

The Clementine Gospel Tradition

For over 200 years there has been debate over the order in which the Gospels were written. But, just before he died, Bernard Orchard put forward a solution which makes the Markan priority theory and 'Q' redundant. This is a summary built on his solution.

The Apostle Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew for the Jewish Christians

to read at the: "Breaking of bread" (an early reference to the Eucharistic celebration, Acts 2:42.)

It was in thematic form and illustrated the fulfilment of the Jewish prophecies. Matthew or a colleague translated it into Greek.

Next, Luke wrote a Gospel in Greek in historical order for the Gentiles. As Luke had not been a companion of

Jesus, he needed an Apostle to indorse his Gospel. So when he arrived in Rome he asked Peter to do this.

Peter agreed and gave a talk in which he quoted alternatively from Matthew and Luke. In this manner he indorsed Luke's Gospel by merging it with that authored by a well known Apostle. Peter's secretary Mark used Greek shorthand to record Peter's words.

Peter, not being a native Greek speaker or an academic, spoke in koine (common) Greek. Linguists agree that what became known as Mark's Gospel has poor Greek grammar and style. Mark's shorthand faithfully records Peter's poor Greek. The large audience of leading Christians: 'Incessantly begged Mark to make copies for them'. To which Mark agreed. When Peter saw the good the Gospel of Mark was achieving, he agreed to him issuing a second edition: 'to all the churches'. In the meantime Luke had published his Gospel.

Archaeologists have found copies of both editions of Mark's Gospel, which are distinguished by one edition

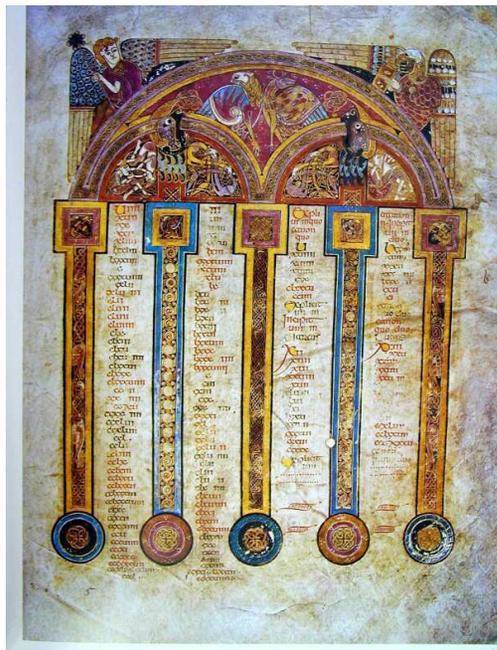


Bible : Codex Aureus Canterbury Matthew 1:18

omitting the last 12 verses. These final verses appear to record Peter's answers to questions asked at the end of the meeting.

So the Gospels were written in the Matthew – Luke – Mark- John order, but published in the: Matthew – Mark – Luke – Mark (2nd Edition) – John order. This led to libraries cataloguing them in differing sequences and preachers quoting from them in differing orders. In following generations this would have caused discussion and raised questions. So, to clarify the situation, Clement of Alexandria, the leading teacher in

Book of Kells 807 AD : Canon table



the diocese originally founded by Mark, explained: “The first written of the Gospels were those with the infancy narratives”.

At the time Jerome wrote, the Matthew- Mark – Luke – John order was popular, so he adopted it for his Latin translation. He never said it was the order of their composure.

Augustine of Hippo, writing his first book at about the same time, reported that: ‘it was said’ that ‘the order of writing’ had been: Matthew-Mark-Luke- John. This was presumably the order they had been received by the library at Hippo. Augustine didn’t offer an opinion regarding their order of being written and published. But some years later, after careful internal analysis of the Gospels, he stated in his fourth book that Mark’s theology had been influenced by that of both Matthew and Luke.

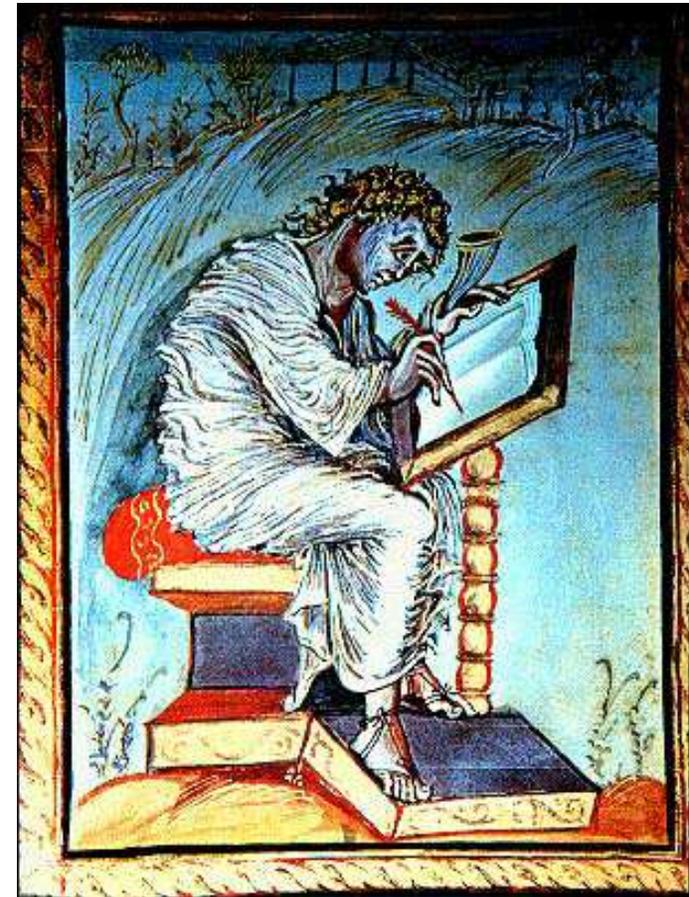
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How the Gospels Were Written



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