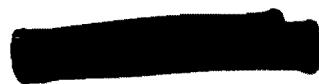
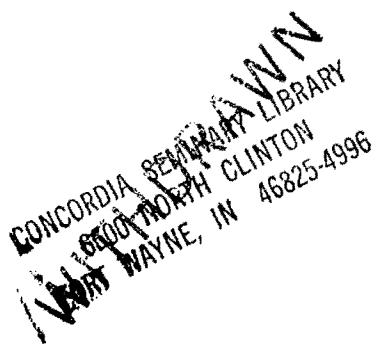


The Problems and Benefits of Citing Post-Apostolic Sources
in Resolving the Order of the Synoptic Gospels:
A Proposed Solution



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It is hardly possible to marshal the post-apostolic evidence in regard to the New Testament documents from a totally unbiased perspective. New Testament scholars simply because they are first of all New Testament and secondarily early church scholars are more apt to approach the post-apostolic church fathers with already predetermined conclusions. In referencing the post-canonical evidences for questions revolving around the origin and relationship of the gospels, three general approaches are taken.

(1) Where the scholars of the gospels have come to such totally untraditional conclusions or so they thought, they have no other choice but to repudiate the church fathers' opinions not only as unreliable, but downright legendary. If they understand New Testament literature as myth or legend, they are more likely to regard the post-biblical testimonies in the same terms. In either case ancient religious writers, apostolic or post-apostolic, are less capable of communicating historical data than modern historiographers.

A complete repudiation of the early church fathers is the more likely position for those who hold the currently majority view that Mark was the first gospel, since there is no explicit or implicit evidence from the non-canonical sources that it was indeed the first gospel. All the evidence leans in the opposite direction, even according to their own admission. There can be little argument that the church fathers regarded Matthew as holding the place of honor in regard to time and importance. Those holding to the Markan priority must concede that Mark's period of ascendancy as an

influence in the church was hardly more than a fleeting moment as it was relegated behind Matthew, John, and Luke to the fourth position in regard to importance. If Mark was the gospel that made the most profound impression on Matthew and Luke, since these two evangelists thought so highly of it that they incorporated nearly all of it in their gospels, it failed to make an impression on anyone else, as the fathers preferred it the least. If for the sake of argument Mark is placed around the year 70 and Matthew and Luke around 80, Mark's influence hardly lasted ten years as it diminished as soon as Matthew and Luke appeared. How could a writing which inspired tow others to write gospels, be considered so uninspiring until only recent times?

Of course, one response at this point would be that Matthew so improved Mark, that it had to relegated to a subsidiary position as an authority. [At this point the counterargument could be offered that Matthew was so expert in improving documents, that he not only superceded Mark but he so effectively reworked Q that no one saw any further need for it. Matthew's and Luke's improvement of Q surpassed their work with Mark, since Q disappeared and Mark did not. This is all said with tongue in cheek, but there might be some merit in the argument. Unlike Mark, the Q document was lost forever as there is no firm hint of its autonomous existence anywhere in the fathers.]

(2) Where the scholars have found their positions on the gospels almost completely supported by the fathers, they will make full use of these evidences. This position recognizes the continuity of the Heilsgeschichte between the histories of the New Testament and early church eras and is more

likely to take their statements at face value. This does not mean that the use of the post-apostolic sources resolves all problems or that the gospels are not subjected to critical evaluation. The problem of interpreting the fathers can not be resolved in every instance to everyone's satisfaction. For example is John the Elder, mentioned by Papias, to be identified with John the Evangelist. Why does Papias mention Mark before Matthew? What are Matthew's logia? These problems are not insurmountable, as we are not dealing with isolated information, but facts belonging to a continuous tradition. The advantage of the approach that takes the early fathers seriously is that it brings to the witness stand the closest thing we have to outside collaborators. Examining the New Testament documents individually and even collectively can too often evolve into a speculative science. Luther's 'scriptures interpret scriptures' can not be so absolutized as to eliminate tradition entirely and obviously he never intended that. By using the church fathers, at least an outside point of departure is provided in seeking the gospels' origins, before the gospel as documents are examined on their own merits. Whatever conclusions are presented by the fathers, if they are not supported by the documents themselves, at least must not be contradicted by them. The views of the fathers about origins and relationships among the gospels are significantly less diverse than the opinions reached by the scholars working solely from linguistic principles in the last two centuries has been. This does not mean that the post-apostolic evidence can ever begin to replace the continued careful examination of the gospels, but it does provide an *a priori* thesis whose merits can be judged and criticized against the documents for reliability. Bringing in post-canonical authority into the debate about the

gospels does not mean that the scholar surrender his critical faculties. Levels of historical reliability and importance among the documents are recognized. While some reports are made by serious scholars who have written to preserve information they fear will be lost, some stories border on legend, but even these should not be dismissed before choice kernels collaborated by other more recognizable sources are compared.

The approach which seriously considers the early church sources is by nature more historical and ecclesiastical. It recognizes not only that there is one continuous history from the apostolic age to the post-apostolic one, but that the biblical documents had a continuous use and hence history from one period into the other.

(3) Where the scholars of the gospels find their opinions partially supported by the fathers, they will adopt a mediating position and make selective use of them. Those who make partial or selective use of the fathers are further removed from the first position which finds them near totally useless and very much closer to the second position which is not willing to draw a firm line between the biblical and post-biblical histories. The question here is not whether levels of authenticity between known historical information and anonymous legends are recognized, but whether one can be selective in using and interpreting recognized reliable sources. If a source is historically reliable in one instance, good reason must be offered for not seeing it as such in another. Can the testimony of one church father be used when he supports a certain position and then an equally reliable source be ignored where the evidence is less favorable in presenting a position? Can the testimony of a church father be used in one case and ignored in another? The selective user of the sources should at

least attempt a critical analysis of the source to show those places where it is reliable and unreliable and how these conclusions were reached.

Ideally, it would be best to proceed from post-apostolic church evidence without any prior knowledge of the New Testament question, but this is virtually impossible. The apostolic age provides the form and content of the post-apostolic age and the reason for its *raison d'être*. Simply by nomenclature, the 'post-apostolic' period is to be defined in relation to the 'apostolic' period. Those who look at the fathers do so because of conclusions already reached from their study of the gospels. Who else would be interested in the question of what the fathers thought about the gospels, except those who already knew the gospels? At an April 1987 meeting of seminary deans in Saint Louis sponsored by the Association of Theological Schools, Professor Schubert Ogden of Southern Methodist University said that the New Testament and the post-apostolic church fathers form one history. Church history begins with Jesus and the apostles and no break should be made between the apostolic and post-apostolic periods. Peter's association with Mark is one datum in history which is confirmed by both apostolic and post-apostolic sources and this association can possibly inform us about the origins of the second gospel.

