

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW; TAX COLLECTOR, APOSTLE,

- and POSSIBLE AUTHOR.

ARGUMENTS SURROUNDING the TRADITIONAL ASCRIPTION

of the 1st GOSPEL to 'LEVI'.

A CONTRIBUTION to the EXPLORATION of GOD'S CHOICE of WRITER

for the MOST INFLUENTIAL GOSPEL.

Kerrin.R.Edwards.

Student No. N1838-251

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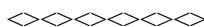
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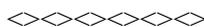
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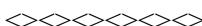
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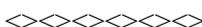
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ARGUMENTS SURROUNDING THE TRADITIONAL ASCRIPTION OF THE 1ST GOSPEL TO 'LEVI'.

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE EXPLORATION OF GOD'S CHOICE OF WRITER FOR THE MOST INFLUENTIAL GOSPEL.

PURPOSES

This Dissertation is submitted as the essential primary component of an exploration into the identity of the author of the 1st Gospel, the available evidence of that person's nature, life-experience and aims - and thereby into the most evincive arguments for the divine election of this particular author as one of the four canonical Evangelists. Such an exercise must begin with an examination of the historical possibilities of when this Gospel writer is crafting his opus, as this factor alone may exclude the formerly long-assumed identity of apostolic authorship.

Thus as comprehensive an investigation into historical and recent scholarship as possible regarding the likely dating of the production of the 1st Gospel, has been assayed with no conscious bias regarding the outcome, as the provenance of the author was not, at the outset, considered to be necessarily germane to the primary focus of the Dissertation.

The aim has been to seek evidence of the nature - the personality and character - of the writer, with his identification with the Apostle to whom this Gospel was eventually attributed not perceived to be of the essence.

However the matter of the historical provenance of the 1st Gospel proved to be so intriguing in the unexpected weight of one point of view in relation to its opposite, - that is to say that the general scholarly consensus has been for a century that St. Matthew cannot be the author - that the dissertation presented herein seemed mandated.

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Papias and the other ancient chroniclers upon whom scholars presently have to rely, had to face what is essentially an arbitrary acceptance or dismissal of the attestations of either the more primitive writers or their still, for today's scholar, many centuries-distant peers. Therefore, on the bases of presently-available documentary material, no precise dating may be determined with absolute certainty. The best that can be anticipated is an evincive preponderance of objective evidence, one way or the other.

History tells us that 'mainstream' Christianity was, from the early 2nd Century, to a great extent Matthean Christianity. This high regard, both theologically and liturgically, placed Matthew's account as the 1st book in the New Testament canon, it having been soon defined for the Early Church as simply "the Gospel". This veneration and pre-eminent usage continued until the advent of critical scholarship in the 19th Century of Higher and Lower Criticism.

This was born out of the nationalism of the late 17th and 18th Centuries and the sceptical perspective of the 1st scholar to attempt to construct a picture of the 'real' Jesus.

Reimarus who with scholars of the ilk of Straus, Renan, Weiss and Schweitzer – were searching for the 'historical Jesus,' - and the seminal work of H. J. Holtzmann on the dating of the N.T. books and letters provided an evincive perspective.

Later the «κερυγμα» was to become the primary focus of many scholars who saw 'The Quest of the Historical Jesus' as, as several pronounced it, "a dead end". Thus as the 20th Century began, the 'Two-Source Hypothesis' (see below) was being championed by Barth, Bultmann *et al* - and Matthew quickly lost its unique *cachet*; (*cf.*, France (2007) *passim*).

Those like the present writer who began serious studies of the New Testament in the 1960's were either fascinated or repulsed by the impertinent seizing of sacred things in the Word of God.

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The early and inevitable extreme reaction of “ignore it and it’ll go away” has slowly evolved into an actually pernicious, would-be pious ultra-conservatism which tries to fight on the battlefield of academic language and pseudo-science. Meanwhile, one of the corollaries of faith-neutral academic studies has been, in this writer’s experience, a new sceptical normative view; so that the license exists to ignore the centuries of simple – now seen as simplistic – reliance, for instance, on the never before seriously-challenged authorship of the 1st Gospel by the Tax-Gatherer from Capernaum, the acknowledged home town of Peter, James, John, Andrew and the (perhaps adoptive) home of Jesus.

There appears to be an ongoing desire to effectively discredit the ascription of the Gospel to Matthew, just as there has been debate concerning the authorship of the 4th Gospel, the Johannines and the Revelation.

A major argument for such scepticism stems from the logically, linguistically and academically discredited ascription of the Pentateuch to Moses – which is poorly defended by the suggestion that the description of Moses’ death may be explained away by Joshua taking over ‘ Captain’s Log’ duties.

There is also the evident unreliability as to authorship of the pseudepigraphal Hebrew scriptural texts and the apocryphal extra-canonical Gospels knocking at the door of the New Testament, works which are precisely characterised by falsely-ascribed authorship (though not necessarily discounted on that basis alone).

The most cursory glance at a range of commentaries, articles and papers on the question of the authorship of the 1st Gospel, reveals an emphatic near-consensus upon the non-authenticity of claims made for Matthean authorship.

