

I. THE PATRISTIC EVIDENCE REEXAMINED: A RESPONSE TO GEORGE KENNEDY

by *William R. Farmer*

George Kennedy has encouraged New Testament scholars to reexamine and to take more seriously the patristic evidence bearing on the question of the origin of the gospels. His views may be found in the essay "Classical and Christian Source Criticism," in *The Relationship Among the Gospels: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*, edited by William O. Walker, Jr. (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1978), pp. 147-52. Kennedy's complaint that the patristic evidence is often inadequately treated is well taken. This essay is a response to Kennedy's implicit call for a more satisfactory treatment of this evidence.

PAPIAS

Papias produced an exegetical work on the gospels consisting of five books. This work has not been preserved but it was known and cited by Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, in his famous and indispensable *Ecclesiastical History*.¹

The citations made by Eusebius are three in number. The first is of value in clarifying the exact place of Papias in the history of the transmission of the gospel tradition. Eusebius is concerned that Irenaeus has written that Papias was a "hearer of John." He wants it understood that this cannot mean that Papias knew John the apostle. And, therefore, to make clear that Papias in no way had been a hearer

¹All citations from Eusebius are composed with the aid of Lake, Loeb Library edition, *Eusebius: The Ecclesiastical History* (Harvard, 1926), and Hugh Jackson Lawlor and John Ernest Leonard Oulton, *Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea: The Ecclesiastical History and the Martyrs of Palestine* (London: S.P.C.K., 1927), with appeal to the original text as printed in the Loeb Library edition when necessary.

and eyewitness of any of the apostles, Eusebius quotes at length from the preface of Papias's work as follows:

And I shall not hesitate to set down for your benefit, along with the interpretations, all that I ever carefully learnt and remember from the elders, for of their truth I am confident. For, unlike most, I did not take delight in those who have much to say, but rather in those who teach what is true; nor in those who recount the commandments of others, but rather in those who recall the commandments given to the faith by the Lord and derived from the truth itself. And if ever anyone chanced to come who had actually been a follower of the elders, I would inquire as to the discourses of the elders, what [the elders reported that] Andrew or Peter had said, or what Philip, or what Thomas or James, or what John or Matthew or any other of the Lord's disciples had said, and what [the elders reported that] Ariston and John the Elder, disciples of the Lord are saying. For, I did not suppose that information out of books would be nearly so helpful to me as the words of an abiding and living voice.²

It is clear from the arrangement of names made by Papias that he distinguishes the apostles (Andrew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, John, and Matthew), whom the elders had heard, from Ariston and John the Elder, who, at the time Papias was in contact with the elders, were still active. Since Ariston and John the Elder were not of the Twelve, they would presumably belong to a wider circle of transmitters of tradition, and would have (at least in the eyes of Papias) stood in some authoritative relationship to the living oral tradition going back to Jesus and his original followers. Eusebius reports that Papias included in his work accounts of the words of the Lord from Ariston, and traditions from John the Elder.

Thus, it is easy to understand that what Eusebius (later in the same book) cites from Papias about the gospels has been studied with the greatest interest. Eusebius's second citation from Papias is as follows:

And the Elder used to say this: "Mark, indeed, having been the interpreter of Peter wrote down accurately all that he could recall of what [Peter had said] was either said or done by the Lord—although not in the correct order. For he [himself—i.e., Mark] had not heard the Lord, nor had he followed Him, but later on, as I said, he followed Peter who used to adapt his teaching to the needs [of his hearers], but not with a view to putting together the Lord's oracles in orderly fashion: So that Mark was not off target in thus writing down things as he recalled them [i.e., from his memory of what he had heard Peter say]. For he kept a single aim in view, namely to omit nothing of what he had heard [Peter say], and to include no false statements in his account."³

²Eus. *EH* 3.39.3-4.

This is a remarkable passage in several respects. First, Papias is referring to a matter on which the Elder apparently commented repeatedly. This is clear from the use of the imperfect tense in Greek when Papias reports that the Elder "used to say." He "used" to say it in the sense that he did not say it on one particular occasion but whenever the matter came up.