Peter and Mark

The connection between Peter, the disciple and apostle of Jesus, and Mark is not only supported by 1 Peter 5:13, but by Papias, Irenaeus, and Clement, all of whom are known to us through the writings of Eusebius. Apart from the question of authorship, 1 Peter places both Peter and Mark in Rome, if the elect lady in Babylon of 5:13 is the congregation there. Papias's source is the elder John, who regardless of his identity as the

evangelist or a totally different 'elder John', was active in the church from 70-100.¹ The claim is not that Papias knew this John directly but that he had come into contact with those who knew him. Since this period does not know of any other John that the one mentioned in the gospels as the disciple and apostle, there is no reason to doubt that he was the John to whom Papias was referring. The gospel of John indicates that this disciple lived to an old age.² Regardless of whether Papias's five books, from which Eusebius quotes, were written as late 125 or as early 110, Papias began collecting his material about 100 and his informants were active 70-100. Though he did not know the apostles, he has preserved a tradition which touches the borders of the apostolic age. The other early church support for Peter's and Mark's involvement in the second gospel is Clement of Alexandria. He is associated with his more famous student Origen and lived at the end of the second century and was the student of a certain Pantaenus,³ who even if he was not directly acquainted with the apostles and evangelists, as some claimed, could have easily been instructed by their students. It is not unlikely that Pantaenus was born before 100 and received his information from the same generation to which Papias belonged. In any event, he stood in the line of recognized tradition. The late second century Alexandrian church father also knew a certain Narcissus, who had been the bishop of Jerusalem, the fifteenth in the succession from Hadrian's siege of that city. Thus Clement represented two traditions: one from Pantaenus and the other from Jerusalem. As Clement gives every evidence of being a very careful scholar, it would have been totally out of character for him either to fabricate these accounts or to take over accounts which would have been recognized as false. Clement's position in

the church was too important to perpetuate stories which had no foundation. Whatever he received from tradition would have been first carefully examined. It had to stand the test of public scrutiny in an age which was not far removed from the apostolic time. He had inherited the leadership of the Alexandrian school from his teacher Pantaenus and bequeathed it to his student Origen. Under the scrutiny of other students and scholars, it is hardly likely that they could have fabricated stories and passed them off as legitimate traditions.

Add to this the testimony of Irenaeus who also places Peter in Rome. Though he does not specifically mention Rome as the place where Mark and Peter were together, as it has only Mark "the disciple and interpreter of Peter,"⁴ it is hardly likely that this could have been anywhere else. Irenaeus as disciple of Polycarp, John's disciple, would have derived his information from the same source as Papias did, if his 'elder' is the apostle. Irenaeus is not however the student of Papias and his information is derived from that 'John' by another tradition. Thus if the 'elder' and the apostle are the same persons, we have two traditions from the same source. Thus Papias and Irenaeus support each other in seeing that this information was taught by John. If the 'elder' of Papias and the apostle John, whose student Polycarp was Irenaeus's teacher, are not the same, then we have not only two separate traditions, but two different sources pointing to Peter as the source behind Mark's gospel. In either case the evidence is substantial.

Mark's place in Rome with Peter is supported in two writings, if you consider Eusebius's preservation of Papias, Irenaeus, and Clement as one and 1 Peter as the other. Eusebius was a collector of sources and there is no

reason to doubt that he carefully recorded data from those whom he considered reliable sources and with equal care differentiated his sources from each other. Papias, Irenaeus, and Clement were for Eusebius reliable and different sources, which were not muddled together. They in turn had received their information from others. Papias relied on the students of the apostles, Irenaeus presumably on Polycarp, and Clement on Pantaenus and Narcissus of Jerusalem. Thus we have five separate strands placing Peter with Mark in Rome, if 1 Peter is also reckoned, coming out of the first century placing Mark with Peter in Rome: (1) 1 Peter, (2) 'the elder' (Papias), (3) Irenaeus, presumably first from Polycarp and then John, the apostle, (4) Pantaenus and (5) Narcissus (Clement). Only the sources preserved by Eusebius and not 1 Peter involve that apostle with Mark in the production of the gospel.

If 1 Peter is written after Mark, the placing of Mark with the author in "Babylon" could be taken as a cryptic reference to his authorship of the gospel, which would have been immediately recognized by those who knew that Mark had written a gospel. Granted this is not a totally convincing argument by itself to place Peter behind Mark's gospel. It does however clearly place Mark with Peter, assumably in Rome, and the reference to Mark as Peter's son points to him as being involved in the apostle's ministry. Whereas Timothy is called Paul's 'child' [teknos], Mark is called Peter's 'son' [huios]. This may suggest that Peter felt closer to Mark than Paul did to Timothy, but this might be speculation. At least Mark was as intimately involved in the ministry of Peter as Timothy was in Paul's. The size of the Pauline corpus makes it easier for us to trace Timothy's association with Paul. All we know from the canonical literature is that

Mark was with Peter in Rome and that their relationship was as close as a son is to his father.⁵

If Peter's supervision of his churches was anything like that of Paul's, it was carried out through Peter's personal assistants who made visits and carried on an active correspondence for the apostle. It is hard to believe that Peter's entourage as it traveled through the ancient world did not match or at least approach the complexity of Paul's with letters being sent constantly to the churches and visits made through assistants to the churches. If Silvanus was serving as an amanuensis for Peter [1 Pet. 5:12] and Paul [1 Thess. 1:1], there is good reason to believe that others, as for instance Mark, were also doing the same. So far as the actual physical work was concerned, the apostolic assistants were capable of and in fact did the very same things that the apostles were doing, but of course they were not apostles. The argument here is not that 1 Peter 5:13 demonstrates that Mark was with Peter in Rome to write the gospel, but it does show an early tradition which placed the two together in Rome and that Mark was an assistant of Peter. As an assistant to Peter, his obligations would have been that of an amanuensis of some sort and was thus in a position to write the gospel, whether or not he was actually writing it.⁶ Silvanus, identified as a scribe (5:12), just before mention of Mark, sends along his personal greetings. The endearment expressed in the word 'son' would suggest that Mark was so close to Peter that he knew his mind perhaps better than anyone else. In any event Mark was aware of the letter's being written, as he sends his greetings. Even if 1 Peter is a pseudonymous letter, the writer's placing Mark with the apostle in Rome is supported by the post-apostolic tradition. What is important is that the mentioning of

Mark along side of Silvanus, 1 Peter sees both men as apostolic assistants who would be authorized to write documents and to represent personally the apostle.

This likemindedness between teacher and student is supported by the early post-apostolic tradition which saw Mark as so close to Peter than he was asked by the congregation to record the apostle's memoirs. Thus the closeness between Peter and Mark is supported by both apostolic and post-apostolic sources. Now the same kind of argument that the assistants did the actual writing for the apostles would be valid for any number of assistants who are mentioned as accompanying Paul. The late Professor Bo Reicke discusses this in a still unpublished manuscript, "The History of the Pauline Correspondence."⁷

While 1 Peter 5:13 only places Mark with Peter and in a position to write [see the above argument], Papias, Irenaeus, and Clement from their sources identify Mark as the writer of a gospel derived from Peter's preaching. Papias's sources would be contemporary with the writer of 1 Peter or his sources. 1 Peter 5:13 is a link in a tradition of associating Peter and Mark in Rome and can be used not as primary but as collaborating evidence for the gospel's origin there. The problem remains of determining the type of relationship between Peter and Mark in writing the gospel. Did Peter dictate the gospel to Mark or was Mark the creative editor using materials which Peter had supplied? This question has to be addressed first to the church fathers and then to the gospel itself.

