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The Subscriptions to Mark's Gospel and History of Reception

Conrad Thorup Elmelund¹  and Tommy Wasserman² 

¹Centre for Theology and Religious Studies, Lund University, Lund, Sweden and ²Ansgar University College, Kristiansand, Norway

***Corresponding authors:** Tommy Wasserman. Email: wasserman@ansgarskolen.no
Conrad Thorup Elmelund. Email: conrad.elmelund@ctr.lu.se

Abstract

This article surveys the subscriptions to the Gospel of Mark in 157 Greek manuscripts, noting their gradual development from being identical to the title in the earliest phase to becoming more and more elaborate and significant for the history of interpretation. Early on, as reflected in the title, the Second Gospel was associated with Mark, known to be Peter's disciple and interpreter. In the fourth or fifth century, an editor added the information that it was written (or spoken) by Mark in Latin in Rome as reflected in the Peshitta and later Byzantine manuscripts. At some point between the seventh and ninth centuries, an unknown editor added dates for each of the four Gospels from a source which has been attributed to Hippolytus' *Chronicle*, and in the process made a cascading error which resulted in too early dates for Mark, Luke and John. In the archetype of Family 13, these traditions were combined which suggests that the archetype of Family 13 is no earlier than the eighth century. A main factor behind this gradual growth of the subscriptions is authentication and authorisation – in the case of the Second Gospel, the association with Mark and Peter legitimates its claim of apostolicity and orthodoxy. Moreover, the situating of each Gospel in time and space through the subscriptions not only satisfies human curiosity but contributes to the construction of an ancient Christian 'landscape of memory', reflecting the collective memory of the early Christians, thus shaping and enhancing their identity.

Keywords: Gospel of Mark; subscriptions; typology of subscriptions; dating of the Gospels; history of reception; authentication and authorisation; Christian landscape of memory

1. Introduction

The subscriptions to New Testament books, including the Gospel of Mark, are not part of the original writings but reflect later and sometimes competing traditions which, nevertheless, are significant for the history of interpretation. In this article, we will survey the subscriptions to Mark (or their absence) based on a fresh collation of 157 Greek manuscripts – the same selection as in the recently published *Novum Testamentum Editio Critica Maior* (ECM) of Mark.¹ We will present the evidence in a critical apparatus divided

¹ *Novum Testamentum Graecum: Editio Critica Maior I: The Synoptic Gospels; 2: The Gospel according to Mark; 1: Text* (ed. Holger Strutwolf et al.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2021). Our particular selection of Greek manuscripts was made not only to represent the textual tradition of Mark as a whole but also to evaluate the ECM edition of Mark. We acknowledge the fact that a full collation of the many Byzantine manuscripts would likely add a few more subscriptions (or alternative forms of existing ones) to our apparatus.

according to a tripartite typology. We will then attempt to trace the origin, character and development of the various traditions reflected in these subscriptions and how they might illuminate the history of interpretation of Mark, in particular, regarding questions of its date, place of origin, authorship, language and readership.

Although we are not primarily concerned with questions of historicity, the evidence in the subscriptions has played a certain role in the scholarly discussion of the dating of the Gospels. Thus, in the two opening articles of a volume devoted to fundamental questions about the Gospel of Mark, Martin Hengel and Günther Zuntz discussed its date and place of origin.² Interestingly, they both referred to the evidence in the subscriptions to Mark in Greek manuscripts, which suggest that the Gospel was written ‘ten years after the ascension of Christ’ implying a date around 40 CE. Hengel, who, for various reasons, dated Mark to 68–70 CE, nevertheless, attempted to find the ‘historical root of this peculiar tradition’ in the Greek manuscripts, but without success.³ Zuntz, who did argue for an early date for Mark to ca. 40 CE, paid more detailed attention to the subscriptions to the Gospels, suggesting that they originated from an edition of the Gospels by Eusebius of Caesarea.⁴

As we will see, however, the subscription that dates Mark to ten (or twelve) years after the ascension is certainly not the work of Eusebius, but rather is based on a scribal error on the part of an unknown medieval editor who introduced the dates for each Gospel from a source that we will here identify for the first time.

2. A Typology of Subscriptions to Mark

The subscriptions to the Gospel of Mark in the selected manuscripts are presented below in an apparatus, which is divided into three main types according to a typology developed by Tommy Wasserman, Linnea Thorp and Conrad Thorup Elmelund.⁵

The typology largely corresponds to William H. P. Hatch’s general description of how subscriptions developed over time.⁶ In the early phase, the subscriptions are short and simple and often identical to the titles indicating the genre and author, e.g., εὐαγγέλιον κατὰ Μάρκον (Type 1). In a later phase, they become more elaborate, still only marking the end of the Gospel, e.g., τέλος τοῦ κατὰ Μάρκον ἁγίου εὐαγγελίου (Type 2). In the final phase, as Hatch explains, other elements are added:

Another kind of subscription is found in some uncial and many minuscule manuscripts of the New Testament. Subscriptions of this type differ from those mentioned above in that they give the reader in succinct form certain information concerning the book in question.⁷

² Martin Hengel, ‘Entstehungszeit und Situation des Markusevangeliums’, *Markus-Philologie: Historische, literar-geschichtliche und stilistische Untersuchungen zum zweiten Evangelium* (ed. Hubert Cancik; WUNT 33; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1984) 1–45; Günther Zuntz, ‘Wann wurde das Evangelium Marci geschrieben?’, *Markus-Philologie* 47–71.

³ Hengel, ‘Entstehungszeit’, 9.

⁴ Zuntz, ‘Evangelium Marci’, 51–71.

⁵ Tommy Wasserman and Linnea Thorp, ‘The Tradition and Development of the Subscriptions to 1 Timothy’, *Paratextual Features in Papyrology and Early Christian Manuscripts* (ed. Stanley E. Porter, Chris S. Stevens, and David I. Yoon; TENTS 16; Leiden: Brill, 2023) 172–201; and Tommy Wasserman and Conrad Thorup Elmelund, ‘Second Timothy: When and Where? Text and Traditions in the Subscriptions’, *Paratextual Features*, 202–26. Some terminology has been drawn from David G. Champagne, ‘Scribal Habits Within the Superscription and Subscription Traditions of Greek New Testament Manuscripts’, Ph.D. diss. (New Orleans Baptist Seminary, 2012), specifically the use of ‘modifier’ to designate various elements in the subscriptions, e.g., εὐαγγέλιον as ‘genre modifier’.

⁶ Hatch, *Facsimiles and Descriptions of Minuscule Manuscripts of the New Testament* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951) 33–4.

⁷ Hatch, *Facsimiles*, 33.

The additional information ‘concerning the book’ in various combinations in the subscriptions to Mark include the date (relative to the ascension), the place of origin and the language of composition. In addition, a few manuscripts contain a note about the authoritative manuscript exemplars used by the implied scribe – the so-called Jerusalem colophon – although the actual scribes of the manuscripts that attest to this note just copied the colophon from their exemplars, i.e., it entered the transmission in an archetype at some specific point no later than the ninth century when it is first attested in extant manuscripts.⁸

In addition to these three types of subscriptions, the apparatus contains an addendum with a few Byzantine book epigrams found at the end of Mark. This category partly overlaps with subscriptions and is included for the sake of completeness.