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A component of the present writer's attraction to this area of study was this almost universal assertion of anonymous authorship of this Gospel, coupled with an unexpected paucity of rationale; most contemporary writers simply deny Apostolic authorship with reference to little or no supportive information. When the latter is produced, it is invariably presented as though an 'Ace' or a 'Trump' in a game of cards. That card is the indisputable (or rarely-disputed) considerable dependence of Matthew's Gospel upon that of Mark.

Even when other arguments are adduced to support the assertion of unauthenticity of Matthean authorship, - it is consistently the case that the 'copying' question is considered the *coup de grace*.

The seeming-automatic assumption is that under no circumstances could it be conceivable that Matthew, as an eyewitness, would reproduce, in undisguised fashion (though often with (in terms of numbers) minor particular redactions, a version of events acknowledged as non-eyewitness, *viz.*, Mark's account.

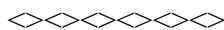
The assumption then, is that what is acknowledged to have been a successful (*i.e.*, widely distributed and revered) Gospel - which eclipsed the 2nd Gospel and then Luke's and even the generally-accepted as authentic Johannine Gospel, and which has never lost its favouritism from the end of the 1st Century to the present day, - holds this place of honour now in spite of the *Zeitgeist*-acceptable theory of anonymous authorship by an individual or group, possibly associated in some fashion with the Apostle -presumed dead by the time of the largely-agreed hypothetical provenance of the work. This assessment has in a practical sense 'disgraced' Matthew from an academic point of view - and (*pace* Griesbach *et al*) the quite evident use of Markan material by the writer has tended over the last century to encourage a lack of scholarly focus on the 'wrongly-attributed' 1st Gospel - like the diminution of interest that attends a deposed king.

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It was in this environment that the present writer through 45 years of biblical studies noted only Matthew's famous penchant for Hebrew Scriptural citations, which at a cursory glance became a cause for diminished credibility for the 1st Gospel in the seeming naïveté of the not always obviously-genuine prophetic connection between the Hebrew material and the 'Jesus Event'.

In the academic world, F.F. Bruce was one of the few scholars in the 1st half of the 20th Century to stand up and be counted as a defender of the truth of the New Testament and the authenticity of the Christ of which it spoke: (*ref.*, Bruce (1969), and M'Clymont, (1989) *passim*). This voice was needed - especially after the 2nd World War culminated in a time of triumph for the considerable school of hyper-rationalistic thought that practically overwhelmed all standpoints except a quasi-scientific literary view of the Christian canon and its extreme opposite, uncompromising championing of verbal inerrancy.

These still strident claims of 'biblical verbal inerrancy' excise the human hand from the writing of the Scriptures as much as 'modern' criticism often tacitly extracts the active Presence of God from the holy works. The scepticism which is still well entrenched today finds scholars of all stripes drawn to - in practical terms, agnostic - arguments which tend to debunk any claims of 'otherness' and any perceptions of the Holy Spirit as engaged in the production of the scriptures. Thus, as Blomberg asserts; "Anti-supernaturalism is still deeply entrenched in many circles, even where it is not explicitly affirmed...Some seem merely to bow to the pressure of consensus – reiterating what is most academically respectable" (*ref.*, Blomberg in Strobel 1998).



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“WHERE’S GOD IN ALL THIS?”

In regard to the assertion made herein regarding historical accounts; studies of divine/human interactions are usually undertaken with a tacit eschewing of the *a priori* implications of the identity between ‘direct communications with God’ and the documentation of such interactions in Scripture. Meanwhile, the ‘Inerrantist’ evades the contentious nature of this subject by positing a (contrived) doctrine wherein the human amanuensis is ‘taken over’ – or ‘possessed’ – by God.

This erroneous – and distasteful – assertion of the alleged overweening manner in which God has interacted with the writers of the Scriptures, seeks its undergirding in what can only be described as ‘eisegesis’, the reading into the biblical texts of a predetermined interpretation supportive of a position already held. The present treatment is characterised by a belief in the authenticity of exegesis as the means by which the scholar may avoid bringing his/her own *a priori* assumptions into the encounter with the Scriptures, allowing meaning to emerge from the text itself; and this exercise must, for example, as the Inerrantist view cannot, take cognizance of the many textual variants – over 150,000 in number.

Considerable academic attention has been given to the matter since the earliest days of the Church, as demonstrated in the cogitations of the Fathers above and the concept of a canon itself. Recent scholarship has helpfully ascertained that of those 150,000 plus variants, - including in excess of 80 papyri, 250 ((early) uncials and 2,800 (9th Century and beyond) minuscules - only perhaps one in 60 has any degree of significance:

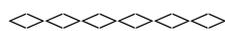
(*ref.*, Schaff, 1885 in Geisler 1999, p.532).

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F.F. Bruce (*ref.*, Dockery 1994, p.182) asserts, “The variant readings about which any doubt remains among textual critics of the New Testament affect no material question of historical fact or of Christian faith or practice. For most of the Biblical text, a single reading has been transmitted. Elimination of scribal errors and intentional changes leaves only a small percentage of text about which any questions occur.” (*cf.*, *ibid.* p.176).