The matter that came up repeatedly clearly had to do with Mark's arrangement of topics. This the Elder admits is faulty, presumably by comparison to some unmentioned standard. But if one understands the purpose of Mark, it will be clear that this fault is not fatal. For Mark's purpose was simply to put down in writing everything he could recall of what he had heard Peter say and to be careful to state these matters truthfully. Since Peter himself adapted what he had to say in accordance with the varying needs of his hearers, and not in accordance with any need for these reports to be arranged in a continuous written narrative, Mark did not have from Peter any set arrangement for the topics in his gospel. His work then can be best judged in terms of his own purpose and it is wrong to fault him for something he could not have been expected to do correctly. Mark himself had not been a follower of Jesus, so he was not in a good position to arrange his material in the proper order. He was dependent on Peter, who never wrote a gospel and who, therefore, never undertook the task of giving his reports an order that would fit them into a continuous narrative. Taking this into consideration, Mark had done quite well and can be best appreciated when it is known that he has preserved the witness of Peter fully and truthfully. This is how the Elder, John, reasoned whenever he heard Mark's Gospel criticized—according to Papias as recorded by Eusebius. Eusebius continues in these words:

Such then is Papias's account of Mark, and about Matthew this was said, "Matthew collected *ta logia* in the Hebrew language, but each interpreted them as he was able."⁴

³Eus. *EH* 3.39.15. See Kennedy, "Classical and Christian Source Criticism," 147, for a rendering of the Greek that differs in some respects from that given here. Kennedy is interested in showing that Papias was referring to the note taking that was preliminary to composition, and not to the actual composition of Mark's Gospel, 148.

⁴Eus. *EH* 3.39.16. See J. Kürzinger, "Das Papiaszeugnis und die Erstgestalt des Matthäusevangeliums," *Biblische Zeitschrift*, Neue Folge, Jahrgang 4, Heft 1 (Januar

These words of Papias have never been satisfactorily explained. They have been variously understood to mean that Matthew wrote his gospel in Hebrew; that he compiled the words of Jesus in Hebrew; that he wrote his gospel in Greek, though in Jewish style; and so forth.

Although the words "each interpreted . . . as he was able" indicates some dependence of the interpreter concerned upon the work of Matthew, nothing can be concluded from this as to the relationship between the gospel of Matthew and the other gospels. Nor can one conclude from the fact that Eusebius cites what Papias wrote about Mark before he cites what Papias wrote about Matthew that Papias regarded Mark as earlier than Matthew. What Papias wrote has its importance for understanding reaction to Mark in the early second century. And Papias's words exerted an influence upon later writers. However, one can safely conclude little, if anything, about the sequence in which the gospels were composed from the words of Papias as cited by Eusebius.

It is quite otherwise, however, when we come to the next piece of external evidence.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

Clement of Alexandria lived in the second half of the second century and was in personal contact with a number of elders from different parts of the Mediterranean world. In order to appreciate the widespread network of informational sources opened up to Clement, it is useful to cite his own words which are cited by Eusebius in Book Five of his *Ecclesiastical History*.

Now this work is not a writing composed for show; but notes stored up for my old age, a remedy against forgetfulness, an artless image, and a sketch of those clear and vital words which I was privileged to hear from blessed and truly notable men. Of these, one, the Ionian, I met in Greece, another in south Italy, a third in Coele-Syria, another was from Egypt, and there were others in the east, one of them an Assyrian, another in Palestine of Hebrew origin. But when I met the last, and in power he was, indeed, the first, I hunted him out from his concealment in Egypt and found rest.⁵

⁵1960): 19-38. Kürzinger concludes that the Papias report does not mean "Hebrew language," but "a Jewish style." Wayne A. Meeks is unconvinced. Cf. "Hypomnemata from an Untamed Sceptic: A Response to George Kennedy," *The Relationship Among the Gospels*, ed. William O. Walker, Jr. (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1978), 165.

⁶Clem. *Strom.* 1.1.11; Eus. *EH* 5.11.3-4.

The last Elder mentioned refers undoubtedly to Clement's famous teacher Pantaenus whom he met in Alexandria in the early eighties of the second century. This means that most of the contacts that Clement established with the various teachers he met were made during the previous decade. Thus, the testimony which these elders passed on to Clement carries us in a reliable way well back into the first half of the second century.