3. Apparatus

The apparatus in Table 1 below contains 157 manuscripts, the same selection as in the ECM of Mark, but 192 entries, since one manuscript can occur several times, for example, if a subscription was added later (e.g., 011*/011C), or combine overlapping subscriptions (e.g., 017–1/017–2).⁹ Lacunose witnesses and lectionaries that lack subscriptions have not been assigned to any type, but are listed in the first two rows of the apparatus. We have identified and corrected errors in the ECM edition of Mark in forty-five of the 157 included manuscripts (29%).¹⁰

List of suffixes (after manuscript numbers)

* / C is used for original hand (*) and later correction/addition (C);

C* is used for a correction by the first hand (*in scribendo*);

– 1, – 2, and – 3 are used for compounded/overlapping subscriptions in the order they appear without any judgement on when and by which scribe the different elements were copied;

S is used for a supplement (the page on which the reading occurs was added later);

r is used for a regularised incorrect reading (e.g., a misspelling);

V is used for uncertain readings (*ut videtur*).

4. Analysis

4.1 Positive Omission of Subscription

Seventy-eight witnesses (41%) lack a subscription to Mark, i.e., they attest to a positive omission. The earliest witnesses date to the ninth century, e.g., Codex Koridethi (Θ 038). Nine of these witnesses are marked with an asterisk since a subscription has been added later. For example, the first hand of Codex Seidelianus I (G 011) omits the subscription (011*), but a different hand added one at a later stage (011C).

⁸ See Tommy Wasserman, ‘The Greek New Testament Manuscripts in Sweden with an Excursus on the Jerusalem Colophon’, *SEÅ* 75 (2010) 86–92. The colophon is first attested in Codex 565 and Codex Λ (039), both dated to the ninth century.

⁹ The ECM of Mark has 170 entries in the subscription apparatus. Our apparatus adds another twenty-five entries and removes three entries from ECM which should not have been included: 1689r occurs twice; 2542 is actually lacunose; 1582Cr records a scholion to Mark 16.19 which is not a subscription.

¹⁰ These forty-five manuscripts are: 05S, 011, 017, 019, 041S, 4, 18, 28, 61, 105, 117, 131, 153, 154, 205, 261, 273, 389, 513, 544, 565, 706, 752, 788, 872, 873, 892, 954, 979, 983, 1160, 1273, 1446, 1506, 1555, 1574S, 1582, 1675, 1689, 2174, 2193, 2206, 2542, 2886, 1387. In seven additional cases, the presented text is correct, but, in our opinion, the notation is wrong (this concerns 472, 695, 713, 828, 1009, 1253, 1654). The full transcriptions including proposed corrections to the ECM of Mark and other notes have been deposited publicly in the Dutch national centre of expertise and repository for research data (DANS): <https://doi.org/10.17026/dans-zdf-b9sk>.

Table 1: Apparatus of subscriptions to the Gospel of Mark

Type	Reading	Witnesses
Subscription unknown or not existing		
–	Lacunose	05 041 042 055 083 099 0233 16 733 2517 2542
–	Lectionaries	L60 L211 L387 L547 L547S L563 L770 L773 L844 L950 L2211
Positive evidence of omission		
0	Omit	011* 038 041S 3* 26 69 79 118 152 154* 176 178 179 184 191 222 238 261* 304 351* 372 377 427 495 555 569 579 590 595 697 719 732 740 752* 766 780 791 792 803 807 827* 829 855 863 892* 1029 1082 1093 1128 1216 1243 1279 1302 1337 1342 1457* 1515 1542S 1574 1574S* 1579 1582 1593 2106 2148 2206 2411 2487 2537 2542S 2606 2666 2680 2737 2738 2766 2786
Type 1: Superscription repeated as the subscription		
I	εὐαγγελιον ὧ κατα μαρκον	03 ὧ εκ του 788-2 txt 01 02 04 017-1 019 032 037 044 0211 28-1 33 348 382 472-1 513-1 700 713*r 872-1 892C-1 1009r-1 1047 2174-2 2193-1* 2726
Type 2: Semi-elaborate subscriptions with terminal modifier		
2.1	εὐαγγελιον κατα μαρκον ετελεσθη	05S
2.2.1	τελος 'του κατα μαρκον ευαγγελιου' ὧ	‘ – 1645 / 4 2-3 61-1C* (ειληφεν 1546) το 2-3 (αγιον 706-1 827C 1457C 1546) ευαγγελιον 2200 (συν ᾠω 1446) /-3 αγιου 4 3C 23 105-2 117-1 153-1 205-1 349 544r 752C 954rV 1160-1 1273 2193-2 2886V txt 351C 892C-2 1241 1424
2.2.2	τελος της ερμηνειας του κατα μαρκον αγιου ευαγγελιου	728 949 1506r 2206
Type 3: Elaborate subscriptions with chronological/geographical-linguistic/other modifiers		
3.1.1	'το κατα μαρκον ευαγγελιον' ὧ εξεδοθη ὧ μετα 'Ιχρονους ὧ της ὧ του ὧ αναληψεως ὧ	‘ 4 2-3 4 273-1r 713Cr 2193-1CV /-3 αγιον 4 011Cr 61-2 131-2 695r 1396 1495 1574SC τελος του 2-3 (αγιου 18 35 261C 706-2 979) ευαγγελιου 716V συνεγραφη /-3 (αγιον 517 1675-1) 4 154CV ὧ – 154CV 517 1160-2 1675-1 εγραφη 61-2 ὧ υπ αυτου 695r 1084S 1396 τουτο 979 2193-1CV ὧ ὧ ετη 1160-2 2 / 154CV ὧ της 1009-2 ὧ 4 154CV 273-1r 517 979 1326 1495 1528 1574SC 1654r 1675-1 2193-1CV ὧ κω 011Cr ὧ ημων ὧ χυ 713Cr ὧ παρ αυτου του μαρκου εγραφη παρα του πετρου διδαχθεντος αυτο 1160-2 txt 017-2 28-2 105-1 389 472-2 872-2

(Continued)

Table 1: (Continued.)

Type	Reading	Witnesses
3.1.2	ιστεον οτι μετα χρονους δεκα της του κϛ ημων και θϛ ιϛ χϛ εκ νεκρων αναστασεως και εις συνουζ αναληψεως εγραφη το κατα μαρκον αγιον ευαγγελιον	205-2 209
3.2.1	‘ευαγγελιον κατα μαρκον’ εγραφη ρωμιστι εν ρωμη μετα ‘π̄ ετη’ της αναληψεως του κϛ	‘τελος του 2-3 ευαγγελιου 983r 1689r εκ του κατα μαρκον ευαγγελιου 788-1 (placed after chapter list of Mark on fol. 58v) ‘ 788-1 983r 1689r txt 13r 124 346r 543 826 828 873
3.2.2	ευαγγελιον κατα μαρκον εγραφη ελληνιστι εις αλεξανδρειαν την μεγαλην μετα ετη δωδεκα της αναληψεως του κϛ	1253
3.2.3	συνεγραφη το κατα μαρκον αγιον ευαγγελιον μετα χρονους π̄ της χϛ του αναληψεως	2174-1
3.3	‘το κατα μαρκον αγιον ευαγγελιον’ εγραφη και αντεβληθη ομοιως εκ των ‘εσπουδαμενων’ [†]	‘ 1-3 5 1555 5 2-3 565 1071 [†] εν ιεροσολυμοις παλαιων αντιγραφων 565 [†] εξεδοθη μετα χρονους τ̄ της χϛ αναληψεως 1555 txt 117-2 153-2
Addendum: Epigrams		
A.1	οσα περι χριστοιο θεηγορος εθνεα πετρος κηρυσσων εδιδασκεν απο στοματων εριτιμων ενθαδε μαρκος αγειρε και εν σελιδεσιν εθηκεν τουνεκα και μεροπεσιν ευαγγελος αλλος εδειχθη	892C-3r 1675-2
A.2	τελος τουδε προυθηκα αρρητω μαρκω (overlaps with Type 2)	513-2
A.3	πετρου μιμητης μαρκος ωφθεις τοις τροποις δικαιον ουκ εκριναι μη και τοις λογοις ειναι μιμητην αυτον ως και του πετρου διο βραχυνθεις του μακρου λογου λογε μικρα μεν ειπε ρηματ’ ευλογιστειας ενος δε μη δεοντα των λοιπων ορου	273-2
A.4	εκδοσιν αμβροσιαν μαρκ’ επιτευξας κοσμον απαντι βιον εκλινας εργων	131-1
A.5	υιον πετρου το μαρκον η θεια χαρις τιθησιν αλλην αρεγεστατην πετραν κρηπιδα και σφραγιδα της εκκλησιας ευαγγελιστιν δευτερον θεηγορον εξ ου μιηθεις των θεοπρεπεστατων εργων ις̄ σκεπτεται το βιβειον (corrector: βιβλιον) υιον θϛ τον χϛ εκ ωροσιμων (corrector: προσιμων) λαμπρος διδασκων και σοφως αναγραφων	117-3

