

Ancient Testimony from the Early Church.

Matthew

Papias (c 60-130) - quoted by Eusebius (c 300)

"Matthew compiled the reports in a Hebrew dialect but each interpreted them as he could."

Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. 3.39.16

Irenaeus (c 115-200)

"Matthew composed his Gospel among the Hebrews in their own language while Peter and Paul proclaimed the gospel in Rome and founded the community. After their death/departure Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, handed on his preaching to us in written form..."

Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses. 111.1.1

Pantaenus (died c190) - quoted by Jerome (c 400)

"He[Pantaenus] went to the Indians and the tradition is that he found there among them, some there who had known Christ. The Gospel according to Matthew had preceded his coming, for Bartholemew... had left them the Gospel of Matthew in Hebrew letters."

Jerome HE 5.10.3

Epiphaneus (c 315 -403) - Bishop of Salamis

"They[Ebionites and Nazoreans*] have the Gospel According to Matthew, complete and in Hebrew"

Adv Haer 29.9.4

Jerome (c 347-420) - Translator of the Vulgate

"Matthew... was the first to compose a Gospel ... in Hebrew... Further the Hebrew is preserved to this present day in the library at Caesarea..."

... I had leave also given me to copy it by the Nazaraeans* in Beroea a city of Syria who use this work."

De Vir III 3

***Note:** Jerome's Nazaraeans are Epiphaneus' Nazoreans.

Mark

Papias (c 60-130) - quoted by Eusebius (c 300)

“Mark became Peter’s interpreter and wrote accurately all that he remembered, not indeed in order... for he had not heard the Lord, nor had he followed him... So that Mark did nothing wrong in writing down single points as he remembered them, for to one thing he gave attention, to leave out nothing of what he had heard and to make no false statements in them.”

Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. 3.39.14ff

Irenaeus (c 115-200)

"After their (Peter and Paul) death/departure Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, handed on his preaching to us in written form..."

Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses. 111.1.1

Note: This does not mean it wasn’t written until after Peter and Paul had died or left Rome for the last time, just that Mark’s Gospel kept Peter’s witness alive and fresh.

Clement of Alexandria (c 150-215) - quoted by Eusebius (c 300)

“...the Gospel according to Mark came into being in this way: When Peter had publicly preached the word at Rome... those present... exhorted Mark... who had followed him[Peter] for a long time and remembered what had been spoken and make a record of what was said; and he did this and distributed the Gospel among them that asked him. And when the matter came to Peter’s knowledge, he neither strongly forbade it nor urged it.”

Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. 6.14.6ff

Clement of Alexandria - in comments on 1st Peter

“Mark the follower of Peter, (while Peter was publicly preaching the Gospel at Rome in the presence of certain of Caesar’s knights was putting forward many testimonies concerning Christ), being requested by them... wrote from the things that were being spoken by Peter the Gospel that is according to Mark.”

Adumbrationes ad 1 Peter 5:13

More traditions regarding Mark.

“[The Churches] ... in Egypt and in Alexandria itself did he [Simon] again, not by his own means but by Mark his disciple, built.”

Eusebius Theophania 4.6-7

“In the eighth year of Nero, (45 AD) Anianus was the first after Mark the Evangelist to receive charge of the Diocese of Alexandria.” -

Eusebius H.E 2.4

“... Taking the Gospel which he[Mark] himself had composed, he went to Egypt and... formed a church... He died in the eighth year of Nero and was buried at Alexandria, Anianus succeeding him.”

Jerome De. Ver 111.8

Mark's Gospel was written by 45 AD!

Matthew and Mark's origins in the Gospel of Thomas?

“Jesus said to his disciples: ‘Make comparison; tell me whom I am like’. Simon Peter said to him, ‘you are a righteous angel.’ Matthew said to him, ‘you are like a wise philosopher’ Thomas said to him, ‘Master, my mouth is completely unable to say whom you are like.’”

Saying 13 of the Gospel of Thomas variously dated 40-250 AD

Luke

The Gospel of Luke in Paul's letters

Origen tells us that Luke's Gospel is being referred to by Paul in writing to the Corinthians (**2 Corinthians 8:18**).

“And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches because of* the Gospel”

... but this was written in 55-56 AD.

Note*: G1722 “εν”/“en” is often translated “because of” see **Matthew 26:31,33**

Anti-Marcionite Prologue to Luke (c200-400).

“Luke, was a Syrian of Antioch, by profession a physician. He had become a disciple of the apostles and later followed Paul until his martyrdom. Having served the Lord continuously, unmarried and without children, filled with the Holy Spirit he died at the age of 84 years in Boeotia.