Eusebius, in the Sixth book of his *Ecclesiastical History*, writes as follows:

And, again in the same books [Hypotyposesis], 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 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 [i.e., 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 [i.e., 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.⁶

It is difficult to know to what extent Eusebius is closely citing Clement and to what extent he may be paraphrasing him. Is the whole, or only the first part of his account which Eusebius has taken from Clement to be regarded as tradition Clement received from the primitive elders? If the whole is from the primitive elders we would reason as follows: Since the gospels with genealogies are clearly Matthew and Luke, they were written first.⁷ Nothing is said as to which was actually

⁶Eus. *EH* 6.14.5-7, Clem. *Hypotyposesis* 6.

⁷George Kennedy acknowledges that modern scholars have usually understood Clement's testimony this way. Kennedy, without questioning Marcan priority, seeks to comply with his counsel to take the external evidence seriously by suggesting an alternate interpretation: "there is, at least, the possibility that Eusebius has muddled the text of Clement." This is not a good example of how best to take the external evidence seriously. In fact, it is a good example of how *not* to take the external evidence seriously. It is an example of how, in the interests of maintaining belief in Marcan priority, even fine scholars can fall into the trap of explaining away evidence that conflicts with Marcan priority. Neither Wayne A. Meeks, "Hypomnemata from an

first and which was second. But both Mark and John were clearly written after Matthew and Luke, and as between Mark and John, it was John which was written last of the four.

This presumably represents what Clement believed was authentic tradition. A comparison of what is said here about the circumstances under which Mark wrote his gospel with what Papias says on the same topic, leaves grounds for reasonable doubt as to the historical reliability of that part of Clement's account. But the tradition that Clement says he received from the primitive elders bearing on the question whether Matthew and Luke were written before Mark and John, or whether John has written last of all is not subject to this kind of doubt. Nothing in what Papias reports conflicts with or causes any difficulty for accepting this tradition. It appears to be quite unmotivated and so far as is known it constitutes the earliest reliable external evidence that exists bearing on the question of the sequence of the gospels.⁸

The reference to the plural "Elders" should be noted. From this it may be concluded that Clement did not know this as a tradition passed on by a single Elder, but that it was a tradition that was known and received in different places in the secondcentury church.

Another possibility is that the account as a whole is composite and that Clement drew together all that he could recall from what various elders had said. In this case one item would have concerned the temporal relationship of Matthew and Luke, which had genealogies, to those gospels that did not. "Those with genealogies were written first." Another item would have concerned John. "John was written after the others and intended to complement them in a 'spiritual' manner." The item about Mark could have been a developed form of the tradition known to Papias. It need not have had within itself any reference to a sequential relationship to the other gospels. It appears to deal mainly

Untamed Sceptic," 167-71, nor Reginald H. Fuller, "Classics and the Gospels: The Seminar," *The Relationships Among the Gospels*, 176-83, in their discussions of Kennedy's treatment of "The External Evidence," comment on this point in Kennedy's otherwise quite valuable work.

⁸Giuseppe Giov. Gamba, in an unpublished research report, remarks: "One ought to keep in mind that Clement is a member of the Church of Alexandria, where Mark, the Evangelist, was acclaimed as founder and first bishop: Cf., Eusebius, *EH* 2.16.1. He, therefore, should have no interest at all to place Mark's gospel after the other two that contain a genealogy of Jesus, but for a definite and grounded persuasion of historical nature." (See p. 21, n. 10, below).

with the question of Mark's relationship to Peter and Peter's attitude to Mark's work. But if Clement knew from the other traditions that Matthew and Luke were written first and that John came last of all, it would have been for him a simple deduction to place Mark after Matthew and Luke, and before John. This would fully explain what Clement says about the order of the gospels. But, here again, there is no apparent motive for the item about Matthew and Luke. So the very least that can be said is that Clement's tradition supports the view that Mark and John were written after Matthew and Luke. And, unless there is some reason to doubt the tradition concerning John, we should also conclude that Clement's account supports the view that John was written last. If we grant these conclusions it follows that Clement's account supports the view that Mark was written third. And it would appear that this deduction is unaffected by any doubt that might be cast upon the reliability of the details Clement relates concerning the circumstances under which Mark was written. In other words, the reliability of Clement's tradition concerning the circumstances under which Mark was written can be considered independently of the question as to the position of Mark in the sequence in which the gospels were written. Mark's being third can be logically deduced solely from the tradition Clement records concerning the other three.