The Writing of the Gospel of Mark

Griesbach was a scholar of the second category who found his views on

the gospels' origins to be at such odds with the apostolic fathers, that he was forced to dismiss them as legendary. He was so committed to Mark's derivation and dependency on Matthew and Luke that he was forced to regard as fictitious the early church testimony that held that Mark was dependent on Peter. For him it was an 'either or' matter in assigning the sources of Mark as either Matthew/Luke or Peter and he opted for the former. In order to protect his theory, he furiously disputed the early church fathers who held that Mark's stay in Rome was the origin of his gospel. Here is a case of a scholar being so committed to his view that in order to preserve it, he had to dispute evidence contrary to it. Bo Reicke takes a milder path and simply overlooks the early church evidence, though clearly he is aware of it. The problem was accentuated for Griesbach as he understood that Clement's student, Origen, had claimed that Peter had 'dictated' Mark's gospel. Griesbach in sorting through the early church evidence cites Papias against such a dictation theory for the origin of Mark, though he hardly holds Papias's opinions in other matters in high regard.⁸ For example he calls Mark's writing down of Peter's discourses "Papias' fabrication."⁹ Griesbach's distaste for the church fathers did not prevent him from citing them where they supported his opinions! His strong convictions about not allowing for any involvement of Peter in Mark's gospel lead him to dismiss the unified testimony of the fathers in the strongest of terms:

We candidly confess that this very ancient testimony about Mark producing his Gospel under the patronage of Peter is attributed by us to those fabrications of which many instances are found among the ancient writers, and which are today rejected by most scholars.¹⁰

Griesbach was unwilling either to adjust his gospel hypothesis to fit the conclusions of the early church fathers that Mark was derived from Peter

or to reassess his own interpretation of them. Though the Enlightenment scholars stressed the importance of their own reason in making historical judgments, Griesbach was slightly inconsistent in his own argumentation. First he called on Papias to demonstrate that Peter did not in fact dictate the gospel to Mark, as Origen allegedly claimed. Then in claiming no association of Peter in Mark's gospel, he overlooked the very Papias citation which placed Mark with Peter and which he cited against Origen.

The easiest way out of this dilemma is to test Griesbach's assumption that Origen regarded Mark as hardly more than the amanumensis of Peter, in the sense of a court stenographer. Neither the Latin nor the Greek texts of Origen makes any reference to Mark's receiving dictation from Peter. What is said is that Mark wrote as Peter gave an interpretation (hos Petros hyphegesato).¹¹ Griesbach may have viewed the relationship between Peter and Mark mentioned by Origen more in the terms of the university lecture room and not as a worship service where these words would have been likely to have been rehearsed. University lectures are intended for notebooks in a way that sermons are not. In fact, Origen's choice of words points to Peter's giving an exposition on an already extant text or texts within the surroundings of a church service and not a lecture hall, as it says that Peter gave an exposition, perhaps in the sense of an exegesis.

The task before us now is to take the testimonies of the fathers and from their agreements to see if it is possible to move towards a composite and hopefully unified picture of those circumstances under which Peter preached about the episodes of the life of Jesus from which Mark is said to have developed his gospel. Papias describes the situation in this way:

This also the elder used to say. Mark, indeed, having been the interpreter of Peter, wrote accurately, howbeit

not in order, all that he recalled of what was either said or done by the Lord. For he heard nothing of the Lord, nor was he a follower of his, but at a later date (as I said) of Peter, who; who used to adapt his instructions to the needs [of the hearers], but not with a view to putting together the teachings of the Lord in orderly fashion: so that Mark did no wrong in thus writing some things as he recalled them. For he kept a single aim in view: not to omit anything of what he heard, nor to state anything therein falsely (Eusebius, HE 3,39,15).¹²

Papias's information Mark's writing his gospel from Peter's sermons came from the elder, who has been identified as John,¹³ and was part of his usual teaching. The use of the imperfect "used to say" points to something which was frequently repeated and most probably points to the Sunday worship when the church would gather to hear the elder preach. By the end of the first century Sunday was called the Lord's Day (Rev. 10:1)¹⁴ and was set aside for reading the gospels by the middle of the second century (Justin Martyr). The custom of reading gospels was in place by the end of the first century when the elder lived,¹⁵ about 60-70 years before Justin wrote. Reading one of the gospels evolved out of the experience of the post-Easter community of reciting the deeds and words of Jesus (Acts 2:42). Here we must engage in historical reconstruction. Some time in the first century, the church who received the first written gospel read from it at the public service in the place reserved for the oral recitation of the deeds and words of Jesus. The custom of reading instead of reciting from memory must have sufficiently popular that others wrote their own gospels and copies were made. Some time between 70 and 100, reading gospels had become so established that titles had to be added.¹⁶

The 'elder,' whom Papias quotes as his authority about the origin of Mark, may have provided this information in a worship service in which the

gospel itself was read. Whether the 'elder' was in Rome is unimportant, since the elder's knowledge of how Mark and Peter were together in Rome was not private information. What the 'elder' was saying about Mark was also preserved in the traditions received by Irenaeus and Clement.

After the gospel was read, the 'elder' would give an exposition which included some isagogical details, a still not uncommon custom in German churches which can be also traced back to Luther. We should not think of the 'elder' sitting by the side of the road smoking his pipe with his chair propped against the house recounting old tales from apostolic days. He was rather with the congregation on the Lord's day, celebrating the Lord's supper, and telling the Lord's story. The phrase, "he used to say," speaks of an ordinary practice and not something which he blurted out on one occasion. The elder's accounts were told within the sanctity of the worship service and did not consist of conjecture but what he personally knew or held to be valid information. Mark's involvement with Peter in Rome was part of the common church knowledge during the last thirty years of the first century, as this was the period in which the elder, according to Papias's source, was active in the church. With living witnesses still available who knew the elder, it seems unlikely that Papias could have contrived Mark's collaboration with Peter.

Peter's preaching activity, which served as the source of Mark's gospel, also happened over a longer a period time. The words of Luke describing Jesus's going into the synagogue might be appropriate in describing Peter: "as his custom was" (Luke 4:16). Peter was as much at home in the congregation at Rome preaching about Jesus, as Jesus was in the synagogues preaching on the Old Testament. Peter's "adapt[ing] his

instructions to the needs [of the hearers], but not with a view to putting together the teachings of the Lord in orderly fashion" (Papias) can hardly be anything but a sermon. Sermons are by definition adjustments of the Gospel or a prior word of God to fit the needs of the hearers. What made Peter's sermons different was that they were based on his own eyewitness accounts from the life of Jesus.

The importance of Peter as an eyewitness is used effectively by the writer of 2 Peter who claims that they, presumably he and the other apostles, had been "eyewitnesses [epoptai] of that great glory." The similarity between 2 Peter claiming that Peter was an eyewitness of the transfiguration and Papias's testimony about the composition of Mark being derived from Peter as an eyewitness of the accounts of the Lord's life is striking. Both citations place Peter as the one who himself has seen or heard the Lord.

Mark's inability to recall everything which Peter said should not be interpreted to mean that the facts bounced around in his memory in no orderly fashion at all. Just the opposite is suggested. He remembered most of what was preached, though some of the details slipped away. Whether Mark was aware of it or not, he followed the outline which had been impressed upon his mind by Peter's preaching. Peter's expositions were not theologically organized as were Matthew's or clustered according to the general sequence in which the events happened as were Luke's. They were homiletical expositions from the life of Jesus which were made to fit the perceived needs of the listeners. Without denying the kerygmatic value of Matthew and Luke, Mark's gospel is the only gospel which is entitled to be called a homily or a collection of homilies. Mark is what its title claims

for itself "gospel," i.e., a proclamation about Jesus Christ. The citation from Clement supports and fills in the information offered by Papias.

. . . the Gospel according to Mark came into being in this manner: When Peter had publicly preached the word at Rome, and by the Spirit had proclaimed the Gospel, that those present, who were many exhorted Mark, as one who had followed him for a long time and remembered what had been spoken, to make a record of what was said; and that he did this, and distributed the Gospel among those that asked him. And that when the matter came to Peter's knowledge he neither strongly forbade it nor urged it forward. . . . This is Clement's account.

The general outlines of Papias's and Clement's accounts are the same. Mark was a follower and student of Peter over a longer period of time and was present when he preached to the congregation. Based on these reminiscences, Mark at a later time, assumably after the martyrdom of Peter according to Irenaeus, constructed his gospel.¹⁷

Griesbach in discrediting the early church sources about the origin of Mark points to what he finds to be a discrepancy in Clement about Peter's attitude about the gospel's production.¹⁸

In one place the apostle is pleased when he heard that Mark under the congregation's prodding had produced the gospel and in another place he remains uncommitted to what Mark is doing.