4.2 Titles as Subscriptions (Type 1)

Type 1-subscriptions belong to the early phase when the subscriptions were identical to the titles. Twenty-six witnesses (14%) contain a simple subscription of Type 1, e.g., Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲭ 01). In contrast to Hatch and others, we think that the genre modifier

εὐαγγέλιον belongs to the initial form, and, hence, we propose that the reading εὐαγγελιον κατα μαρκον reflects the earliest subscription rather than the reading κατα μαρκον (as in the ECM Mark). The longer form is actually attested by all the earliest witnesses except Codex Vaticanus (03) which has the short form.

In this connection, it is to be noted that P75, the sister manuscript of Vaticanus, attests to the subscription εὐαγγέλιον κατα λουκαν in Luke, and both P66 and P75 attest to the title εὐαγγελιον κατα Ιωαννην (with orthographic variation) in John (they do not preserve Mark). Moreover, the flyleaf of P4 contains only the title of Matthew's Gospel written as εὐαγγελιον καταμαθ'θαιον. The same title was likely also on a flyleaf of the bilingual P62, judging from the remaining Greek and Coptic letters.¹¹

Martin Hengel assumed that the titles of the individual Gospels originated already in the first century before the four Gospels were brought together in a collection sometime in the second century, since it would have been necessary to assign each writing to an author when read in worship.¹² Silke Petersen also argued that the version of the Gospel titles that includes εὐαγγέλιον must predate the collection of the four Gospels in a tetraevangelion codex in which εὐαγγέλιον could be dropped, but she suggests that titles were added at the beginning of the second century simply reflecting a consciousness of other Gospels that were circulating.¹³

Whereas both Hengel's and Petersen's hypotheses allow for the reconstruction of differing titles (and subscriptions) for each Gospel as they circulated separately, David Trobisch has instead connected the unusual genre designation εὐαγγέλιον combined with the use of the preposition κατά, which is unusual in titles, to one canonical redaction and edition of the four Gospels.¹⁴ Similarly, Simon Gathercole has argued, based on a broad range of textual evidence, that it is preferable to treat the titles *en bloc* because of the striking consistency 'in the form of the title from one Gospel to another'.¹⁵ At the same time, he is open to the possibility that the four Gospels were (re-)titled *en bloc* (presumably when they were brought together in a collection).¹⁶ In a subsequent study, Gathercole is more confident that the authors' names were appended at a later point.¹⁷

Regardless of the origin of the titles, the uniformity of the evidence in early titles and subscriptions is remarkable and must reflect a consciousness of more Gospels and the

¹¹ Simon Gathercole, 'The Titles of the Gospels in the Earliest New Testament Manuscripts', *ZNW* 104 (2013) 33–76, 39.

¹² Martin Hengel, *Die Evangelienüberschriften* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1984) 47–51. Further, Hengel proposed that the genre designation εὐαγγέλιον derives from Mark 1.1 (p. 49).

¹³ Silke Petersen, 'Die Evangelienüberschriften und die Entstehung des neutestamentlichen Kanons', *ZNW* 97 (2006) 250–74, 274.

¹⁴ David Trobisch, *The First Edition of the New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 38, 41.

¹⁵ Gathercole, 'Titles', 69. Gathercole has devoted a separate study to Papyrus 4, the flyleaf of which contains nothing but the title of Matthew's Gospel written as 'εὐαγγελιον καταμαθ'θαιον', which he regards as the earliest extant manuscript title of Matthew. See Simon Gathercole, 'The Earliest Manuscript Title of Matthew's Gospel (BnF Suppl. gr. 1120 ii 3 / P4)' *NovT* 54 (2012) 209–35. More recently, Brent Nongbri, *God's Library: The Archaeology of the Earliest Christian Manuscripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018) 247–68, has argued that this manuscript may be as late as the fourth century. See, however, the response by Tommy Wasserman who argues for a date around 200 CE in 'Beyond Palaeography: Text, Paratext and Dating of Early Christian Papyri', *The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri at Ninety: Literature, Papyrology, Ethics* (ed. by Garrick V. Allen, Usama Gad, Kelsie Rodenbiker, Anthony Royle and Jill Unkel; *Manuscripta Biblica* 10; Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2023) 152–60.

¹⁶ Gathercole, 'The Titles', 69.

¹⁷ Simon Gathercole, 'The Alleged Anonymity of the Canonical Gospels', *JTS* 69 (2018) 447–76, esp. p. 454. Gathercole's main point in this study is that although the standardised titles were added in the second century (the consensus view) that certainly does not mean they were anonymous (or that the earlier Gospel manuscripts were unaccompanied by any indication of a name, e.g., an author's name could be written on the back of a roll or on a separate name tag).

need to distinguish between them. We think that these paratexts derive from the archetype of the extant textual tradition and that it is impossible to reach beyond it. Further, we agree with both Petersen and Gathercole who think that εὐαγγέλιον should be included in the titles in the Nestle-Aland-editions.¹⁸ It is perhaps needless to say that the same goes for the ECM editions of the Gospels.

4.3 Subscriptions with Terminal Modifier (Type 2)

The semi-elaborated subscriptions of Type 2 are defined by their inclusion of a terminal modifier (τέλος or ἐτελέσθη) and by their lack of additional information. However, we have allowed for a few minor elements to be included in this type, such as the divine agency-modifier (σὺν θεῷ) and the referential modifier (ἀγίου). In this corpus, the verbal forms ἐπληρώθη and ἐτελέσθη are used exclusively in the bilingual manuscripts with their Latin equivalents (e.g., in Codex Bezae which has ἐτελέσθη and *explicit*), but they are attested in other Byzantine manuscripts outside this corpus.¹⁹ The corresponding verb form is also used in the subscriptions in the Old Syriac and the Peshitta traditions (see below).

The noun τέλος seems to have been introduced at a later stage in the subscriptions to Gospel manuscripts. On the other hand, it is attested in subscriptions in literary papyri at least from the third century CE in the formula τέλος ἔχει + nominative of the name of the work + genitive of the name of the author (where especially the last element may be implied from the context).²⁰ Moreover, the Old Syriac version, which probably dates to the third century, has a similar terminal modifier corresponding to τέλος. In conclusion, we think that both terminal modifiers in our subscriptions reflect influence from the broader book culture, Greek and Latin, respectively (possibly, the verbal forms originated in Latin book culture).²¹

4.4 Elaborate Subscription Situating the Gospel of Mark (Type 3)

The Type 3-subscriptions place the Gospel of Mark in time and space by means of chronological and geographical-linguistic modifiers, and some subscriptions contain additional information as the type developed over time.²² This type of subscription is particularly significant for the history of the interpretation of Mark.