All thus is said without prejudice to the ultimate outcome of a critical evaluation of Clement's tradition about Mark and Peter. But since there is room for critical doubt concerning that part of Clement's account, it has been necessary to isolate this question and to proceed as we have in order to clarify the abiding import of Clement's statement for understanding the far less complicated question of the sequence of the gospels.

IRENÆUS

Irenaeus of Lyons, an older contemporary of Clement of Alexandria, was also a widely traveled man. He was especially well acquainted with the churches of Asia Minor and the churches of the Rhone valley in southern France, as well as the church in Rome. At about the time Clement ended his extensive travels and settled in Alexandria, Irenaeus, who had become the Bishop of Lyons, wrote his famous work *Against Heresies*.

In the third book of that work Irenaeus adduced proof from the scriptures to combat the heresies of his day. In the first chapter of this book, there is a passage referring to the gospels. Eusebius, in Book Five in his *Ecclesiastical History*, has preserved the original Greek text of this important passage:

Matthew published a written gospel among the Hebrews composed in their own language [or dialect, or style], while Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel in Rome and founding 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. And Luke, as well, the companion of Paul, set down in a book the gospel which Paul used to preach. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, the one who had leaned upon his breast, also set forth [in writing] the gospel, while residing at Ephesus in Asia (I:11 5.8.1-4).

This statement by Irenaeus, though including information bearing on the question of the sequence, does not purport to treat the four gospels in the strict order of their composition. What Irenaeus writes that effects our understanding of this question is limited to what can be deduced from his words. First, he writes that Matthew wrote his gospel while Peter and Paul were active in Rome. If this refers to a gospel written in Hebrew it says nothing about the compositional sequence of our canonical Matthew, which is written in Greek. Next, Irenaeus writes that Mark was written after the death [or departure] of Peter and Paul. This places Mark after a Hebrew Matthew but says nothing about the sequential relationship between canonical Matthew and Mark. When Irenaeus writes "Luke, the companion of Paul . . ." we are probably meant to recognize the parallel with the preceding "Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter . . .": that is to say, Irenaeus treats Mark and Luke together because each of them was closely associated with the apostles Peter and Paul, respectively.

It seems most natural to understand Irenaeus to imply that Luke, as well as Mark, composed his gospel after the death of Peter and Paul. However, there is no indication of any sequential relationship between Mark and Luke. Matthew was written while Peter and Paul were active in Rome; that is one period of time; Mark and Luke were written after the death of Peter and Paul. Their deaths mark the end of one and the beginning of another period of time. With John, however, Irenaeus clearly includes a sequential reference. John wrote "afterwards," that is, after Mark and Luke had written their gospels.

Hans von Campenhausen has noted that the order of the gospels followed by Irenaeus is generally Matthew, Luke, Mark, and John and he observes that this order would seem to be "the order most familiar to Irenaeus himself."⁹ The evidence for this view is drawn from the same work of Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, and relates to the order in which Irenaeus cites the gospels as he built his case against heresy. Thus, in Book Three in defending his thesis that the creator god is one and the same as the god declared by the gospel, he takes up first, proof from Matthew (3.9.1-3); second, proof from Luke (3.10.1-5); third, proof from Mark (3.10.6); fourth, proof from John (3.11.1-6). So, also in discussing the gospels in relation to the different heretical groups he treats them in the same order, associating Matthew with Ebionites, Luke with Marcionites, Mark with Docetists, and John with Valentini-ans (3.11.7).

In Book Four of *Against Heresies*, in refuting the view that God was not the Father of Christ, Irenaeus refers to the gospels in the order, Matthew, Luke, Mark, and John (4.6.1).