Although there were Gospels already in existence... [He] moved by the Holy Spirit composed the whole Gospel in the districts around Achaia.”

The Muratorian Canon... a damaged list of NT texts from c 170 (oldest copy c 700)

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“The third book of the Gospel is that according to Luke. Luke, the well-known physician, after the ascension of Christ, when Paul had taken with him as one zealous for the law, composed it in his own name, according to [the general] belief....”

A Puzzle ...

“In the same books Clement has inserted a tradition of the primitive elders with regard to the order of the Gospels as follows. He said that the Gospels first written were those which include the genealogies”

Eusebius quoting Clement quoting the Elders, HE 6.14.5

...perhaps indicating that Luke was started before Mark was fully compiled and in Asia Minor?

Some confusion

“ Yet he[Luke] himself had not seen the Lord in the flesh; and therefore, as he was able to ascertain events, so indeed he begins to tell the story from the birth of John.”

Muratorian Canon, 7th Century copy of 2nd century list

BUT....

Eutropius: How many disciples did Christ have?

Adamantius: First, twelve, and afterwards, seventy-two, those sent to preach the Gospel. Mark and Luke were from among the seventy-two, who along with the apostle Paul preached the gospel.”

Dialogue of Adamantius against the Marcionites, (written c300)

Note: “Adamantius” is thought to be a pseudonym for Origen.

“And he sent seventy-two others as well to preach, among whom were the seven who were put in charge of the widows, Stephen, Philip... etc but before them was Matthias, who was included among the apostles in place of Judas. After these seven, and Matthias who preceded them, he sent Mark and Luke, Justus, Barnabas and Apelles, Rufus, Niger and the rest of the seventy-two.”

Epiphanius of Salamis, Panarion 4:3-4. 4th Century

Luke: Lucius or Lucanos?

Origen reports in his commentary on Romans (early third century) that “Lucius, Paul’s kinsman” (**Romans 16:21**) is Luke the evangelist.

Scholars used to argue that this was wrong, Luke was short for Lukanos not Lucius! But inscriptions at the Men Askaenos sanctuary at Pisidian Antioch use both Luke and Lucius for the same person.

Ephrem of Syria

“But Saul and Barnabas, who carried food for the saints in Jerusalem, returned with John who was called Mark and so did Luke of Cyrene. But both these are evangelists and wrote before the discipleship of Paul, and therefore he used to repeat everywhere from their gospel”

Ephrem Syriac from a translation by FC Conybeare.

The Lucius of Romans is probably the Lucius of Acts...

“Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul”

Acts 13:1

... Who is probably one of those that first came to Antioch

“... some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, when they came to Antioch, spoke to the Greeks, preaching the Lord Jesus.”

Acts 11:20

Paul quotes the Gospel of Luke

“For the scripture says: ‘you shall not muzzle the ox as it treads out corn’; and, **‘the worker is worthy of his wages (ο εργατης του μισθου αυτου)’**”

1 Timothy 5:18

“Stay in that same house, eating and drinking what they give you, **for the worker is worthy of his wages (ο εργατης του μισθου αυτου)’**”

Luke 10:7

Matthew has the same concept but different wording

“For the scripture says: ‘you shall not muzzle the ox as it treads out corn’; and, **‘the worker is worthy of his wages (ο εργατης του μισθου αυτου)’**”

1 Timothy 5:18

“no bag for the journey, or an extra tunic, or sandals or staff, **for the worker deserves his provisions(ο εργατης της τροφης αυτου).’**”

Matthew 10:10

John

“Now Jesus performed many other miraculous signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not recorded in this book.”

John 20:30

“The fourth of the Gospels is that of John, [one] of the disciples. To his fellow disciples and bishops, who had been urging him [to write], he said, 'Fast with me from today to three days, and what will be revealed to each one let us tell it to one another.' In the same night it was revealed to Andrew, [one] of the apostles, that John should write down all things in his own name while all of them should review it...”

Muratorian Canon, 7th Century copy of 2nd century list

“This is the disciple who testifies about these things and has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true. There are many other things that Jesus did. If every one of them were written down, I suppose the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.”

John 21:24-25

Polycrates writes aged 65 c195 AD

Defending the date of Easter he refers to seven great witness in his tradition...

“Philip, one of the twelve... moreover John too, he who leant back on the Lord’s breast, who was a priest, wearing the sacerdotal plate; both witness and teacher, he has fallen asleep at Ephesus... Polycarp too... etc.”

Quoted by Eusebius Hist Eccle 5.24.2ff