Despite the demonstrably still-extant *Zeitgeist* of robustly rationalistic Theology (and, in the case of the influential von Harnack, ecclesiology), - a strong indication of an early provenance for, in particular, the Synoptic Gospels, must perforce add credibility to the argument for the involvement of eyewitness accounts. Further, the availability of such witnesses would increase the likelihood of narrative and *logion* accuracy. Zukerman notes that, as exemplified in Acts 2.22 and 26.26, the Apostles appealed with confidence to hostile witnesses; (*ref.*, Zukeran 2000). *En passant*, the latter biblical archaeologist also suggests that, even when a later dating of the New Testament dominical narratives and descriptives is posited, there is always a considerable hiatus between asserted-historical events and the establishment of credible and generally accepted myths: (*ref.*, Sherwin-White 1992, p.189; *ref.*, Geisler 1999, p.47).

This latter argument actually seems somewhat arbitrary given the similarities *mutatis mutandis* of social networking then and now, in the swift broadcasting of stimulating, mythic-redolent rumours and (putatively) fact-based narrative. In illustration, the rapid dissemination of the ‘Nero Redivivus’ fantasy and its two further revivals is noted; (*ref.*, Farrar 1955, 1.4; *cf.*, *Sibylline Oracles* 5.216, *cf.*, Augustine; ‘*Holy City of God*’ 20.19: *cf.*, Hebrew Gematria.)



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Regarding the 1st Gospel and in line with the still-potent *Zeitgeist* of non-metaphysical enquiry, a search has been made in preparation of the present dissertation amongst the works of a broad spectrum of biblio-critical scholars for indisputable, or at least cogent, arguments for the general assent amongst contemporary scholars to a post-70AD dating for Matthew's work.

An assertion of disinterested enquiry in this matter will hopefully be given credence by the fact that a pseudepigraphal 'Matthew' would be no less accessible to enquiry than the Apostle himself, into matters of auctorial character and personality - and of divine choice and active cooperation through the Holy Spirit to which the present thesis is prefatory.

It is averred that, as it transpires - regrettably, attempts to engage rigorous 'scientific' methodology spreading from German 19th Century scholarship, have to this point essentially excised exploration of the aforementioned "divine choice and active cooperation" in the fashioning of the Gospels as cogent in regard to the 1st Evangelist.

The evident unwillingness to consider the numinous element - always previously a natural part of biblical studies - has led perhaps, to the 'mere' intellectual exercise of the clinical analysis of the Word, which alarmingly alienates and disappoints the pew-borne Faithful as their relationship with the three-in-one God is - perhaps imperceptibly - malnourished.

In the light of all the above, continued scholarly attempts to establish Matthean authorship are held herein to be legitimately made, in that a convincing or very persuasive auctorial verdict may assist in the assessing of the value of the written proclamation of the Good News of the Kingdom, in terms the early or later provenance of the canonical material.

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Such observations can allow the recognition of the nearest it may be possible to approach an account of the dominical message and teaching with only minimal morphoses. This may be an especially valuable exercise given that the relevant regional circumstances on a political, religious and domestic level, have already changed rapidly between the 60's and 70's AD in particular – with a social impact as great as that between the 1930's and 40's AD in much of the developed world.

The present writer is of the opinion that the closer it is possible to reach to the actual years of Christ's Earthly Ministry, the less influence the accretions of a crisis-laden wartime psyche (*e.g.*, in two global wars) may have; reinterpretations of the dominical Word which may be compromised in terms of the Gospel's unmatched capacity to speak into any human situation, critical or mundane. It is further asserted herein that all four Gospels, and numerous non-canonical works, bear clear signs of their authors' or their authors' communities' theologies, soteriologies, attitudes towards Jewish origins, (particularly in regard to eschatology); and nascent christologies and pneumatologies – many evidenced in both canonical and extra-canonical texts – and that this variety of perspectives is a Gift from God. It is however, clearly of considerable import in regard to broader enquiries into the intrinsic value of the 1st Gospel's account, to attempt to establish, on the grounds just explicated, which 'Matthew' it is whom we hear. Do we hear the Apostle or a later compiler of written and Oral Tradition? The difference will be, as suggested, in the degree of development or distortion of the contents of the (presently and probably enduring) inaccessibility of an autograph.

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Even were such a document to be discovered - despite the depredations of early use and passing from hand to hand, town to town, - the text would still represent the, at least minor, adaptations of maturing consideration of the original events – as is evidenced by any written record of an historical anomaly - including one that occurred over a probable one- or three-year period. Just as, according to Aeschylus, the 1st casualty of war is truth, - at the other end of the spectrum the 1st casualty of the dissemination of the «κερυγμα» will be anything that feels dissonant to the individual or group transmitting it.

To be able to acknowledge that the author of the 1st Gospel is as primitive a witness as possible, even an eyewitness, would be to scrape of the patina of the accretions of time to the nearest to original metal as it is possible to go.

Thus, without assigning a necessarily lesser didactic value to more developed, evolved beliefs, there is an intrinsic value to essaying to delve as far back towards the Christ Event as possible. Time and experience always change perceptions, and this is particularly so in the esoteric world of things spiritual. Thus the risk of mere idiosyncratic evaluations of Holy Scripture inheres in essaying to examine the process by which the divine revelation has been made.

That risk includes the choosing of a partisan revelation over the legitimate responsibility of any Christian disciple to understand the fullest and most accurate interpretation available. The present writer asserts that this risk may be minimized by the acknowledgement of the Spirit's willing role as always-present teacher and paraclete - and the invoking of that authentic source of divine inspiration, a defining component in the concept of 'canon' which infrequently finds expression in recent Christian Academia.