The alleged discrepancy noted by Griesbach at least relieves both Eusebius and Clement of any fabrication of their sources. Clement could have harmonized the discrepancies before recording them. They also passed under the eyes of Eusebius unnoticed. Both could have removed the difficulties by changing them, but they did not. If there was a fault, it lay with the tradition which Clement received and not with his preserving of the tradition. Regardless of the discrepancies in the traditions preserved first by Clement and then by Eusebius - and these are not insurmountable,

both sources are agreed in placing Peter with Mark in Rome for the writing of the gospel. Add to this the testimony of Irenaeus and 1 Peter 5:13 and it begins to approach one of those rare indisputable facts. Here we may be permitted to bring the biblical standard of truth of establishing a fact by 'two or three witnesses.' Equally important, the joint witness of several sources points to their reliability in other matters concerning the origin of the gospels. The matter of Griesbach's concern about Clement's ambiguous testimony about Peter's approval and disapproval about Mark's gospel must be answered.

It is difficult to approximate the length of time during which Mark took notes and when during this process Peter became aware of what Mark was doing and his intentions of producing a gospel. Thus at one time the apostle might have remained detached from the project and at a later time under different circumstances he expressed some enthusiasm about it. Upon his impending imprisonment or his death, Peter could have changed his attitude from one of neutral detachment to concerned endorsement. Providing a solution for this discrepancy may be beyond reach, but all accounts put Peter and Mark in Rome and see both as having a part to play in the gospel writing. Mark according to Papias, Irenaeus, and Clement has gathered his materials from Peter as his source in very much the same way that Luke did from the eyewitnesses (1:2).

The Origin of Mark's Gospel (1)

The cover of Martin Hengel's Studies in the Gospel of Mark is a detail from a 12th or 13th century south Italy ivory showing St. Peter dictating the gospel to Mark. Peter is prominently enthroned in a chair with a back

high enough to encase his hallowed head. Mark with a stylus in hand takes dictation. His chair's back reaches only above his waist to indicate a status inferior to Peter's. The accompanying note for the cover illustration makes no mention role of the angel situated between the two saints. Facing Peter and talking to him alone, the angel is presumably first dictating the gospel to him which will in turn be dictated to Mark.

A piece of art, whether it is for the ear or the eye, should not be held accountable under the same canons of critical accountability as is for example an historical record. Art brings together in a limited space or time events which happened over longer periods of time. It involves the beliefs and emotions of the artist. The medieval ivory summarizes in one moment the call of Peter as an apostle, his preaching of the gospel, Mark's hearing it, and then finally its actual composition.

There is no suggestion in any of the sources that Peter received his gospel from an angel, though Acts tells how an angel released him from prison (12:7). It was not an uncommon technique in medieval painting to depict an angel as the vehicle of divine revelation to the gospel writers, an idea which may have been taken over from Revelation 1:1 where the angel comes to John with a message for the churches. In some way the angel's speaking to John and the Spirit's giving of the Scriptures were combined, so that the angel came to symbolize the Spirit's inspiration. Clement speaks of Peter being informed by special revelation that Mark was writing a gospel, for which of course there is no biblical reference, but there is a parallel. A voice tells Peter as he is sleeping to eat the unclean animals (Acts 10:9-16) and the Spirit instructs him to go to the house of Cornelius (10:17-23). Clement's account of Peter receiving special revelation about

things which were happening or what would happen is an extension of what is found in Acts and can not be dismissed as fiction. Peter like the writer of Revelation does receive heavenly revelations.

There is no support from Clement for the artist's concept that Peter received his information for Mark's gospel by revelation (EH II.15 and VI.14). Peter was the witness to Jesus and Mark was a witness to his preaching and from these remembrances he constructed his gospel. This is the testimony of the church fathers. Just as there was no pouring of the words into Peter by an angel, Peter did not dictate words into the ears of Mark. Though here the artist of the ivory used artistic license, he was correctly portrayed Peter as the source for Mark's manuscript. For this there is support from the fathers.

What concerned critical scholars during the Enlightenment was any suggestion that the words were dictated to the writers of the Scriptures. Whether the Enlightenment theologians understood properly the concept of inspiration held by the sixteenth and seventeenth century Orthodox teachers whom they replaced is a debated issue, but they did caricature it in their minds as one of an actual dictation by the Holy Spirit to the writers. The historical circumstances of the writers and how they gathered their materials was of secondary importance to Lutheran and Reformed Orthodoxy. Of primary interest was that the Scriptures were words of the Holy Spirit. With the Enlightenment the priorities were reversed. Determining historical circumstances of the ancient documents, whether they were religious or secular, came first and in a sense last. Sacred and secular literature were placed on the same level and the supernatural was denied or seen only as extension of ordinary reality. This critical mind set was the hallmark of

the Enlightenment scholars and may explain the reluctance of one scholar to treat post-apostolic testimonies as credible.

Griesbach set out to discredit the alleged position of Origen that Peter had dictated the gospel to Mark, a position which he insinuates was widely held, but for which he offers no names of the offenders.¹⁹ Whether or not he understood Origen's position on this matter correctly, his dislike for the idea was more likely derived from a more generalized dislike for anything to do with dictation of the Spirit to Peter or Peter to Mark. Dictation or the mere repetition of the words from one person to another does not allow for full historical development and consequently disallows any criticism with the exception of what might be involved textual criticism.

The situation which produced the gospel of Mark was even according to Papias and Clement much more diverse than what could be explained by a modern understanding of dictation. This was overlooked by Griesbach and he pronounced a verdict of useless fiction over the testimonies preserved by Eusebius. His aversion to Peter as a source was his own idea, which has born his name ever since, 'the Griesbach hypothesis', that Mark in writing his gospel had used Matthew and Luke. Griesbach found his ordering of the gospels contradicted by the early church tradition that had Peter and not Matthew/Luke as the source of his gospel.

According to Clement, Peter was not aware of what Mark had intended to do until he was well into his project. Instigation for the gospel came not from Peter, but from members of the congregation. Mark may have taken notes, but he relied more on his memory. This hardly resembles modern court room stenography. Had the accounts of Papias and Clement been apocryphal,

they would have more likely had Peter authorizing beforehand Mark's gospel. Just the opposite is so. The congregation and not Peter urges Mark to record the preaching of Peter. The situation is completely human. The Spirit does not urge Peter to have Mark write a gospel and only informs him after the project has been undertaken. The medieval ivory has no place for the congregation's request to Mark to write the gospel. For the artist, Peter has become the dictating 'evangelist' and was no longer how Papias and Clement pictured him as the 'evangelical preacher', i.e., the preacher of the Gospel.

The relation of Mark to Peter can be informed by the role of the amanuensis in the ancient world and particularly in the church. The early church had amanuenses. With critical scholarship so concerned about the place of oral tradition as it evolved into the gospels, it may be assumed without support that the concern for producing manuscripts came much later. Writing was a part of Paul's mission enterprises and is there every reason to believe that the church from the beginning was preserving certain items in writing by amanuenses (Acts 15:23-9). Consider the situation of Paul who acknowledges Silvanus and Timothy as coauthors (1 Thess. 1:1) and used shorthand writers in other cases where he adds words of personal greeting added by his own hand (2 Thess. 3:17; Gal. 6:11; 1 Cor. 16:21; Rom. 16:22; Col. 4:18; Philem. 19).²⁰

By the time tradition places Mark with Peter in Rome in the early 60s, the Pauline churches of the west were thoroughly acquainted with the practice of preparing manuscripts. These churches had received apostolic documents and knew of the apostolic amanuenses. Mark's close association with Peter in Rome would suggest to the congregation there that among his

duties was to serve as an amanuensis to Peter. This was after all among the duties of the apostolic assistants. The early church testimony about Mark's writing the gospel from Peter's materials is supported by the New Testament picture of the role of the amanuensis. Mark's role in writing the gospel does not fit that of a stenographer or coauthor with Peter, but his dependency on Peter for his materials could have later lead others to this conclusion. Peter's dictation to Mark, as depicted in the medieval Italian ivory, was an abridgement of the longer history which developed into Mark's gospel.