4.4.1 Ten (/Twelve) Years After the Ascension

To begin with the chronological modifiers that indicate when the Gospel of Mark was written, there are two competing dates – either ten years (3.1) or twelve years (3.2) after the ascension of Christ (/the Lord). The indication of ten years is first attested by

¹⁸ Petersen, 'Evangelienüberschriften', 254; Gathercole, 'The Titles', 33–7. Although Trobisch is less clear on this particular matter, he does think that the long form is original to the 'canonical edition' (p. 126 n142). Moreover, he proposes that modern editions should include titles of 'the literary unit of the Four-Gospel Book', i.e., εὐαγγελιοὶ δ' (p. 103).

¹⁹ Vito Lorusso, 'Locating Greek Manuscripts through Paratexts: Examples from the Library of Cardinal Bessarion and Other Manuscript Collections', *Tracing Manuscripts in Time and Space through Paratexts*, (ed. Giovanni Ciotti and Hang Lin; Studies in Manuscript Cultures 7; Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2016) 246.

²⁰ Francesca Schironi, *To Mega Biblion: Book-Ends, End-Titles, and Coronides in Papyri with Hexametric Poetry* (The American Studies in Papyrology 48; Durham: The American Society of Papyrologists, 2010) 21–2, 164, 168 (P.Mil.Vogl. inv. 1225 and P.Lond.Lit. 5).

²¹ Cf. David C. Parker, *Codex Bezae: An Early Christian Manuscript and Its Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 11, '[t]he use of explicit (i.e. *explicitum*) and incipit is standard in Latin books'.

²² For further examples of subscriptions outside our sample, see Hermann von Soden, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments in ihrer ältesten erreichbaren Textgestalt hergestellt auf Grund ihrer Textgeschichte*, 2 parts in 4 vols., 2nd unchanged ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1911–3), 1.1:297–9.

Codex Cyprius (K 017) dated to the ninth century, το κατά μαρκον ευαγγελιον εξεδοθη μετα χρονους δεκα της του χυ αναληψεως (3.1.1), whereas the indication of twelve years after the ascension is not attested until the eleventh century (in 124, 788 and 873) and likely reflects a secondary development.²³

In a discussion of the dating of Mark, Martin Hengel tried to reach the historical root behind this peculiar tradition of the ten or twelve years after the ascension, which he observed both in hypotheses in Gospel manuscripts and the commentary of Theophylact.²⁴ He suggested that the ten years might derive from Jerome's Latin translation of Eusebius' *Chronicle*, where it is said that Peter came to Rome in the second year of Claudius' reign, and that in the next year, the evangelist Mark became Peter's interpreter. This, Hengel suggested, would be in 42 CE and, thus, 'around' ten years after the ascension. Moreover, the note in Acts 12.17 that Peter, after his release from prison (presumably under Agrippa I ca. 42/43 CE), 'left and went to another place' could have been interpreted as him travelling to Rome. In addition, Hengel suggested that the round numbers ten or twelve were particularly suitable because they are holy numbers.²⁵ However, Hengel did not place any weight on this ancient tradition but dated Mark to ca. 68–70 CE on other grounds.

On the other hand, Zuntz dated Mark to 40 CE, and he did so mainly based on the internal evidence in Mark 13.14 – the note about 'the desolating sacrilege' set up in the temple which he connected with Caligula's threat to the Temple in Jerusalem.²⁶ Nevertheless, he discussed the ancient evidence found in hypotheses and subscriptions that apparently supported this early dating of Mark, namely to 'ten [v.l. twelve] years after the ascension', proposing that they were added to an edition of the Gospels by Eusebius of Caesarea (d. 339 CE).²⁷ Like Hengel, he pointed to the reference in Jerome's Latin translation of Eusebius' *Chronicle* (lost in its Greek original) which says that Mark, the evangelist, became Peter's interpreter in Rome, further noting that the manuscript witnesses of the *Chronicle* contain variation concerning whether Peter arrived in Rome in the first, second, or even third year of Claudius' reign, i.e., 41, 42 or 43 CE – a variation which he assumed could explain the corresponding variation in the subscriptions between ten and twelve years after the ascension.²⁸

Zuntz further assumed that the dates for the other Gospels derived from the dating of Mark and according to canonical order (so Matthew a little bit earlier, Luke and John later), although wrongly from a historical point of view. In this connection, he acknowledged that the dating of John to thirty or thirty-two years after the ascension (ca. 60 CE), as indicated in the subscriptions, was quite remarkable.²⁹ In the end, however, Zuntz concluded that Eusebius' chronology of the Gospels, in turn, depended on unreliable information from Papias, and, therefore, it could not be used as historical evidence for the early dating of Mark after all.³⁰

²³ For the use of χρόνος as indication of a year, as attested in *T. Jud.* 7.10, *Acts Paul* 45 and elsewhere, see *PGL* s.v. χρόνος 3.

²⁴ Hengel, 'Entstehungszeit', 8–9.

²⁵ Hengel, 'Entstehungszeit', 9, 'Die historische Wurzel dieser eigenartigen Tradition hängt gewiß auch mit der runden bzw. heiligen Zehn- oder Zwölfzahl zusammen . . .'

²⁶ Zuntz, 'Evangelium Marci', 47. More recently, Nicholas H. Taylor, 'Palestinian Christianity and the Caligula Crisis, Part 2, The Markan Eschatological Discourse', *JSNT* 62 (1996) 13–41; and James G. Crossley, *The Date of Mark's Gospel: Insight from the Law in Earliest Christianity* (JSNTSup 266; London: T&T Clark, 2004) have argued along the same lines.

²⁷ Zuntz, 'Evangelium Marci', 57–65.

²⁸ Zuntz, 'Evangelium Marci', 66.

²⁹ Zuntz, 'Evangelium Marci', 66–7.

³⁰ Zuntz, 'Evangelium Marci', 65–71, esp. 70–1.

4.4.2 The Source of the Date in Subscriptions

We agree with Zuntz that the dating of each of the four Gospels relative to the ascension in the subscriptions must be the work of one editor, but we can safely exclude the idea that this was Eusebius. In the following, we will instead demonstrate that an unknown editor supplied dating for each of the four Gospels from one earlier source, which can be dated between the seventh century and 836 CE. In this process, he made a cascading error which resulted in this ‘peculiar tradition’ of early dates for Mark, Luke and, in particular, John. The error is attested first in Codex Cyprius (K 017) dated to the ninth century.

The earliest attested form of the source in question, we suggest, is preserved in Fragment IX a, attributed by Franz Diekamp to the *Chronicle* of Hippolytus of Thebes, who was a Byzantine author likely writing in the late seventh or early eighth century.³¹ Diekamp found the fragment in the tenth-century catena manuscript GA 299 (*Paris BN Grec.* 177; Parpulov type e.2.iii.α) where it is appended by the same hand (in our judgement) to a longer excerpt from the *Chronology* of Hippolytus of Thebes placed at the end of the codex with three other brief texts.³² For convenience’s sake, we provide a transcription and translation of Fragment IX a from this manuscript:

Καὶ γὰρ τὸ κατὰ Ματθαῖον εὐαγγέλιον μετὰ ὀκτὼ χρόνους τῆς Χριστοῦ ἀναλήψεως συνεγράφη, τὸ κατὰ Μάρκον μετὰ δέκα, τὸ κατὰ Λουκᾶν μετὰ εἴς, τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην μετὰ τριάκοντα δύο ἐπὶ Δομετιανοῦ.

