order to maintain a conservative version of the two-document theory, this will be discussed later under our topic, the synoptic problem.

Summary on the date of Mark. Clearly, people are willing to ignore data so that their view of the synoptic problem to be discussed looks plausible. The concordant view seems to fit the data best, and I favor it.

However, it must reject the two-document theory, which puts Mark earlier than Matthew. That brings us to the date of Luke's gospel. Internal evidence.

Well, you can argue whether this is internal evidence or not, but clearly, Acts 1:1 presupposes Luke, so the gospel must be written before Acts. The prologues are connected since Acts refers to the previous account. Luke ends with the Ascension.

Acts picks up from there and continues. Both are addressed to the same person, Theophilus. Liberals feel that Luke 21-20 refers to the Jewish War, so they date Luke after AD 70.

As predicted in Luke 21-20, in 66 AD, the city was surrounded by armies, but the Roman general got scared and retreated. This allowed people to flee the city, as Jesus had warned them to do, and lots of Christians did, before the Romans came back the second time in 68 AD and leveled Jerusalem, as in verse 24. Only unbelievers feel a need to post-date prophecies.

No such approach is warranted for believers, though, of course, Luke could have been written after AD 70 if other evidence so indicates. That is, it's not necessary for Luke to write before the prophecy is fulfilled. That's all we can say on internal evidence.

External evidence, Acts, as we discuss in our course, Acts and Pauline Epistles, seems to date from the end of Paul's first Roman imprisonment around 63-64 AD, and that's because the date of Acts seems to precede the Roman fire at 64, as it reflects no antagonism between Christianity and the Roman government. Once Nero put the blame for the fire on Christians, Christianity became an illegal cult until after 300 AD. Acts gives us no hint that Christianity is illegal.

Acts also gives us no hint of the death of Paul, and that is also, according to tradition, while Nero is still alive, so no later than about 68 AD. Paul has been in Rome for two years under house arrest when the book of Acts ends. Liberals, to try and explain this away, say everyone knows what happened to Paul so there was no need to include his death.

But house arrest is a strange way to end a book if he's dead. Some, including some conservatives, suggest Luke intended to write a third book as a sequel to Acts but, for some reason, never was able to do so. This argument is based on taking Acts 1:1, the first account I wrote, etc., where it uses *proton* for first to mean the first of several, and assuming Luke would have used *proteron* if he meant the first of two.

Well, the word used in Acts 1:1 can mean first of two in Hellenistic Greek, even though this was not proper in Classical Greek, and we have no particular reason to believe that Luke is writing in Classical Greek in general, even though his Greek is somewhat nicer than some other Greek writers of the period. If our suggestion is right, Luke brings the reader up to date at the end of Acts. That is, he is writing just two years after Paul has arrived in Rome.

Secondly, that Luke would be dated slightly earlier than Acts is seen from the internal evidence above, especially if Paul's two-year imprisonment in Caesarea that's before his trip and shipwreck headed for Rome especially if Paul's two-year imprisonment in

Caesarea gave Luke the opportunity to research and write the Gospel. Now, if Luke had written the Gospel before the voyage to Rome, that would have avoided the problem of Luke losing his notes; if in the shipwreck, of course, he might have saved them. Even so, in this case, Luke would begin to circulate in the east about the time of Paul's voyage around 60 and perhaps not begin to circulate in the west until substantially later. A date of about 60 AD seems to buck the tradition that puts Mark in the 60s but earlier than Luke.

I suggest that either the tradition is partly mistaken or that both Mark and Luke are nearly simultaneous and reach different parts of the empire at different times, that Mark arrived first in some places, say the west, and Luke arrived first in others, say the east. Mark is traditionally written in Rome, the west Clement, in Egypt, and in the east, which puts Luke ahead of Mark chronologically. Irenaeus' testimony looks chronological, but note that he's the one who says Luke also and puts it after Mark and before John, but note that he does not give an explicit time or sequence reference for Luke; he doesn't say afterward.

Irenaeus may not have intended to be chronological here, or he may be mistaken because the sources receive the two gospels in a different order than Egypt did. Then we date Luke 58-60 AD before Acts in 63-64 AD. So, a summary on the dates of the Synoptic Gospels, my notes here have a little chart, but I give a big, broad span for Matthew from perhaps as early as the early 40s to something like the mid-50s, Luke the late 50s, and Mark the middle 60s, or early to middle 60s.

Well, I think that's probably a good place to stop. What do you think? We'll pick up then on the characteristics of the Synoptic Gospels next time. Date and authorship. Certainly, it's some arguable stuff.