It would not be unusual in the ancient church for an assistant of the apostle to take copious notes as he was speaking or afterwards. Some of the New Testament, for example, some of the Pauline letters and 1 Peter, had its origins with these coauthors and shorthand writers. Mark's serving as an amanuensis for Peter is not out of keeping from what we know from other sources about apostolic assistants.

Sacred documents were already part of the worship of the church at Rome since the first Jewish Christians had come there, perhaps as early as the 30s. Paul's indictment of those of Jewish extraction is so severe in his letter to them that his message would have fallen on deaf ears had they been mostly Gentiles. Romans 15:4 with its admonition to pay attention to the things which were written before would have made little sense unless they were not only acquainted but regularly reading the Old Testament. When Peter and Mark were in Rome, the congregation there was already reading the letter which Paul had sent them in addition to the Old Testament. If Rome was like the other Pauline churches, it was a letter which was frequently read and this frequent reading would also be demanded if its original

readers found it as profound as modern ones do.

The request for a written document to Mark from members of the congregation could have only come, if they already had been acquainted with the custom of reading of sacred documents in their services. These documents were the Old Testament and an embryonic Pauline corpus, whose size depended on far his other letters had circulated. Mark in undertaking gospel writing was not embarking on a strange, unknown venture in ecclesiastical writing. He was not the inventor of sacred writing in the Christian church! A letter from the Council of Jerusalem had been written in 48 and Paul's letters were written in the next years. As highly prized as the oral tradition was, the request from the congregation to Mark for a written document showed their respect and honor for the written word. The words of Paul had been transcribed by his assistants. Tertius, who was so well known to the Roman congregation, that he sent along his own personal greetings (16:22). The Romans knew that it was a common practice to have a scribe or several scribes taking down the words of the apostles.²¹ Thus the request for a written transcription of Peter's sermons came from their common experience. At this point a number of questions begin to surface.

Can the momentous decision to write the first gospel be left to the request of a congregation which so far removed in time and space from the events they purport to record? Did the request for a written gospel come first only after forty years after the life of Jesus? The first question poses a problem. The Gospels for the church are its most significant literature simply because of their content and the subsequent belief that they came from the apostles, at least in some sense. Now if for the sake of argument, Mark is taken as the first gospel and if the testimony of Clement

is right that the congregation requested it, this would mean that the church's most significant literature came into existence by a chance request of a congregation. Yes, the gospels evolved from the oral tradition, but it does not seem likely that the writing of the tradition into a gospel occurred because the members of one of the less organized churches on the edge of Pauline and Petrine mission endeavors thought of the idea first. But does this ask us to believe too much? If the testimony about the congregation members asking Mark to commit to writing the sermons of Peter is correct, it is more likely that they were already acquainted with prior gospels.

The church services in Rome, from which the gospel of Mark was said to have come, shared a fundamental liturgical uniformity, common in the Pauline/Petrine churches of the west, which was modeled after the first church in Jerusalem. In the matter of the women preachers, Paul appeals to the common tradition of the churches, "as in all the churches of the saints," in urging the Corinthians to desist from the practice (1 Cor. 14:33b.) The liturgical aberrations of the Corinthians and Paul's appeals to "all the churches" is an argument for liturgical similarity or may be even uniformity, at least in some points.

Peter's rehearsing of the words and deeds of Jesus before the congregation at Rome, according to the testimonies of Papias and Clement, was a continuation of a practice soon begun after Pentecost on a regular basis (Acts 2:42). This minimal outline of their worship shows that it consisted in the teaching of the apostles, that is, the account of the life and death of Jesus, the Holy Communion, and the prayers. The use of the imperfect points to this as a continued activity. The use of the definite

article with prayers indicates that the service was formal in contrast to the irregularities which arose in Corinth. There was not a free rehearsing of apostolic teachings but one teaching, just as there one was breaking of the bread (1 Cor. 10:17) and certain given prayers, among which we can assume was the Lord's Prayer. The 'teaching of the apostles' should not be understood in a doctrinal sense that bare theological statements were laid out before the people in the sense of a catachesis, but that the Lord's life and death were rehearsed according to a set pattern. Unity of faith and liturgical practice can be deduced from Eph. 4:4-6.

By 160 Justin Martyr refers to the reading of the gospels as the 'Reminiscences of the Apostles'.²² For non-Christians he referred to these books as reminiscences or recollections of the apostles and for Christians in their services they were called gospels.²³ It can be safely assumed that by the time of Justin the custom of reading written gospels was already long in place. The problem now is drawing a line back from Justin to the first church in Jerusalem, a period of about 130 years. What both churches, the early post-Easter one in Jerusalem and the Gentile one in the mid-second century, held in common was the centrality of the recitation of the life and death of Jesus with the Jerusalem relying on oral teachings of the apostles and Justin's church on the written recollections of the apostles. If the testimonies of Papias and Clement are reliable, the transition had taken place at least before the year 70, shortly after the martyrdom of Peter.

Those who see Mark as the first gospel and accept the testimony of the fathers that it has Petrine authority in some sense see this transition from oral report to written gospel taking place in Rome.²⁴ This is however a rare opinion for those holding to the Markan priority. More typical are

Weeden, Conzelmann, and Marxsen who have to deny what C.S. Mann calls "the old tradition of Roman authorship" in order to maintain Markan priority.²⁵ The problem is that Clement who places Mark in Peter with Rome also claims that the gospels with genealogies are first. Thus they are consistent in disposing of the entire Roman tradition. Mann himself takes a mediating view. He agrees to accept the early church testimony that Mark is derived partially from the reminiscences of Peter's preaching in Rome. Before Peter's martyrdom, he witnesses the impending struggle in Palestine where he has at his disposal Matthew's gospel which presents the end times but without the impending urgency.²⁶ Mark is a conflation of Matthew and Luke for Jewish Christians before the impending perils of 66.²⁷ Thus Mann attempts to keep the best of two possible worlds by positing a Roman origin for the materials found in Luke and a Palestinian origin for the destination and presumably for the writing itself. The problem here is that Mark's being in Palestine to write the gospel has no support from the church fathers and is really a literary and not an historical conclusion. It requires that Mark leave Rome early enough to return to Palestine, observe the critical situation with the impending war, study Matthew's and presumably Luke's gospel, to organize and write his own gospel, and to take to heart his own admonition to flee the increasingly unstable situation. Whether all this could have and in fact did happen is the real problem.

Bo Reicke whose theory is that the gospels came into existence without any interdependence works around the old church testimony also denies Rome as the origin in any sense of Mark.

Reicke like Mann generally regards early church testimonies highly. To get around 1 Peter 5:12 where Mark is placed with Peter in Rome, Reicke says it

describes a situation after Mark had written his gospel.²⁸ He ignores Clement and relies solely on Papias who makes no mention of Rome, all this in spite of the fact that Eusebius who preserves the testimony of Papias also preserves that of Clement as equally valid. Reicke holds that Mark's information for his gospel was derived from the Petrine tradition in the Galilean churches and then sees the personal association of Peter and Mark in Rome as of no relevance whatsoever for the gospel. To do this he has to create an unnatural bifurcation of the Petrine authority behind Mark's gospel. Mark's access to the Petrine tradition in Palestine for his gospel is indirect, but his personal access to the person of Peter in Rome comes after the gospel is written. All this is a bit too awkward and contradicts the early church testimony that Peter's authority on Mark and his gospel was personal and direct and not through the mediation of Petrine tradition. If Reicke's theory is correct, it would have seemed that Mark would have issued an updated version of his gospel after he had personally had been with Peter for a longer time.