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There is a tacit but evident embarrassment surrounding ‘polluting’ hermeneutics with the metaphysical, resulting in the assiduous excising of the spiritual vector from the intellectual exercise of literary criticism of the Scriptures *qua* ancient writings.

At the other extreme of hermeneutics where *only* the numinous is considered and the human author granted little if any consequence, the approach usually self-defined as ‘verbal inerrancy’; the balance is just as proudly tipped towards the effective eschewing of auctorial significance.

And an unfortunate factor that both extremes fall foul of is the tendency each view has to build a wall between God and Humanity whose *raison d’être* has been succinctly defined by an iteration of the Body of Christ more renowned for its gravity of attitude, the Reformed Church, in its ‘Shorter Westminster Catechism’ clause one: “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.”

Certainly, the context of any search for the authentic cooperation of a real Spirit with a real human writer has to be the recognized impossibility of proving any stance regarding who the various writers were -and identifying beyond dispute the exact year of production of each author’s contribution to what was to become the canon of the New Testament.

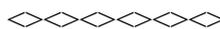
Blomberg, (*ref.*, Strobel 1998) prefaces his scholarly comments with the dictum, “It’s important to acknowledge that strictly speaking, the Gospels are anonymous”. However, once having established this realistic limitation to the possible results of scriptural or extra-biblical research, there is overwhelming evidence of the keen debate of these matters throughout the known history of the Church to this day, with the posited difference that the 21st Century *Zeitgeist* creates a non-numinous desire to establish a *mere* author, rather than a Spirit-imbued one.

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It may be averred that the personal characteristics of the writer of the 1st Gospel are not solely dependent on his location in time. It is true of most individuals, that they will display (*mutatis mutandis*) fundamentally self-coherent reactions and responses to external circumstances. Thus their own set purposes or agenda will be evidenced through any filter of *Sitz im Leben*.

This latter is a central assertion of the present work, which seeks to create the groundwork upon which to establish the manner in which, - as the second central assertion - God worked with the men He chose for the task of the written revelation of the Good News, - a choice, it will be herein asserted, that involved His gracious acknowledgment and unqualified acceptance of the differing personalities, skills and formative experiences of the writers, as illustrated by His divine *imprimatur* on the four canonical Gospels.

These appropriately uniquely-textured accounts (which do not require conflation or homogenization), may be viewed as representing the four dimensions of the Universe the Lord God has fashioned – giving metaphorical breadth, length, height - and the fourth significant dimension of time - to His revelation of His own nature and plans for humanity.



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RATIONALE

If disinterested, thoroughgoing academic scrutiny indicates the likelihood that the 1st Gospel is an original document which overtly employs existent material – as any putative historical work will always do – then Matthew’s Gospel qualifies as a candidate for acknowledgement as the work of an individual writer. If this auctorial claim can be sustained, then the hypothesis that the constructor of the 1st Gospel is, as tradition has averred, the former Tax Collector from Capernaum has a basis for legitimate consideration.

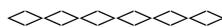
And immediately an insight into Matthew, the Gospel-writing Apostle may be expected to emerge. Matthew’s profession as a Tax Collector will have involved having a facility with an extremely complex system of taxation and record-keeping. Wenham summarizes data from Goodspeed thus; “It is known that in Egypt at this date there were 111 kinds of tax, and many of the tax collectors knew shorthand. Matthew's livelihood was earned by interviewing tax-payers and discussing their affairs (usually in Aramaic) and then writing up his reports in Greek. He had a lifelong habit of noting things down and of preserving what he had written”: (*ref.*, Wenham 1992, pp.112-113).

Nota Bene: the citation from Goodspeed (1959), while otherwise cogent, should not be taken as implying such a plethora of taxes in 1st Century Palestine. There were two forms of Roman taxation; general property, income and (census-determined head or) poll tax following predetermined assessments – and the tax on Imports and Exports which allowed tariffs on anything transported by or using roads and was the more easily abused system of which Matthew was a hired operative . This would have made him the local face of the hated Roman overlords and of the taxes they imposed which were not seen as a religious duty as were the indigenous taxes, for instance for Temple maintenance.

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For the ‘Apostolic Author’ hypothesis to receive serious (re)consideration, the fundamental question (after why any writer or redactor would want to associate any Gospel with a despised - even if former – traitor) must be asked of the available evidence; - can the 1st Gospel be credibly dated to within the reasonable life expectancy of Matthew? To illustrate, if the commonly-asserted dating of the dissemination of this opus to after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD, - and indeed at least 10 years after that watershed event - be accepted, then the plausibility of the 1st Gospel being the work of Matthew the former Tax Collector recedes.

The Apostle’s age would be very considerable and out of the range of normal life expectancy even in the civilised world of the Roman Empire at the height of its puissance. Therefore if it be acknowledged that Matthew is somewhat dependent upon the Second Gospel and not, as long Tradition holds, itself primitive – as the (believed) chronologically-based canonical biblical order suggests, - it is necessary to indicate an authentic likelihood of Mark’s account being conceivably available to Matthew. This will need to be –as will be explicated below – in the most complete iteration of the Second Gospel presently available and found in the canon.