For the Gospel according to Matthew was written eight years after Christ’s ascension; that according to Mark after ten; that according to Luke after fifteen; that according to John after thirty-two in the reign of Domitian. (*Paris BN Grec.* 177 = GA 299; our translation)

Diekamp further noted that the fragment is attested in Codex Mosquensis II (V 031), where it had been supplied in the twelfth century on the recto of a leaf followed by the same excerpt from Hippolytus’ *Chronicle* on the verso.³³ Finally, Diekamp mentioned that the fragment was later incorporated into *The Letter of the Three Patriarchs*, a work composed in 836 CE that we then, therefore, regard as the *terminus ante quem* of the Fragment IX a.³⁴ The *Letter* is preserved in three different Greek versions (apart from one fragment of what is regarded as the original version preserved in a ninth-century majuscule, *Tiranensis gr.* 25), but the Hippolytus Fragment IX a is preserved in all three versions and was therefore very likely part of the original letter.³⁵ Table 2 gives an overview of the text which dates all four Gospels *en bloc*.

³¹ Franz Diekamp, *Hippolytos von Theben: Texte und Untersuchungen* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1898) 40.

³² Pinakes labels this untitled excerpt ‘Hippolytus Thebanus, Excerptum De Iacobo fratre Domini’, (<https://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr/notices/oeuvre/16467/>), since the fragment follows after a section that commences, Ἰάκωβος δὲ γεγονὸς πρῶτος ἐπίσκοπος on folio 323r. As evident from Georgi Parpulov’s catalogue of catena manuscripts of the Greek New Testament, no other manuscript of the same catena-type (e.2.iii.α) attests to this text. See Georgi R. Parpulov, *Catena Manuscripts of the Greek New Testament: A Catalogue* (Text and Studies, Third Series, 25; Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2021) 54–6.

³³ Codex Mosquensis II = Moscow, State Historical Museum, Sinod. Gr. 399, fol. 5. Here it begins with Ἰστέον, ὅτι instead of Καὶ γὰρ as in Fragment IX c.

³⁴ Diekamp, *Hippolytos*, LV. In the heat of the iconoclast dispute, in April 836, a letter was sent in the name of the three iconodule Patriarchs, Christophorus I of Alexandria, Job of Antioch, and Basil of Jerusalem, to the iconoclast Byzantine Emperor Theophilus, which would later enjoy a wide circulation. For an extensive discussion of the possibility of the synod in Jerusalem in 836 and the *Letter’s* authenticity, see Juan Signes Codoñer, *The Emperor Theophilus and the East, 829–842: Court and Frontier in Byzantium During the Last Phase of Iconoclasm* (Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies 13; Farnham: Ashgate 2014).

³⁵ For a critical edition of the Greek versions, see *The Letter of the Three Patriarchs to the Emperor Theophilus and Related Texts* (J.A. Munitiz, J. Chrysostomides, E. Harvalia-Crook, and Ch. Dendrinos, ed., Camberley:

Table 2: Texts with datings of the Gospels en bloc

Text with datings of the Gospels (<i>en bloc</i>)	Date of work	Critical edition/witness (where relevant)
Fragment IX a of Hippolytus' <i>Chronicle</i> (?)	7/8 th cent.	Diekamp, ed., 1898:40 based on: Paris BN Grec. 177 (10 th cent.) Codex Mosquensis II (added in the 12 th cent.)
Pseudo-Epiphanius, <i>Appendices ad indices apostolorum discipulorumque</i> , 4a-4b	After 8 cent.	Schermann, ed., 1907:126–127 based on: Vat. gr. 1506 (11 th cent.) Vat. gr. 1974 (12 th cent.)
<i>The Letter of the Three Patriarchs</i> 6b-6e	836 CE	Munitiz et al, eds., 1997:25–27
<i>Mnogosložnyj svitok</i> 16 (Slavonic translation of <i>The Letter of the Three Patriarchs</i>)	9 th cent.	Afinogenov, ed., 2014:59

The medieval editor who used the text of Fragment IX a (the earliest attested form) for the subscriptions – whether he drew it from Hippolytus' *Chronicle* or not – apparently did not realise, when he distributed dates to each Gospel, that *only* Matthew's Gospel was dated relative to the ascension in the source, but instead, he continued to repeat the reference to the ascension after each Gospel – and this is, of course, a natural interpretation of the sentence, except that it does not square with the final reference by the chronicler to John being written 'during the reign of Domitian' (81–96 CE); a time reference which was unknown or neglected by the editor. As seen in Table 3 below, this procedure resulted in a cascading error, where the dating of Mark's Gospel was changed to ten years, Luke to fifteen and John to thirty-two years *after the ascension*, indeed, resulting in this 'eigenartige Tradition', to use Hengel's words.³⁶ The date for Mark in the source was rather eighteen years after the ascension, i.e., around 48 CE – a date that evidently conflicts with Eusebius' *Chronicle*.

Table 3: Cascading error in Gospel subscriptions after distribution

	Dates in Hippolytus' Fragment IX a (indicated <i>en bloc</i>)	Dates in Type 3.1 subscriptions (distributed by an editor to each Gospel)
Matt	Eight years <i>after the ascension</i>	Eight years <i>after the ascension</i>
Mark	Ten years <i>after Matt</i> [i.e., 8 + 10 = 18 years after the ascension]	Ten years <i>after the ascension</i>
Luke	Fifteen years <i>after Mark</i> [i.e., 18 + 15 = 33 years after the ascension]	Fifteen years <i>after the ascension</i>
John	Thirty-two years <i>after Luke</i> [i.e., 33 + 32 = 65 years after the ascension] <i>during the reign of Domitian</i> [81–96]	Thirty-two years <i>after the ascension</i>

Porphyrogenitus, 1997); for a critical edition of the ninth-century Slavonic translation with reconstructed Greek text, see Dimitri Afinogenov, *Mnogosložnyj Svitok: The Slavonic Letter of the Three Patriarchs to Emperor Theophilus* (Monographies ACHCByz 41; Paris: Histoire & civilisation de Byzance, 2014). The *Svitok* matches the only portion of the Tiranensis-fragment that is not preserved in any Greek version, thus confirming that the Greek text behind the *Svitok* is as old as the Tiranensis-fragment and antedates the prototype behind the Greek versions (Afinogenov, *Svitok*, 10–14).

³⁶ Hengel, 'Enstehungszeit', 9,

The Type 3.1 subscriptions are first attested in Codex Cyprius (K 017) dated to the ninth century, which marks a *terminus ante quem* for distribution by the editor.³⁷ This tradition was later incorporated – with the cascading error – in the influential commentaries of Theophylact of Ohrid (11th cent.)³⁸ and Euthymius Zigabenus (12th cent.)³⁹ and therefore gained wide distribution. Extracts from Theophylact’s commentary, including this note on the date of Mark, subsequently found their way into the catenae manuscripts.⁴⁰

Possibly, the dating of Mark to twelve years after the ascension (Type 3.2) reflects a subsequent copying error where the number two (β) was transferred from the dating of John to Mark so that we find the corresponding variation between thirty (λ) and thirty-two (λβ) in manuscripts of John. Interestingly, in Pseudo-Epiphanius, *Appendices ad indices apostolorum discipulorumque*, in a section first attested in *Vat. gr.* 1506 (11th cent.), we find again references to the dates of the four Gospels relative to the ascension and the combination of twelve years (Mark) and thirty years (John), the latter followed by the known phrase ἐπὶ Δομετιανοῦ τοῦ βασιλέως.⁴¹ The unexpected sequence of the Gospels in this source, i.e., Matthew, Mark, John and Luke, increases the likelihood of such an error.

Although we do not know exactly how and when this error occurred in a similar source, the introduction of this secondary dating – twelve years for Mark and thirty for John – into the subscriptions may reflect the continuing influence of these various chronological fragments on the subscriptions, even as they were embellished over time and possibly incorporated by editors or scribes into various texts independently.

