

When Were the Gospels Written?

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(1) Preliminaries

- What is a literary work? The question of reconstructions and approximations.
- The evolution of a literary work: What are we trying to date?
- Text and tradition: Confusion between dates of the text and the traditions it contains.
- Looking first for sequence and then for date ranges.

(2) Getting the Gospels in Order

- The consensus order is Mark > Matthew / Luke > John, but is this right?
- Looking at narrative anomalies can help to date the Gospels with respect to one another.
 - (a) "Fatigue" in Matthew, e.g. Matt. 14.1-12 // Mark 6.14-29, Death of John
 - (b) "Fatigue" in Luke, e.g. Mark 6.30-44 // Luke 9.19-17, Five Thousand; Matt 25.14-30 // Luke 19.11-27, Talents / Pounds
 - (c) Anomaly in John, e.g. Mark 14.3-9 // Luke 7.36-50 // John 12.1-8, Anointing
 - (d) Missing Middle in Thomas, Matt. 13.24-30 // Thom. 57, Wheat and Tares; Luke 12.15-21 // Thom. 63, Rich Fool; Mark 12.13-17 // Thom. 100, Tribute to Caesar

(3) Was Mark written after 70?

- James Crossley recently argued for a very early dating (30s-40s) on the basis of assumptions made in traditions about the law.
 - (a) It is important to distinguish between an author and his traditions
 - (b) 7.2 may be revealing, "the Pharisees *and all the Jews*" wash hands before eating.

- Several recent scholars have pushed for a date after 70, with special focus on:

Mark 13.1-2: As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!" Then Jesus asked him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down."

- What is the literary function of prediction in narrative texts like this?
- Dramatic irony in Mark 15.29-30:

Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!"

(4) Dating of Dependent Gospels

- Josephus, *Jewish War* 6.299-301: Jesus ben Ananias predicts the temple's destruction.
- Cf. Matt. 23.37-9 // Luke 13.34-5:

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you, desolate..

(5) Authorial Self-Representation in Later Gospels

- Lack of authorial self-representation in Mark and Matthew. Use of the first person in Luke 1.1-4 and second half of Acts.
- John 21.24, "This is the disciple who testifies to these things and wrote them down" (cf. 19.35)
- Thomas Incipit, "These are the secret sayings which the living Jesus spoke and which Didymos Judas Thomas wrote down" (cf. 13).

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