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AUTHENTICITY

Clearly, a primary concern with regard to the testing of the authenticity of any New Testament work – given the serendipitous milieu of the flourishing of the Roman Empire around them, is external attestation to their existence at a particular time by reliable documents that can themselves be authenticated in regard to temporal provenance.

It is not essential that they be disinterested in the religious sense, nor even that their content be unassailable, only that they contribute to the establishment of a *terminus ante quem*.

The earliest Christian document, dated with comparative certainty to 95-98 AD, is the ‘*Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*’ (trans., Lightfoot); it contains sayings of the Lord which closely resemble those recorded by Matthew; (Clement 16.17 *par* Matthew 11.29; Clement 24.5 *par* Matthew 13.3), although it may be that they are derived from Apostolic (*i.e.*, oral) preaching, as in Clement 13.2, where there are examples of a combining of sentences from Matthew, Luke, and another source.

In the ‘*Epistle of Polycarp*’ (110-117 AD) there are various passages from Matthew that are quoted literally; (12.3 *par* Matthew 5.44; 7.2 *par* Matthew 26.41, *et al.* [*par* = ‘parallel’ *i.e.*, *effectively or literally ‘identical to’*]); also a number of Epistles are quoted but only one other Gospel citation - from Luke.

‘*The Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans*’ (*ca.*, 110-145, *ref.*, *Smyrna*. 5.1 and 7.2) is a probably authentic letter (not all others bearing his name are likely to be) from the Bishop of Antioch, refers to Matthew 3.5 and cites Matthew 19.12.

Ignatius also borrowed expressions and some sentences from Matthew in other probably- authentic letters; (‘*Ad Polycarp*’ 2.2 *par* Matthew 10.16; ‘*Ephesians*’ 14.2 *par* Matthew 12.33, *et al.*).

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An early dating (before the death of Trajan in 107 AD) is suggested herein for the non-pseudepigraphal Epistles among the group.

All four Gospels find reference in Clement of Alexandria's anti-Gnostic '*Stromateis*' 3.13 (ca., 200 AD) (ref., *Roberts-Donaldson translations for all ancient writings unless otherwise specified*) he quotes over 300 passages from the Gospel according to Matthew, introduced by the formula, «ὁ ἐν δε κατὰ Ματθαίον εὐαγγέλιον» or «φησὶν ὁ κύριος».

In his '*Epistle to the Philadelphians*' 5.12, Ignatius writes of the Gospel in which he takes "refuge as in the Flesh of Jesus" - suggestive of his having possessing an evangelically-focused collection of texts which he regarded as Spirit-inspired. Many scholars consider this personal library as likely to have included the 1st Gospel.

In the pseudepigraphal '*Epistle of Barnabas*' (between 80 and 120 AD), there is a passage citing Matthew 22.14, that is introduced by the scriptural formula, «ὅς γεγραπταί». This usage suggests that the author considered the 1st Gospel to be autographic.

In his '*Legatio pro christianis*' 12.1112, Athenagoras (117 AD), quotes almost verbatim, sentences taken from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5.44 ff) as equal in authority to the writings of the Hebrew Scriptures.

The '*Shepherd of Hermas*' (ca., 150 AD, trans., *Lightfoot*) has several passages which closely resemble pericopæ from Matthew, but do not quote the Gospel *per se*.

In his '*Dialogue*' 99.8, Justin (ca, 160 AD) quotes, almost verbatim, the prayer of Christ in the Garden of Olives, (Matthew 26.39-40).

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Similarly, a significant number of other passages in the writings of Justin recall the Matthean opus, and indicate that he ranked it among the ‘Memoirs of the Apostles’. These, Justin wrote, were called ‘Gospels’ (I ‘*Apol*’ 66), were read in the services of the Church, and were thus, significantly, regarded as Holy Scripture.

Also, in the paraenetic, pseudepigraphal, ‘*The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*’ (trans, Charles, (ca, 150), there are numerous passages that closely resemble the 1st Gospel, e.g., ‘*Test. Joshua*’ 1.5-6 par Matthew 25.35-36: (ref., de Jonge (1975) *passim*).

Theophilus of Antioch (ca, 170) ‘*Ad Autol*’ 3.13-14’ quotes Matthew 5.28 and 32, and, by the evidence of Jerome, ‘*Prolog.in Matthew*’ (between 350 and 420 AD), wrote a commentary on the 1st Gospel, as did Jerome himself.

Tatian, (ca, 173 AD) incorporated the Gospel of Matthew into his attempted harmony, the ‘*Diatesseron*’.

For Irenæus, (ca, 180 AD) the Gospel of Matthew, from which he cites numerous pericopæ, was one of the four that constituted the complete Gospel as inspired by the one Spirit of God.

This latter assertion is echoed by Bede (ca, 672–735 AD) "Though there were four Evangelists, yet what they wrote is not so much four Gospels, as one true harmony of four books. For as two verses having the same substance, but different words and different metre, yet contain one and the same matter, so the books of the Evangelists, though four in number, yet contain one Gospel, teaching one doctrine of the Catholic Faith"; (ref., Thomas Aquinas ‘*Matthew*’, Introduction. 1st citation of Bede).