4.4.3 Mark Was Written in Latin in Rome

Some subscriptions contain a geographical-linguistic modifier (3.2.1–3.2.2). The main type (3.2.1) states that Mark ‘was written in Latin in Rome’, ῥωμαῖστί ἐν Ῥώμῃ. A single commentary manuscript (1253) instead indicates that it ‘was written in Greek to the great (city of) Alexandria’ (3.2.2), but this particular phrasing is, in fact, an intrusion from Luke where it is attested in many subscriptions.

³⁷ In Codex Cyprius, the type is found in Matthew (81r), Mark (131v) and Luke (204v).

³⁸ Theophylact wrote in his commentary on Matthew: Ἦν δὲ ὁ μὲν Μάρκος ἀκόλουθος καὶ μαθητὴς Πέτρου· ὁ δὲ Λουκᾶς, Παύλου. Ὁ τοίνυν Ματθαῖος, πρῶτος πάντων ἔγραψε τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον Ἑβραϊδὶ φωνῇ, πρὸς τοὺς ἐξ Ἑβραίων πιστεῦσαντας, μετὰ ὀκτῶ ἔτη τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀναλήψεως· μετέφρασε καὶ τοῦτο Ἰωάννης ἀπὸ τῆς Ἑβραϊδος γλώττης εἰς τὴν Ἑλληνίδα, ὡς λέγουσι. Μάρκος δὲ, μετὰ δέκα ἔτη τῆς ἀναλήψεως ἔγραψε, παρὰ τοῦ Πέτρου διδασκθεὶς. Λουκᾶς δὲ, μετὰ πεντεκαίδεκα. Ἰωάννης δὲ ὁ θεολογικώτατος, μετὰ τριάκοντα δύο (Migne PG 123:145); and in the commentary on Mark: Τὸ κατὰ Μάρκον Εὐαγγέλιον, μετὰ δέκα ἔτη τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀναλήψεως συνεγράφη ἐν Ῥώμῃ· ἦν μὲν γὰρ οὗτος ὁ Μάρκος Πέτρου μαθητὴς (Migne PG 123:492).

³⁹ Euthymius wrote in his commentary on the four Gospels: παρ’ οὗ καὶ ὅλον τὸν τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου λόγον ὁ Μάρκος μεμάθηκεν. Ἔπειτα συνεγράψατο τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον, ὡς μὲν ἰστορεῖ καὶ Κλήμης ὁ Στρωματεύς, ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ Ῥώμῃ, κατὰ δὲ τὸν Χρυσόστομον, ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ, παρακληθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκεῖ πιστῶν, μετὰ ἔτη δέκα τῆς τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἀναλήψεως (Migne PG 129:769).

⁴⁰ Thus, the scholion from the margin of folio 86r of *Oxford, Bodl. Libr. Laud Gr.* 33 (GA 50), cited by J. A. Cramer, reads: Τὸ κατὰ Μάρκον Εὐαγγέλιον συνεγράφη ἀπὸ [MS: ὑπὸ] Μάρκου μετὰ δέκα χρόνους τῆς Χριστοῦ ἀναλήψεως· οὗτος ὑπὸ Πέτρου Ἀποστόλου ἤκουσε τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον καὶ συνεγράψατο αὐτὸ, μαθητὴς ὢν Πέτρου. See J. A. Cramer, ed., *Catenae Graecorum patrum in Novum Testamentum* (Vol. 1; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1840) 264.

⁴¹ Greek text in Theodor Schermann, ‘Appendices ad indices apostolorum discipulorumque’, *Prophetarum vitae fabulosae: Indices apostolorum discipulorumque domini Dorotheo, Epiphanio, Hippolyto aliusque vindicate* (Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana; Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1907) 126–7: Δεῖ γινώσκειν τὸ πῶς συνεγράφησαν τὰ δ’ εὐαγγέλια. Ὅτι μετὰ τὴν ἀνάληψιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τὸ κατὰ Ματθαῖον μετὰ ἔτη η’, τὸ κατὰ Μάρκον μετὰ ἔτη ιβ’, τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην μετὰ ἔτη λ’ ἐπὶ Δομετιανοῦ τοῦ βασιλέως, τὸ κατὰ Λουκᾶν μετὰ ἔτη ιε’. The text is also attested with some variation in *Vat. gr.* 1974 (12th cent.).

This modifier is attested much earlier in subscriptions in the earliest Peshitta Gospel manuscripts. In the edition of P. E. Pusey and G. H. Gwilliam, they read (in our translation):

Finished is the holy Gospel, the preaching of Matthew the apostle, which he spoke in Hebrew in Palestine;

Finished is the holy Gospel, the preaching of Mark, which he spoke in Latin in Rome;

Finished is the holy Gospel, the preaching of Luke, which he spoke in Greek in the great city of Alexandria;

Finished is the holy Gospel, the preaching of John, which he spoke in Greek in Ephesus.⁴²

We assume that these forms derive from a Greek, or possibly Syriac, source which was used by the translator who created the Peshitta, whether Rabbula, bishop of Edessa (d. 435), as suggested by F. C. Burkitt, or someone else.⁴³ Hence, we think the geographical-linguistic modifier reflected in Type 3.2.1–3.2.2 is much older than the chronological modifier and that the two circulated separately but were conflated at some point as reflected in Byzantine Gospel manuscripts. The conflation is further attested in what Diekamp labelled Fragment IX c of Hippolytus' *Chronicle*, attested in *Turin, BL, B.VI.25*, although we actually think this fragment, which has no connection to the *Chronicle*, was more likely copied from a Gospel manuscript because it incorporates the cascading error.⁴⁴

The geographical-linguistic modifier for Matthew can ultimately be traced back to Papias: Ματθαῖος μὲν οὖν Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ τὰ λόγια συνετάξατο, ἡρμήνευσεν δ' αὐτὰ ὡς ἦν δυνατός ἕκαστος, 'So then Matthew compiled the oracles in the Hebrew language, but each interpreted them as they could'.⁴⁵ In the second century, Irenaeus picks up material from Papias concerning all four Gospels:

Ὁ μὲν δὴ Ματθαῖος ἐν τοῖς Ἑβραίοις τῇ ἰδίᾳ αὐτῶν διαλέκτῳ καὶ γραφὴν ἐξήνεγκεν εὐαγγελίου, τοῦ Πέτρου καὶ τοῦ Παύλου ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελιζομένων καὶ θεμελιούντων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν. Μετὰ δὲ τὴν τούτων ἔξοδον, Μάρκος, ὁ μαθητὴς καὶ ἑρμηνευτὴς Πέτρου, καὶ αὐτὸς τὰ ὑπὸ Πέτρου κηρυσσόμενα ἐγγράφως ἡμῖν παραδέδωκεν. Καὶ Λουκᾶς δὲ, ὁ ἀκόλουθος Παύλου, τὸ ὑπ' ἐκείνου κηρυσσόμενον εὐαγγέλιον ἐν βίβλῳ κατέθετο. Ἐπειτα Ἰωάννης, ὁ μαθητὴς τοῦ Κυρίου, ὁ καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ στήθος αὐτοῦ ἀναπεσὼν, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐξέδωκεν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, ἐν Ἐφέσῳ τῆς Ἀσίας διατρίβων.⁴⁶

⁴² P. E. Pusey and G.H. Gwilliam, ed., *Tetraeuangelium Sanctum* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1901) 195–6 (Matthew); 314–15 (Mark); 479–80 (Luke); 604–6 (John). For example, this type of subscription is attested with slight variation in the Peshitta manuscript British Library, Codex Add. 14459 (fols. 1–66), dated to the second half of the fifth century (only extant in Matthew and Mark). For a detailed description, see G. H. Gwilliam, 'An Account of a Syriac Biblical Manuscript of the Fifth Century with Special Reference to Its Bearing on the Text of the Syriac Version of the Gospels', *Studia Biblica* 1 (1885) 151–71. Syriac text and English translation of the subscriptions on p. 157.