The order of the gospels followed by Irenaeus in these parts of his work corresponds to the order that is supported by the witness of Clement. However, in discussing the symbols of the four evangelists, Irenaeus follows the unique order John, Luke, Matthew, Mark (3.11.8). His reasons for following this order are not clear but Von Campenhausen regards them as theological.¹⁰

So, it would appear that Irenaeus is free to discuss the gospels in any order that best fits his purposes. In the case of the passage with which we began our discussion, Irenaeus's purpose is quite clear. This passage comes at the very beginning of his refutation from scripture of the views of the heretics. It is necessary to unite the gospel preached by the apostles of the Lord with the scriptures now in the hands of an embattled church, besieged on all sides by damnable heretics. This Irenaeus accomplishes by appeal to his doctrine of the spirit. After the resurrection of the Lord, the apostles were empowered from on high by the Holy Spirit. They thereupon departed to the ends of the earth preaching the gospel. At this point, Irenaeus takes up the contribution of Matthew. His contribution was to put the gospel that the apostles

⁹*The Formation of the Christian Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 195.

¹⁰Ibid.

were preaching into written form. This he did among the Hebrews and in their own language. And he did this at a time when Peter and Paul were preaching the same apostolic gospel in Rome. His purpose is to establish that these two apostles are also to be credited with written gospels through their close associates, Mark and Luke. For this reason he next speaks in succession of Mark and Luke, connecting their gospels with the "preaching of Peter" and "the gospel Paul preached," respectively. As a possible sign that he does not mean the order Mark-Luke to be understood sequentially, Irenaeus includes no separate time reference for Luke. We cannot be sure that Irenaeus was this concerned about the question of compositional sequence. In fact, it is clear that an overriding consideration is theological, namely, to connect written gospels with the preaching of specific apostolic figures. But it cannot be said that Irenaeus is oblivious of temporal considerations. Otherwise there would have been no purpose for him to have noted that one gospel was written when Peter and Paul were in Rome and the other three after Peter and Paul had died.

The reason why Peter is mentioned before Paul by Irenaeus is presumably a reflection of historical fact, namely, that Peter was an apostle before Paul. That, in fact, is the order in which their careers are treated in the Acts of the Apostles. But this is certainly not the church's judgment of the relative importance of these two apostles. When early Christian writers refer to "The Apostle" (absolutely) it is generally a reference to the Apostle to the Gentiles, that is, to Paul.

There is every reason to think, therefore, that Clement's sequence "Peter-Paul" reflects a well recognized historical sequence. Peter came before Paul in the history of the church, or to apply Irenaeus's categories, "in the plan of salvation."

It should be obvious, however, that this historical priority of Peter to Paul, says nothing about the compositional relationship between the gospels of Mark and Luke. Irenaeus, in the passage under consideration, has just referred to Peter and Paul. He is about to write something about the gospels which are by tradition linked to these two apostles. It is natural and perfectly reasonable that he discuss them in the order set by that tradition. There is no reason at all to think that Irenaeus intended his readers to conclude that Mark was written before Luke. And yet it appears possible that Origen did just that.

ORIGEN

Origen almost certainly knew the work of Irenaeus, and Clement was his teacher. It is with no little interest, therefore, that we turn to Origen's statement on this matter. Origen takes up this topic in his *Commentary on Matthew*. His statement has been preserved by Eusebius in Book Six of his *Ecclesiastical History*. Eusebius writes as follows:

In the first of his [commentaries] on the gospel [i.e., that] according to Matthew, defending the canon of the church, he gives his testimony that he recognizes only four gospels, writing somewhat as follows, "...having learnt by tradition concerning the four gospels (which alone are unchallenged in the Church of God under heaven), the first[gospel] written was that according to Matthew, who was once a tax-collector, but afterwards an apostle of Jesus Christ, who published it for those who, from Judaism, came to believe, composed as it was in the Hebrew language. And second, was that according to Mark who wrote it in accordance with Peter's instructions, whom also Peter acknowledged as his son in the catholic epistle, speaking in these terms: *She that is in Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Mark my son* (1st. Peter 5:13). And third, that according to Luke, who wrote the gospel that was praised by Paul, for those who from the gentiles [came to believe]. After them all, that according to John" (EH 6.25.3-6).

This is a remarkable statement. Origen may have once been a pupil of Clement. But a lot of water has gone under the bridge since Clement penned his statement about the gospels. Each of the four gospels is but a separate written expression of the *one* apostolic gospel that was being preached everywhere long before any written gospel was composed. The unexpressed subject of the ascriptions "according to Luke," "according to John," is the one glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. Such a theologically comprehensive concept combined with such uniform linguistic usage in the ascriptions to each gospel bespeaks a conscious and deliberate ecclesiastical act. None of these statements about the gospels prior to that of Origen reflect any consequence of this act of ecclesiastical publication. The order of the gospels which Origen follows is the order given in the statement about the origin of the gospels made by Irenaeus. But this order is neither the order followed by Irenaeus when he discusses the reasons that there are four, and only four, gospels, nor is it the order he follows when he draws proof from the gospels.