Tertullian (‘*Adv Marc*’ 4.2) (ca., 210 AD) asserts that the ‘*Instrumentum Evangelicum*’ was the work of the four Apostolic writers, specifically mentioning Matthew as a Gospel author in ‘*De carne Christi*’ 12: (ref., Metzger, 1987).

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

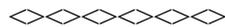
The ‘*Didascalia Apostolorum*’ (ca., 230 AD) in its Gospel references most often alludes to Matthew –and least often to John:

(*ref.*, Quasten 1983, p. 37 and Herbermann 1913, *passim*).

The (Greek) ‘*Clementine Homilies*’ (between 260 and 350 AD), contain some citations of Matthew’s account; *e.g.*, ‘*Hom*’ 3.52 *par* Matthew 15.13; 18.15 *par* Matthew 13.35.

There is a similar mélange of texts in the *Didache*;
(‘*The Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles*’; ca, 100 AD) with 66 passages that recall the 1st Gospel, some being literal quotations; (8.2 *par* Matthew 6.7-13; 7.1 *par* Matthew 28.19; 11.7 *par* Matthew 12.31, *et al.*), but nothing from Mark.

(See below; ‘*Didache*’).



REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

NO AUTOGRAPHS

The overarching circumstance that relates to all Judaeo-Christian Scripture is the present absence of any autographs – originals from the hand of the authors. And it seems very unlikely that one could ever be discovered, given the original status of each manuscript as a personal reflection, not necessarily intended to form a Canon.

Also given is the inevitability of the depredations of constant handling and transporting of the various works to the already geographically-expanding outposts of the Church, as attested to in Colossians 4.16.

There is, in addition, the ravaging factor of deliberate attempts to ban and to destroy the writings of the new, alien and scarce-comprehended religion by the fiat of imperial edict. What is left to the Church are some manuscript copies of these documents of which the oldest known is, at present, ‘*Papyrus #52*’ which contains a few verses of the Gospel of John in Greek and is commonly dated to 125 AD. This fragment was found in Egypt and is thus illustrative of the depredations upon the writing media of the distances the early copies were being carried.

By number, there are 257 documents, normatively categorized by their written style as ‘uncials’ (the graphological style used between the 3rd and 9th Centuries) or ‘miniscules’ (a lower case small script), 93 papyri and in the region of 2,800 copies from *circa* the 9th Century. ‘*Codex Shoyen*’ (*ca.* 325 AD) has Matthew 5.28-28.20.

The earliest complete text is in the ‘*Codex Siniaticus*’ (*ca.* 331 AD) and ‘*Codex Vaticanus*’ similarly dated. The ‘*Codex Alexandrinus*’ from the 5th Century has only Matthew 25.7-28.20.

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

If the document traditionally attributed to Matthew reveals itself to be a compilation of «λογια» and narratives constructed around the core «κερυγμα» tradition of the Passion Narrative found in the synoptic Gospels – plus one of the Infancy Narratives in circulation (of which the 1st Chapters of Luke are another example), then the writer *per se* is a tradent-cum-redactor or group of the same, whose ‘fingerprints’ may be discernible, but whose authority may be unquantifiable.

A criterion to be considered may be the evidence of the consistency and idiolectic characteristics of the work itself. Such evidence would not lend weight to the identification of the 1st Gospel as the work of a ‘committee’ of a putative Matthean school, nor indeed the positing of an individual author, bold enough to challenge the *bona fides* and unique (arguably Petrine-derived) status of Mark’s account and thus to write his own somewhat idiosyncratic version of the earliest Gospel to receive universal approbation.

In other words a perceptible uniformity of style, vocabulary, concepts and evident provenance of the 1st Gospel would suggest the work of one writer -and the quiet but clear personal authority that writer evidences most naturally suggests an apostolic auctorial hand.

The 1st Gospel is crafted using about 1,475 words, 137 of which are «‘απαχ λεγομινα» (words used by one writer, in this case Matthew, alone of all the New Testament writers). Of these latter, 76 are classical; 21 are found in the LXX; 15 («βαττολογειν», «βιαστεσ», «ευνουουχιζειν», *et al.*), were seemingly introduced for the 1st time by Matthew, the former evidently to allow a pun. Eight words («αφεδον», «γαμιζειν», *et al.*) were employed for the first time by Matthew and Mark, and 15 others («εκχυνεθαι», «επιοθσιος», *et al.*) by Matthew and one other N.T. writer.

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

The Gospel contains many constructed expressions peculiar to itself, which help to give it a distinctive ‘flavour’. Thus, for a familiar and significant example, there is an idiolectic pattern to Matthew’s use of «ουρανοσ». The word has a number of different uses in the 1st Gospel, in both the singular and plural forms.

Matthew employs on 34 occasions, his own version of a characteristically-Jewish circumlocution of the mention of God, «‘η βασιλεια τον ουρανον» - which phrase is not found in Mark or Luke’s accounts, where, in parallel passages, «‘η βασιλεια του θεου» is used, the latter occurring only four times in Matthew’s account, where, in each case, the writer is using the Markan account verbatim.

Another use of «ουρανοσ» is found in Matthew 24.29 where the concept reflects the Genesis 1 cosmology which includes a ‘firmament’; «και οι αστερες πεσουνται απο του ορανου, και αι δυναμεις των ουρανων σαλευθησονται».