⁴³ F. C. Burkitt, *Evangelion da-Mepharreshe* (2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1904) 2:160–5.

⁴⁴ Greek text in Diekamp, *Hippolytos*, 40: 'Ἰστέον, ὅτι τὸ κατὰ Ματθαῖον ὄγιον εὐαγγέλιον ἐγγράφη εἰς Παλαιστίνην μετὰ ὀκτὼ ἔτη τῆς ἀναλήψεως ἑβραϊστὶ. τὸ κατὰ Μάρκον εὐαγγέλιον ἐγγράφη ῥωμαίστι ἐν Ῥώμῃ μετὰ δώδεκα ἔτη τῆς ἀναλήψεως. τὸ κατὰ Λουκᾶν εὐαγγέλιον ἐγγράφη ἑλληνιστὶ εἰς Ἀλεξάνδρειαν τὴν μεγάλην μετὰ δεκα-πέντε ἔτη τῆς ἀναλήψεως. τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον ἐγγράφη ἑλληνιστὶ ἐν Πάτμῳ νήσῳ μετὰ τριάκοντα δύο ἔτη τῆς ἀναλήψεως. The now lost Turin manuscript (*Turin, BL, B.VI.25*) did not contain Hippolytus' *Chronicle*, but rather the *Philosophumena* attributed to Hippolytus of Rome. See Johann Albert Fabricius, ed., *S. Hippolyti episcopi et martyris Opera* (2 vols; Hamburg: Liebezeit, 1716), 1, appendix p. 50. The secondary nature of the fragment is further seen in that it connects the Gospel of John to Patmos and omits reference to the reign of Domitian.

⁴⁵ Greek text and English translation in Stephen Carlson, *Papias of Hierapolis Exposition of Dominical Oracles: The Fragments, Testimonia, and Reception of a Second-Century Commentator* (OECT; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021) 116–17 (Papias F5 apud T5 Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.16).

⁴⁶ Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 3.1.1 (SC 211, 20–5). There is a consensus that Irenaeus' source is Papias (cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.15–16). Eusebius confirms the dependency of Irenaeus on Papias regarding the theory of a millennial reign

Then Matthew, indeed, published a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their language while Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel and laying the foundation in Rome. Then, after their departure, Mark, the disciple, and translator of Peter, also himself handed over in writing to us what Peter had preached. Furthermore, Luke, the follower of Paul, put down the Gospel preached by him. Then John, the Lord's disciple, who was also reclining at his chest, also published the Gospel while residing in Ephesus of Asia. (*Adv. Haer.* 3.1.1; our translation).

Similar traditions from Papias were transmitted in the East by Origen and Eusebius.⁴⁷ However, the language of composition in these sources is still indicated only for Matthew, but apparently, this soon triggered someone to fill in the gaps for the other Gospels.⁴⁸ Mark was already closely connected to Peter and Rome, and John was known to have resided in Ephesus, whereas Luke was known as a follower of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, and at some point, his Gospel became associated with Alexandria.

Interestingly, at the end of Ephraim's *Commentary on the Diatessaron*, preserved in the fifth- or sixth-century Chester Beatty 709, there is an appendix titled 'The Evangelists' reflecting the Papias tradition as mediated via Eusebius.⁴⁹ In the Armenian recension of Ephraim's commentary, reflecting a different underlying Syriac text, the section is longer and indicates the language of composition: 'Matthew wrote the Gospel in Hebrew, Mark in Latin from Simon in the city of Rome, Luke in Greek, John, finally, [v.l. also in Greek] wrote it because he remained in the world until the time of Trajan' (our translation).⁵⁰ There is no reason to believe that Ephraim, who never mentioned the separate evangelists in his commentary on the *singular* Gospel, wrote this concluding section. Rather, it must have been interpolated at some point, and perhaps from a Greek source, but, as Matthew R. Crawford points out, even if the passage (in Chester Beatty 709) is not authentic, it reflects the influence of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* in the Syriac world at a very early stage.⁵¹

Possibly, the translator of the Peshitta also depended indirectly on the Papias tradition when emphasising that the written Gospel was based on preaching and therefore *spoken* in Hebrew, Latin or Greek, respectively. Regarding the destinations of the Gospels, it is further to be noted that Gregory of Nazianzus wrote in his fourth-century poetical canon list, 'Matthew wrote the miracles of Christ for the Hebrews, Mark for Italy, Luke for Achaia (Greece), John . . . wrote for all'.⁵²

At some later point, the geographical-linguistic modifier was combined in each Gospel with the chronological modifier from Hippolytus' *Chronicle*. In this connection, it is to be

(*Hist. eccl.* 3.39.11–13). Carlson, *Papias*, 310–11, labels this passage as 'Potential Use' item Y7 of Papias, stating, 'Since we know that Irenaeus had read Papias, we can see in here his reception of Papias, F4 on Mark, F5 on Matthew, and F6 on traditions from the elders, in combination with other traditional material' (p. 311 n. Y7).

⁴⁷ See Carlson, *Papias*, 300–3 (X12: Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 3.24.6) and 318–19 (Y15: Origen in Matt. apud Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 6.25.4–6).

⁴⁸ In this connection it is perhaps worth noting that in Codex Cyprius (K 017), the oldest witness to Type 3, a geographical modifier, Jerusalem, is only included for the Gospel of Matthew, ἐξεδοθη ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἐν ἱεροσολυμοῖς μετὰ χρόνου ἧ τῆς τοῦ χυ ἀναληψέως (017-2), '. . . published by him in Jerusalem eight years after the ascension'.

⁴⁹ Louis Leloir, *Saint Éphrem, Commentaire de l'Évangile concordant, texte syriaque* (Manuscrit Chester Beatty 709) (Chester Beatty Monographs 8; Dublin: Hodges Figgis, 1963).

⁵⁰ Louis Leloir, *Saint Éphrem. Commentaire de l'Évangile concordant, version arménienne* (CSCO 145, *Scriptores Armeniaci* 2; Leuven: L. Durbecq, 1954) 247 (Latin translation); for discussion of the variants, see Louis Leloir, 'L'Original syriaque du commentaire de S. Éphrem sur le Diatessaron', *Biblica* 40 (1959) 959–70, 965–6. Leloir ascribed the text reflected in the two extant twelfth-century Armenian manuscripts to the fifth century (*Saint Éphrem*, i).

⁵¹ Matthew R. Crawford, 'The Fourfold Gospel in the Writings of Ephrem the Syrian', *Hugoye* 18.1 (2015) 9–51, 24.