It appears most likely that, by the time of Origen, on some common ground of ecclesiastical authority, located between the church in the

Rome under the influence of Irenaeus's "history of salvation" theme, then both the comprehensive theological conceptualization and the canonical order would be explained. "First to the Jews and then to the gentiles" places the more Jewish Matthew and before the other three. Mark comes next because it represents the apostle Peter, who, though he had had close ties to Jewish Christianity favored admitting gentiles into the church and was martyred for that faith in Rome. Then comes Luke which represents Paul the apostle to the gentiles. And finally, comes the work of John who was regarded as the author of both the fourth gospel and the Book of Revelation. So the same church which places John at the end of the four-fold gospel canon will in the end prevail in retaining the Revelation of John as a fitting close for its canon of scripture, all in accordance with the plan of salvation envisioned by Irenaeus.

The canonical order of the gospels and the order of Origen are the same and that order is readily susceptible to a theological explanation. The order Matthew, Luke, Mark, and John, supported in part by the witness of Clement, in part by the witness of Irenaeus and clearly contradicted by no one, unless it is Origen, is not readily susceptible to any such theological explanation. It is an enigma unless it is what it is purported to be, a historical order supported by the earliest and most explicit, external evidence available.¹¹

¹¹Wayne A. Meeks, "Hypomnemata from an Untamed Sceptic," 170-71 observes that there are grave limits to the probative power of all these reports. He makes two points that bear on the question of sequence: (1) "... they are completely uninterested in the 'synoptic problem'; (2) 'Even when these authors speak of the order of the gospels, it is not certain that it is the *chronological* order with which they are concerned.' But the fact that these authors are uninterested in the 'synoptic problem' (in the *chronological* order of the gospels) provides no critical ground for discounting the importance of their evidence. To the contrary, whatever one can infer logically from their testimony that is of relevance for the question of sequence, is all the more trustworthy as evidence since it is drawn from the testimony of authors who, on the point at issue, are disinterested witnesses.

Rhone valley and Alexandria in Egypt, the four-fold gospel canon has been formed, and from that center, is being promulgated by teachers like Origen as if it had always been so.

There is no reason to think that Origen had evidence to support the order Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John that he does not mention. And, in fact, it is possible that when he systematically moves from first to second to third, and last of all, he does not himself think of this order as the historical order in which these gospels were composed. Eusebius includes Origen's statement because of its bearing on the *number* (not the *order*) of gospels in the canon of the church. He probably accepted Origen's order as the canonical order. On the other hand, Eusebius included *Clement's* statement because of its bearing on the *order* of the gospels. In his own statement about the gospels, Eusebius is very judicious.

Eusebius adds nothing to our knowledge about the order of the gospels. What he writes about order corresponds to what he knew from Origen and Irenaeus. Eusebius does not say, however, that Mark and Luke were published in that order. That is left ambiguous as well it might be, since Eusebius knew the tradition on order from Clement which places Mark after Luke.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Eusebius neither contradicts nor confirms either the order Luke-Mark or the order Mark-Luke. His statements are compatible with either, and/or both, as well as with anything that is said about order by Clement, Irenaeus, or Origen. All, including Eusebius, agree that John is fourth. No one disagrees that Matthew was the first to write a gospel though Clement only implies that Matthew was before Mark and John, not that he was first. Papias, Irenaeus, Origen, and Eusebius all appear to speak of a Hebrew Matthew. The order Luke-Mark is supported by Clement, and, in balance, by Irenaeus when his overall witness is carefully examined. Origen has either misunderstood Irenaeus or, more likely, followed the order already fixed in the four-fold gospel canon. The relationship between the witness of Irenaeus and that of the four-fold gospel canon remains unclear.

If the order of the four-fold gospel canon was known to Irenaeus, why is it that he does not follow it, except for *one* known occasion? On the other hand, if the four-fold gospel canon was fixed and published in