Matthew 13.44 gives the always plural «‘ωμοια εστιν ‘η βασιλεια των ουρανων», which is Matthew’s way of referring to «‘η βασιλεια» as a blessed state of living, and an ultimate home to be found and embraced.

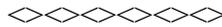
A familiar Matthean distinctive, (suggestive of a didactic *modus operandi*), is the repetition of a phrase or a special construction several times in close succession, (*cf., e.g.,* 2.1, 13; 19.4, 12, 18; 9.26,31 and 13.44, 45, 47).

Also the same terms often recur: – «τοτε» (90 occurrences), «απο τοτε», «και ιδου», *et al*, Similarly, Matthew evidences a preference for the preposition «απο», using it even when both Mark and Luke use «εκ». Characteristically Matthean expressions include; «‘ο επουρανιονς», «‘ο εν τοιςουρανοις» and «συντελεια του αλονος».

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The evangelist adopts the Greek form «Ιεροσολυμα» for Jerusalem, rather than «Ιερουσαλεμ», which he uses only on one occasion (23.37) where he is quoting verbatim from the same source as Luke 13.34; an example of the discipline both Evangelists display when using the «λογια» compilation.

It is acknowledged that these literary devices only certainly indicate that the author (if considered as as-yet-unidentified) was practiced in the use of Greek and that he translated his text with proto-Rabbinical license).



REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

SYNOPTIC VISION

Some attention must be given to the ‘Synoptic Problem’: (*ref., e.g.,* Streeter (1929, Ch 11).

A significant factor in any debate on the general current dismissal of the 1st Evangelist’s identification with the Apostle, resides in the interpretation of scholarly comparisons of the Gospel according to Matthew with the two other Synoptic Gospels.

Firstly then, while there are 330 verses peculiar to the 1st Gospel alone – the document also contains an estimated 330 to 370 verses in common with both of the other Synoptics; from 170 to 180 which agree with the Markan account, and from 230 to 240 verses in very close agreement with Luke's bipartite opus.

It is also evident that in similar pericopæ, the same teachings are expressed - sometimes in identical and sometimes in differing terms. Matthew and Mark most often use the same expressions, with Matthew seldom agreeing with Luke against Mark.

The main variations in their use of the same expressions are in comparative minutiae such as numbers of persons and objects, and in the use of different tenses of the same verb - with Matthew generally evidencing the greater facility with the written language.

Changes of terms or in modes of expression are very frequent. Thus, Matthew often uses «ευθεος» where Mark has «ευθως»; «μεν . . . δε» in place of the Markan «και», *et al.*

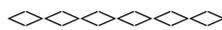
Mark’s Gospel account is found complete in Matthew, with the exception of a number of minor textual omissions and the following pericopæ; Mark 1.23-28, 35-39; 4.26-29; 7.32-36; 8.22-26; 9.39-40 and 12.41-44, which represent 31 discarded verses.

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

The ordering of the common material is very similar except where, in chapters 5-13, Matthew groups together material of like import and teachings conveying the same concepts. Thus, for example, in Matthew 8.1-15, 3 miracles are clustered together that are separated from each other in Mark, who is the only author who frequently quotes Aramaic words and phrases (some of which *may* have been the actual words of Jesus as remembered by Peter).

The 2nd Evangelist alone uses the words «Βοανηργησ» (Mark :17), «εφφαθα» (7:34), «ταλιθα ουμ» (5:41), «αββα» (14:36) and the Aramaic form of 'Eli' in the cry, «ελωι ελωι λαμα σαβαθανι» (15:34): (*ref.*, Vermes, 2006; p. 175).

Matthew seems at pains at times to 'mask' some of Mark's rough grammar as, for instance, he may be posited as doing a number of times in his use of Mark 6.5-11; (*cf.*, Matthew 13.53-58).



REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

SOURCE SUGGESTIONS.

The various source hypotheses posited in attempted answer to the ‘Synoptic problem’ are well-known. Significant amongst them are the ‘Two Source Theory’ which avers that Matthew and Luke were sourced from Mark and the collection of sources almost exclusively of «λογία» which has only theoretical existence at this point – no document or even fragment being extant – dubbed ‘Q’ from ‘quelle’ – Germ; ‘source’: (See below for an examination of the ‘Q’ theory; *ref.*, Kloppenburg 2000).

Another commonly-cited position is the ‘Two Gospel Theory’; similar to the ‘Augustinian Theory’ which placed Matthew first, largely from Early Church attestations, with the Second and Third Gospels each relying on their predecessors; the ‘Two Gospel Theory’ also known as the Griesbach Hypothesis posits Luke second and Mark as a synopsis of Matthew and Luke.

The ‘Farrer-Goulder’ Theory (also endorsed by Goodacre 2002) dismisses ‘Q’ as redundant: (*ref.*, Nineham, ed., 1960, pp 55-88; *ref.*, Goulder, 1996, *passim*).

A further suggestion is the ‘Three Source’ Theory (*ref.*, Tuckett, 2009, *passim*) which asserts Markan priority and retains ‘Q’, but posits a Matthean influence on Luke – thus positing a chronological order for the production of the 1st and Third Gospels and suggesting an earlier than previously urged *terminus ad quem* for the writing of Matthew’s account.

Some scholars aver that this position would contradict the *raison d’être* of the compilation of ‘Q’.