Now consider the different conclusions about the time of Peter and Mark reached by Mann and Reicke who both have high regard for the early church fathers. Mann has to place Mark with Peter early enough in the 60s, so that Mark can leave Rome for Palestine to write his gospel. Reicke has to place the composition early enough in the 60s to allow for Mark to be with Peter before his martyrdom in Rome. Mann has to place the martyrdom of Peter in the early 60s so that Mark can get to Palestine to write the gospel by 66. Reicke has to place that martyrdom later, so that there is enough time for Mark to write his gospel and get to Rome soon enough to spend time with Peter before his martyrdom. [Those who hold to Matthean priority see

this transition from an oral report to a written gospel taking place somewhere closer to Jerusalem. The question arises where the transition took place. If the missionary and also theological principle of "first to the Jew and then to the Greek" applies not only to preached Gospel, but to the written gospels, then the transition took place closer to Jerusalem.^{29]}

Mark was immediately treasured by that congregation, for both religious and sentimental reasons, as it reflected the remembrances of the prince of the disciples and the martyred apostle. In spite of its comparative inadequacies in theological discussion and length of narrative in comparison with the other gospels in offering a complete picture of the life and teachings of Jesus, its origin in circumstances surrounding the death of the martyred apostle would have made it a fit candidate for 'canonization' or at least 'beatification' soon after its publication. Mark's gospel had all the marks of being Peter's relic. It was treated as such by the fathers. The special attention given to the historical origins of Mark by Papias, Irenaeus, and Clement, can be explained. Matthew and Luke could stand on their own merits. Without this special association with Peter which gave it the status of a relic, it would not have been discarded by the church. From the evidences of the first centuries, it was 'canonized,' but did not prove to be a major factor in formulating the church's theology.

The understanding of Papias and Clement that Mark had its origins in the preaching of Peter is supported by Martin Hengel's critical evaluation of the gospel.

The Second Gospel probably developed out of the living oral teaching and was composed for solemn reading in worship. The short *cola*, often with rhythmic shape, point to oral recitation in the assembled community.³⁰

- In the original German version of the essay, Hengel speaks of Mark being

written for the lectio sollemnis, a phrase which is not really caught by the English 'solemn reading'. Mark did not compose his gospel for private study, but for that moment of the church's worship when rapt attention would be given to the account of the Lord's life as this record had been preached by Peter. In a sense it was not unlike the King James Version of the Bible which was not written so much for precision in translation, but for public lectionary reading in the churches of the England's monarch. If Hengel's judgment is right on this point, Mark intended his gospel as a lectionary. Its pericopes were intended for separate Sunday services and not to give a comprehensive theology as Matthew or a comprehensive narrative as Luke. This is not to deny that Matthew and Luke were not written for liturgical reading, but there were the other purposes of keeping a record of the words and deeds of Jesus. Matthew's conclusion with its promise that Jesus will be with them to the end of the age presupposes that this evangelist is looking at several succeeding generations and providing a record for them. Mark's overarching importance as 'preached gospel' is already found in its title "the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

Its lack of cohesion does not derive from the literary deficiency of Mark or the inadequacy of Peter, but from the liturgical purpose for which it was almost solely designed. Seeing the gospel of Mark as a document constructed for the church's liturgy does not make it unique, as Matthew, in the view of Hengel, was also written to be read publicly.³¹ The same could be said of Luke, as in a certain sense the majestic sweep of his language for the Christmas and the Emmaus accounts can only be fully appreciated when it is read aloud. Gospels are inherently liturgical documents, written for public and not private reading. Here Luke and Mark are similar in being

geared to the ears of the less informed listeners. Luke's unique discourses - the prodigal son, the woman and the lost coin - and Mark's short, pithy, and somewhat disconnected accounts from the life of Jesus are addressed more to the listeners' imagination than is Matthew whose gospel at certain points requires scholarly reflection. If Matthew's gospel was not problematic for Jewish ears, it was for Gentile ones. We have gotten ahead of our argument.

If Matthew and Luke used Mark, then they also were aware of its liturgical usage and adopted it for same purposes in their churches. If Mark, however, comes after Matthew or Luke, he adopted from them their understanding that a gospel should also be a liturgical document, one intended for the sollemnis lectio. Here lies the point of controversy. Of one thing we are certain. None of the evangelists originated the prominence given to Gospel recitation in the services. This was as early as the first Jerusalem church and according to Papias and Clement was being done in Rome by Peter.

From the very beginning the Christian services were a mixture of Scripture reading and oral tradition about the deeds of Jesus. The synagogue custom of reading from the law and the prophets was not only maintained in the Jewish-Christian synagogues, but was introduced into those which were predominantly Gentile, as for example, Corinth.³² While it is hardly debatable that Matthew wrote for a community which was virtually completely Jewish and thus could presuppose a detailed knowledge of the Old Testament, even the gospels written for Gentiles, Mark and Luke, required of their readers and listeners at least a panoramic view of it.³³ Paul's Gentile congregations were not Old Testament illiterates. The reading of the books of Moses with special attention given to his life story is

presupposed by all the gospel writers who see him as the figure after whom the life of Jesus is modeled.³⁴

The early Christian worship in the churches served by apostles consisted of the Lord's Supper and prayers accompanied by the reading of the Old Testament, those available epistles of Paul, and the recitation of the life and deeds of Jesus. The writer of 2 Peter presupposes that Paul's writings were given the same place of liturgical honor as the Old Testament, as he assumes his readers know of them as a collected corpus or perhaps even canon (3:15). It seems unlikely that the members of any congregation would have their private collections of Paul's letters. Problems, mentioned by the writer of 2 Peter, surfaced from Paul's letters being read in the services and not privately.

In this schema the question of when the first written gospel surfaced must be answered. We know from the fathers that a gospel came into existence in Rome during the stay of Peter and Mark. But was this the first gospel? Still the more fundamental question is why had the church been so reluctant to commit to writing the life of Jesus until the late 60s, when they had in their possession the written lives of Moses and the prophets in the written forms of the Old Testament and the messages of Paul in the epistles. The argument that the written word was less effective than the oral word in conveying the message of salvation is contradicted by the church's use of Old Testament Scriptures from the very beginning and the inclusion of Paul's letters. The written word was intended for reading and thus the line between the written and the oral word should not be sharply drawn. Why did this 'gospel' writing first happen in Rome and not first in Jerusalem, where the Jewish Christians continued to show such great respect

for the written Scriptures that a controversy over circumcision a requirement from those Scriptures arose?

The Origin of Mark's Gospel (2)

Historical reconstructions are always fraught with dangers and this is no less true in reassembling the pieces of the historical puzzle out of which Mark's gospel evolved. Certain historical probabilities have the support of early church testimony. Mark, who is in all probability the son of a certain Mary whose house in Jerusalem served the purposes of the first congregation there, is the gospel's writer. Various canonical and post-canonical sources identify him as the assistant to Peter. At the request of the Roman congregation, Mark records Peter's reminiscences of the life of Jesus. This association of Peter and Mark can be dated around the years 60-62, shortly before the martyrdom of Peter. The congregation has certain established liturgical practices. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are practiced. The service consists of a reading of the Old Testament Scriptures, a reading of at least one of Paul's epistles, and Peter providing his own recollections about the life of Jesus.

Clement, who provides information about the circumstances in which Mark was written, fleshes out the data provided by Papias. The same Clement is also speaks of the two the gospels with genealogies, Matthew and Luke, as being the first.