⁵² Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmina dogmatica* I.12.6–9 (from the poem *de veris scripturae libris*). Greek text in Migne PG 37:472–4.

noted that all the Greek manuscripts that attest to Type 3.2.1 (13 124 346 543 788-1 826 828 873 983 1689) belong to Family 13 in Mark, and thus descend from a common, now lost archetype, perhaps an uncial.⁵³ Based on the subscriptions (including the indication of ‘twelve years’ in Mark), however, we suggest that this archetype cannot be earlier than the eighth century. Finally, we note that Type 3.2.1 is not exclusive to Family 13, but is attested elsewhere, e.g., in GA 9 (= Paris, BN, grec 83), which brings together the subscriptions of all four Gospels on a single page (fol. 271v after John).⁵⁴

4.4.4 The Jerusalem Colophon

In contrast to a subscription, a colophon gives information regarding the book’s production and the scribe’s work rather than the work itself. In this connection, we note that five witnesses refer to authoritative manuscript exemplars containing a form of the so-called Jerusalem colophon (Type 3.3), first attested in the ninth century, stating that the text of Mark’s Gospel in this manuscript ‘likewise [has been] copied and corrected from the best [manuscripts]’.⁵⁵ The ‘likewise’ refers back to the full form of the colophon which is normally found only after Matthew. Here the fuller form is attested by the ninth-century minuscule 565, which replaces ‘the best [manuscripts]’ with ‘the old manuscripts in Jerusalem’. Tommy Wasserman has considered the possibility that the popularity of the colophon is related to the ‘tradition [from Papias], recorded in many subscriptions, that Matthew wrote his Gospel in the Hebrew dialect in Jerusalem’.⁵⁶ The colophon validates the text of a particular manuscript by relating it to an authoritative source.

4.4.5 Byzantine Book Epigrams in Mark

Finally, we come to the addendum, the Byzantine book epigrams (A.1–5). Byzantine scribes or book owners loved to add these poems in metrical verses to important objects like Gospel books. The epigrams were usually added either before or after the end of the text, and most of the epigrams are written on a metric verse of twelve syllables (*dodecasyllabikon*) as in four of our five examples.⁵⁷ There are over 9,000 epigrams collected in the Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams, and all except one of our epigrams are already recorded in that database, namely A.2, ‘The end of that which was published by the inexpressible Mark’ (τέλος τούδε προύθηκα ἀρρητῶ μαρκῶ) – an epigram and, at the same time, a subscription to Mark overlapping with Type 2.⁵⁸

⁵³ For the most recent and extensive study of this family of manuscripts, see Didier Lafleur, *La Famille 13 dans l'évangile de Marc* (NTTSD 41; Leiden: Brill, 2013). Lafleur did not include 873. See, however, Yvonne Burns, ‘A Newly Discovered Family 13 Manuscript and the Ferrar Lection System’, *Studia Patristica* 17.1 (1982) 278–89. Lafleur *La Famille 13*, 365–6, wrongly claims that 13, 346, 543 and 983 omit a subscription (in contrast to his own apparatus on p. 361).

⁵⁴ We want to thank Martina Vercesi who brought the subscription to Mark in this manuscript and in GA 684 (see below) to our attention in her paper ‘Gospel’s Paratexts: Unexplored Avenues in New Testament Manuscripts Research’ at the SBL Annual Meeting in Denver, 2022.

⁵⁵ For a survey of the Jerusalem colophon, see Wasserman, ‘Greek New Testament Manuscripts’, 86–92.

⁵⁶ Wasserman, ‘Greek New Testament Manuscripts’, 91.

⁵⁷ A.1 is written in dactylic hexameter.

⁵⁸ The Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams (DBBE) is maintained by the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy at Ghent University, see <https://www.dbbe.ugent.be/>. We have notified the project team of the unrecorded epigram. Moreover, we have noted another unrecorded epigram following the subscription to Mark in GA 684 (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Holkham Gr. 64), which was not included in our survey, ἀπό στόματος ἐκδιδοχθεις τοῦ πέτρου.

5. Conclusions

We have surveyed the subscriptions to the Gospel of Mark in 157 manuscripts, noting their gradual development from being identical to the title in the earliest phase (Type 1); provided with a terminal modifier (noun or verb) in the second phase (Type 2); becoming more elaborate in a third phase providing additional information about the book (Type 3). The elaborate subscriptions are most interesting for the history of interpretation. The typical geographical-linguistic modifier for the Gospel of Mark stating that it was written (or spoken) in Latin in Rome is first attested in the Peshitta, which suggests that there were likely Greek manuscripts with similar subscriptions, perhaps as early as the fourth century. This information concerning the place of origin and language of the Gospels probably started with the Papias tradition about the Gospel of Matthew being written ‘among the Hebrews in their language’. Papias’ note, as incorporated by later patristic authors like Eusebius, triggered someone to fill in the corresponding gap for the other Gospels no later than the early fifth century.

In another Greek tetraevangelion, an unknown medieval editor decided to supply dating for each of the four Gospels from a source which has been attributed to Hippolytus of Thebes’ *Chronicle* (Fragment IX a), probably after the seventh century and no later than the ninth century. In this process, the editor made a cascading error which resulted in too early dates for Mark, Luke and John. Modern scholars, like Hengel and Zuntz, have acknowledged that these datings are peculiar (in particular for John), but yet, the evidence has played a certain role in their discussion about the dating of Mark. In a later manuscript, i.e., the archetype of Family 13, the chronological modifier was combined with the geographical-linguistic modifier in all four Gospels. This suggests that the archetype of Family 13 is no earlier than the eighth century.

A main factor behind this gradual growth of the subscriptions is authentication and authorisation. Although it is unclear whether the four canonical Gospels circulated with titles before they were collected together, we think that the earliest form of both the title and subscription, εὐαγγέλιον κατὰ + the name of an evangelist, emphasises the unity of the singular Gospel and, at the same time, associates each of the four versions with an important apostle or eye-witness of the first generation, and so legitimates its claim of apostolicity and orthodoxy.⁵⁹ In the case of the Second Gospel, it was associated early on with Mark who was known to be Peter’s disciple and interpreter.

Another factor that explains further additions of information is probably plain human curiosity. In his study of the analogous growth of Christian tradition concerned with names, Bruce Metzger has pointed out that there are many people and places mentioned in the NT unaccompanied by their names, and because of curiosity about these characters and places early Christians sought to identify them.⁶⁰ ‘Tradition’, he says, ‘provided names for all of these – sometimes several different names’.⁶¹

Finally, and in close relation to the above factors, we think that the situating of each Gospel in time and space through the subscriptions contributed to the construction of

⁵⁹ Cf. Eric W. Scherbenske, *Canonizing Paul: Ancient Editorial Practice and the Corpus Paulinum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 127, ‘The sources deemed authentic were used to reconstruct Paul’s life, which in turn authenticated them as sources for readers of this edition. In a related manner, these extracanonical traditions supplied a proto-orthodox metanarrative legitimating their own claims of apostolicity and orthodoxy. The inclusion of such traditions in paratexts (prologues, subscriptions, etc.) even ensured their transmission as part of the very scripture they sought to authenticate.’

⁶⁰ Bruce M. Metzger, ‘Names for the Nameless in the New Testament: A Study in the Growth of Christian Tradition’, *Kyriakon: Festschrift Johannes Quasten* (ed. Patrick Granfield and Josef Andreas Jungmann; vol. 1; Münster: Aschendorff, 1970) 79–99.

⁶¹ Metzger, ‘Names’, 79.

what Tobias Nicklas has termed as ancient Christian ‘landscape(s) of memory’, which served to express and preserve the collective memory of the social group, thus shaping and enhancing their identity.⁶²

Competing interest. The authors declare none.

⁶² Tobias Nicklas, ‘New Testament Canon and Ancient Christian “Landscapes of Memory”’, *EC* 7 (2016) 5–23, 23. Nicklas’ concepts of ‘landscapes’ and ‘sites of memory’ depend on Maurice Halbwachs’ theories of ‘collective memories’ and ‘social frameworks of memories’. See Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1925); and idem, *La mémoire collective* (Paris: Presses Univ. de France, 1950).

Cite this article: Elmelund CT, Wasserman T (2023). The Subscriptions to Mark’s Gospel and History of Reception. *New Testament Studies* 69, 429–444. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028688523000139>