And, again in the same books [Hypotyposes], Clement has inserted a tradition of the primitive elders with regard to the order of the gospels as follows. He used to say that those gospels were written first which include the genealogies, and that the gospel of Mark came into being in this manner: When Peter had publicly preached the word at Rome, and by the Spirit had proclaimed the gospel, that those present, who were many, exhorted Mark (as one who had followed him [that is, Peter] for a long time, and

remembered what had been spoken), to make a record of what was said: and that he did this, and distributed [copies of] the gospel among those that asked him. And that when the matter came to Peter's knowledge, he neither strongly forbade it nor urged it forward. But that John, last of all, conscious that the outward facts had been set forth in the gospels [that is, those with genealogies and Mark], was urged on by his disciples [as Mark had been urged on by the Christians in Rome], and, divinely moved by the Spirit, composed a spiritual gospel. This is Clement's account.³⁵

What Clement says about Mark's gospel only substantiates what Papias has already said. The view that Matthew is the church's first written gospel was the unanimous opinion of the early church, including Irenaeus. He is hardly ploughing new ground on either of these points. Several problems have arisen for modern critical scholars on the use and value of these sources. Griesbach saw that Clement's account about the association of Peter and Mark, if taken seriously, made Mark's dependency on Matthew and Luke untenable. Those holding to the Markan priority can find at least supplementary support for their view in Clement's position, if they desire it. Peter as the first of the apostles would be an impeccable source for the first gospel. The first gospel would be derived from the first apostle, at least indirectly. There is the problem that Clement places Matthew and Luke first and other writers, though differing on the order, support Matthew as first. The supporters of the Markan priority freely acknowledge the popularity of Matthew, almost as soon as it appeared.³⁶ In both cases part of Clement's testimony is accepted and another part rejected. Problematic is that the parties making use of the early church testimonies are not agreed among themselves on what parts should be called as witnesses!

The early church testimonies require seeing Matthew and Luke first and Mark in the third position, but dependent on Peter in some sense. Without the testimonies of the fathers, these questions would not have to be

addressed, but they are part of historical transcripts and an historically responsible can not simply leap from the New Testament era to the critical era, ignoring the early testimonies. Failure to pay them serious attention reflects a certain degree of intellectual arrogance.

All concerns of the fathers could be met, if Peter is added as an independent source for Mark along side of Matthew and Luke. This solution would not satisfy Griesbach who sees Matthew and Luke as the sources for Mark and those who see Peter as the major or only source of Mark. Is it too complex to see three separate and in a sense autonomous sources behind Mark?

On the surface it appears that Clement and the other sources says nothing of Peter knowing of two others gospels. Papias with his reference to each interpreting Matthew as best he could does open the possibility that one or more of the last three evangelists knew the first.³⁷ By itself Papias's statement does not without absolute certainty point to Luke and Mark using Matthew, but it does allow for the possibility. Together with Luke's claim that he used a written source(s) raises to a level of probability that he may have indeed used Matthew. In any event, Papias claims that the others used Matthew and Luke claims that he used a prior written source. The testimonies of Papias and Luke dovetail. Thus the task before us is not totally impossible in coming up with a solution which incorporates all the evidence into a more or less unified picture.

The elder John, who is the source for Papias, outlines the shape of 'gospel canon' consisting of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. If the elder is to be identified with the evangelist, he was able to construct his gospel so as not to go over any previously covered material. If John some time around the year 90 had access to written gospels, it is not impossible that Mark

and Peter in the early 60s could have had such documents at their disposal. This deduction from Clement that the last three gospel writers had access to Matthew is supported by the earlier testimony of Papias. Since then is Papias's account of Mark, and about Matthew this was said "Matthew composed ta logia in Hebrew language, but each one interpreted them as he was able." Problematic here is what Papias intended by "Hebrew language." Whereas some have concluded that he is referring to an original Hebrew or Aramaic version of the gospel,³⁸ it can also be taken as a reference to the Hebrew style.³⁹ Those who used Matthew are not identified but they first had to overcome his use of the Hebrew idiom in his expressions before adapting his materials for their own purposes. Farmer points out that the mentioning of Mark before Matthew in no way speaks to the question of order and that nothing is said here of the relationship between Matthew and the other gospels.⁴⁰ When this statement is taken by itself, this might be true; however, Eusebius is setting forth this history about the New Testament not in disconnected, unrelated statements, but as a totality to which the fathers, as he knew them, are bearing a unified witness. Clement's view, which is also preserved by Eusebius, that Mark follows the two gospels with genealogies, must in the light of the Papias statement mean that Mark used Matthew. The same is also true of John, if he is the elder, would have had the previous three gospels at his disposal. Luke's claim to have seen at least one another document dovetails with Papias's claim that "each interpreted [Matthew's logia] as he was able." Since according to the testimonies gathered by Eusebius, Matthew was used by the others, that Matthew and Luke were first, that Mark was third and produced in Rome, it is highly probable that Matthew and Luke were not only known but being used in Rome when Mark

wrote. Consider that the Christians at Rome had (some) Old Testament Scriptures and Pauline epistles. What would prevent the congregation there from obtaining the gospel documents and placing them along side of the Old Testament and the Pauline epistle(s)? Regardless of when Luke was written, any time from the 50s through 80s, he explicitly mentions that there a written life (lives) of Jesus being circulated. A good argument can be made that Luke-Acts as a composite was intended for the Roman congregation, since the close of the Book of Acts places the author of Luke-Acts in Rome (28:16). Thus it is almost certain that if Luke had been written before 62, it was being used in Rome before Peter arrived. Peter arrived at a church which was already Pauline. It had Paul's epistle to them and Luke-Acts. Both Romans and Luke-Acts would have become the personal treasure of the Roman congregation and would have been made part of the regular services. As Acts was written from Rome, its prologue assumes the gospel. Whether or not Luke was also written from Rome, it was known there. When Peter arrived in Rome, he would have found a congregation already using the gospel of Luke and by implication of Luke's prologue already knew the narrative put together by the hands of many (1:1-4), i.e., Matthew. Luke's readers were informed about the existence of another document(s) which the evangelist for whatever reason found inadequate in accomplishing his ideal of what a 'gospel' should be. Assumably the readers knew of this document or may have been among those who found those parts which set form in 'the Hebrew style of speaking' difficult to understand. Unless the readers were aware of this other 'sacred literature', there would have been little purpose in the Luke's mentioning it. The author of Luke-Acts, who claims to be a companion of Paul, may have written his gospel expressly for problems in comprehension

being faced in Rome which had been brought up on by Matthew's gospel to replace the oral tradition. A congregation in which the Gentiles were increasingly in the majority over a dwindling Jewish minority would have been one in which more and more of the members found Matthew incomprehensible in some of its parts. If Luke was writing his gospel for the Roman congregation and if this congregation had already had in it possession a written 'gospel,' then there is good reason to believe that this gospel was Matthew. This hardly rules out the possibility that Luke is also looking at the Pauline churches in Greece and Asia Minor as co-recipients of his gospel. All were Pauline churches and shared in Roman-Hellenistic culture. Their common culture and were inclusion under one government was reenforced by the use of one language. Still Rome would have been the focal point.

If New Testament scholarship did not first have to be concerned about making its conclusions revolve around the unmovable objects of a Markan priority and the existence of the Q document, it could safely assume that when Mark wrote his gospel, Matthew and Luke were already widely circulated in the church and were known by their being read in the services, including Rome. If Paul could look to the Roman congregation as a source of financial aid for his proposed trip to Spain, they were sufficiently prosperous to have obtained copies of Paul's epistles and whatever lives of Jesus might have then been available at that time.

The use of three gospels between 69-100 became so widespread that according to Hengel, titles had to be attached to them to distinguish one from the other.⁴¹ A dating for the gospels between 69-100 requires that their titles were attached as soon as each was written. An earlier dating

for the gospels, at least before 70, provides for the first gospel to have its own initial impact on the church, for the second gospel to react to the first, and for the third to react to the first two. Whether the writing and naming of the gospels could have happened with the assigning of titles between 69-100 might be problematic for some. An earlier dating for the gospels would allow for the development of a 'gospel canon' by the year 70 and their naming afterwards, between 70 and 100.

Time must be allowed for several factors: (1) the writing of the first gospel; (2) a sufficiently wide circulation of that gospel so that another potential evangelist can become aware of that first gospel; (3) the resolve of this potential second evangelist that there should still be another gospel; (4) the preparation and actual writing of that second gospel; (5) the awareness on the part of still another potential evangelist that a third gospel should be written; (6) his concluding that it should be done and the preparation for and the writing of it;

(7) the placing of these gospels side by side, regardless of the order; (8) the resulting confusion arising from having three gospels with each so similar that one was being mistaken for the other; (8) the assigning of names to the gospels. During this last period, the church lectors to distinguish one gospel from the other assigned the designations "according to Matthew", "according to Luke", and "according to Mark." John's gospel would have been named almost as soon as it appeared, at least in those churches which accepted.

Within a span of hardly more than 10 years, from the early 50s to the middle 60s, the church had experienced a period of feverish apostolic writing in from the hand of Paul and his assistants. There is good reason

to be believe that this literary productivity which expressed itself in epistles could also at this time express itself in the documents later known as gospels. Paul's need to provide supervision of his churches through letters could have hardly been more than his need to provide them with authorized documents describing the life of Jesus. The early fathers describe with some detail how Mark arose in Rome in the 60s and how Matthew and Luke had come into existence before them. Hengel's early dating for the titles at least opens an earlier dating of the gospels as an item for discussion.

Only when all three gospels were seen as being part of the same liturgical genre as sollemnis lectio (sollemnes lectiones) did the need for titles arise. As important as the title became in distinguishing one gospel from another, the evangelists did not see themselves as creative composers of stories, but preservers of the same traditions which comprised the one Gospel.

NOTES

1. Martin Hengel, Studies in the Gospels of Mark tr. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), p. 47.
2. Bo Reicke, The Roots of the Synoptic Gospels (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986) pp. 161-2.
3. Hengel, Studies in the Gospel of Mark, p. 77.
4. H.E. VI.25.3-6.
5. Bo Reicke also holds to a Peter-Mark connection but he places this in Jerusalem in the house-churches, particularly the one of Mark's mother. Without denying this relationship, it could have hardly been more than

casual. Reicke mentions that Papias makes no reference to their being in Rome; however, he must ignore the other evidences that place the close connection between Peter and Mark in Rome. The Roots of the Synoptic Gospels, pp. 161-6.

6. Both Hengel and Reicke discuss the role of the traveling scribes. Hengel describes their duties as "look[ing] after the community libraries, copying and sending out liturgical writings, letters, and other documents which were connected with the life of the community, and in so doing worked hand in hand with traveling teachers and messengers who went from community to community. This abundant travelling, from the beginning associated with a constant exchange of books and letters, was one of the foundations of the unity of the church." Studies in the Gospel of Mark, p. 80. Reicke in unpublished ms "The History of the Pauline Correspondence" sees Timothy and Silvanus as collaborators in Thessalonian and Corinthian correspondence. Timothy was then both a messenger and a scribe.

7. pp. 2-4.

8. J.J. Griesbach, "A Demonstration that Mark was written after Matthew and Luke", trans. Bernard Orchard in J.J. Griesbach: Synoptic and Text-Critical Studies 1776-1976 ed. Bernard Orchard and Thomas R. W. Longstaff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 115. "According to Papias, Mark had gathered the material he used for constructing his Gospel from the discourses of Peter, but Peter was not at hand when he wrote and did not offer his help. Papias therefore convicts of falsehood those who argue that Mark wrote at Peter's dictation." At this point Griesbach has no difficulty in citing an apostolic father for the support of his position.

9. Griesbach Studies, p. 115.

10. Op. cit. pp. 114-5.

11. Griesbach, Commentario qua Marci Evangelium totum e Matthaei et Lucae commentariis decerptum esse monstratur. Cited from Griesbach Studies, op. cit. p. 86. ["The writers whom we have considered so far maintain that Mark has taken the subject-matter of his book from the discourses that Peter had given in public." Op. cit., p. 117.]

12. Quote from Hengel, Studies in the Gospel of Mark, op cit., p. 47.

13. Reicke who uses the term veteran instead of elder to translate presbyteros notes that this is Eusebius's term for John [EH III.39.14]. Op. cit., p. 161.

14. Geoffrey Wainwright, Eucharist and Eschatology (2nd ed; New York: Oxford University Press, 1981 [1971]), pp. 74-6.

15. Martin Hengel, Studies in the Gospel of Mark, p. 84.

16. Hengel, Studies in the Gospel of Mark, pp. 72-4.

17. "Matthew published a written gospel among the Hebrews in their own language [or dialect, or style], while Peter were preaching the gospel in Rome and found the church there. After their decease, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing the things that used to be preached by Peter." Quoted from Farmer, Jesus and the Gospel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982) p. 100.
18. J.J. Griesbach: Synoptic and text-critical studies 1776-1976, pp. 116-7. "But Clement is not quite consistent with himself. For according to H.E. II, 15, he relates that Peter was pleased with 'the desire of the Romans and approved the Gospel of Mark; but on the other hand, according to H.E. VI, 14, he says that the apostle did not restrain the disciples from his purpose, nor did he urge him to carry it out."
19. J.J. Griesbach Studies, p. 115. "Papias therefore convicts of falsehood those who argue that Mark at Peter's dictation."
20. Bo Reicke, "The History of the Pauline Correspondence" , Unpublished Manuscript, pp. 2-3.
21. Hengel, Studies in the Gospel of Mark, pp. 80-1.
22. Hengel, Studies in the Gospel of Mark, p. 68.
23. Bo Reicke, The Roots of the Synoptic Gospels, p. 153.
24. Hengel, Studies in the Gospel of Mark, p. 30. "[Mark] was written in a time of severe affliction in Rome after the persecution of Nero and before the destruction of Jerusalem, probably during AD 69, the 'year of revolution'.
25. C.S. Mann, Mark, pp. 79-80.
26. Mann, p. 81.
27. Mann, p 83.
28. The Roots of the Synoptic Gospels, p. 166.
29. C.S. Mann, Mark. Anchor Bible (Garden City, New York; Doubleday, 1986), p. 59. Mann applies this principle to the priority of Matthew over Luke. It can be used with effectiveness to Matthew's preceding Mark.
30. Hengel, op. cit., p. 52.
31. Studies in the Gospel of Mark, p. 161, n. 97.
32. Hengel, Studies in the Gospel of Mark, p. 161, n. 97. "Without relatively regular reading of scripture in worship, Paul could have never argued in his letter with the help of the OT."
33. Hengel, Studies in the Gospel of Mark, p. 76.

34. Hengel, op. cit., pp. 56-8.

35. Quoted from William R. Farmer, Jesus and the Gospel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), p. 98.

36. Hengel, Studies in the Gospel of Mark

37. E.H. III.39.16.

38. Bo Reicke, The Roots of the Synoptic Gospels (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), p. 159.

39. Farmer, Jesus and the Gospel, p. 97. For a discussion on the choice between language and style, see p. 265, n. 41.

40. Op. cit., p. 97.

41. Hengel, Studies in the Gospel of Mark, p. 84.