However Tuckett argues that the Third Gospel’s «πολλοι επεχειρησαν αναταξασθαι διηγησιν» refers, at the least, to the 1st and Second accounts and that the fact that Luke elected to write a Gospel may simply indicate that he was dissatisfied with the (roughshod) Mark and the (Jewish-toned) Matthew.

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In terms of putative textual evidence, Luke's Sermon on the Plain lends itself to an argument that Luke used Matthew's (probably 'Q'-sourced) Sermon on the Mount, 'de-Judaising' its Mosaic redolence, while retaining the Matthew 5.2 introductory and the Matthew 7.28 and 8.1 concluding framework, but in less Hebrew-referent terms (*cf.*, Luke 6.17,20 and Luke 7.1): Davies and Allison (2004) note that in each case these are purely editorial insertions.

Other arguments include the assertion of Schnelle that there are *ca* 700 minor agreements between the 1st and Third Gospels against Mark which are most naturally explained by Luke's employment of Matthean material: (*ref.*, Schnelle, (1998, *passim*).

Dr. James Gibbs produced a study document for his 1976 students at Bangalore, which provides a rigorously text-based and evincively-argued potential solution to the 'Synoptic Problem' which is outlined below.

Gibbs' hypothesis is remarkable for its 'simplicity in complexity' and is deserving of more exploration than it has received in the last almost four decades. The scholar notes that Matthew and Luke do not agree together against the Markan text except for four verses and one Hebrew Scriptural citation; suggestive of Markan priority.

In general, there is agreement in pericope order or sequence where there is triple attestation to those passages. This cannot be attributed to Oral Tradition as many strict agreements in wording between the Synoptics have been identified.

Mark 1.40-45 *par* Matthew 8.1-4 *par* Luke 5.12-16, *mutatus mutandis*, example these agreements - requiring the availability of written source material.

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All but about 30 verses of Mark's Gospel appear in an aggregate of Matthew and Luke; - 606 in the 1st Gospel and 300 in the Third. Of Mark's 10,650 word vocabulary, 7768 are used in Matthew and 7040 appear in Luke. Out of his 1071 verses, Matthew has 387 in common with Mark and Luke, 170 agreements with Mark only, 184 with Luke and 387 peculiar to his own Gospel.

Matthew sometimes omits Markan detail he considers inessential; *cf.*, Mark 4.39 and Matthew 8.26[b]: (Luke retains and enhances the Markan detail; (*ref.*, Luke 8.24[b]). However, Matthew also adds to Mark (*ref.*, Matthew 12.22-45, *cf.*, Mark 3.20-30). Mark's apocalyptic Chapter 13 has 37 verses while Matthew's equivalent; (Matthew 24.1-25.50) has 97 verses.

These observations join many others in strongly suggesting Markan priority.

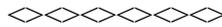
Mark's Greek is colloquial and often Semitic in style and his phraseology is frequently improved by both other synoptic authors. For example Mark 2.4 has «κρᾶβος» ('pallet' or 'mat') which Matthew 9.2 'upgrades' to «κλίνη» ('mattress' or 'bed') and Luke further improves –after using «κλίνη» in Luke 5.18, to «κλινιδίω» ('couch' or 'recliner') in 5.19.

The many examples of this 'redaction of improvement' are but one of the factors that preclude the logical possibility that Mark deliberately 'roughens' particularly Matthew's elegant phraseology. It seems very unlikely, for example, that either the 1st or the Third Evangelists' well written texts would be 'dumbed down' by the Markan predilection for joining sentences by a string of 'ands' «καί», or the pointlessly distracting alternative inelegances of asyndeton or parataxis.

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

Matthew's stylistic improvements, then, include his replacement of «εϋθους» with «εϋθεος» and, as noted, another Matthean phrase, and «μεν...δε» replaces the ubiquitous «και». The 1st Evangelist changes the Markan Imperfect to the Aorist, removes double negatives and replaces awkward expressions and neologisms probably constructed by Mark, with appropriate current usages.

And Matthew often redacts Mark's imprecisions, such as his referring to Herod Antipas as «ο βασιλευς» (Mark 6.14) with the appropriate title «ο τετρααρχης» (Matthew 14.1) as also does Luke (9.7): and of course «Λειψιν τον του Αλφαιου» becomes «Μαθηταιον».



REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

THE QUESTION BEGGED.

The question arises of why Matthew chose to write a Gospel account so dependent on the Second Gospel. It has been salutary for this writer to canvas the opinions of a chosen group of a variety of backgrounds, education and Christian beliefs, regarding the ‘copying’ argument for the apostolic unauthenticity of the writer of the 1st Gospel. Told (for simplicity’s sake) that Markan priority was undisputed, as was the copying of almost the whole of Mark’s text into Mathew’s Gospel – and that equally beyond doubt was the lack of attempted identification with an eyewitness, so that Matthew an alleged eyewitness was copying without disguise from a non-eyewitness – what did that suggest to them in terms of the status of the 1st Gospel.

The instant response, or nearly so, of each of these separately-canvassed individuals was very surprising to this writer who expected to hear uniformly negative assumptions which could then be vigorously debated. The surprise was that almost all of them expressed the simplicity of the answer and opined that Matthew having copied information he agreed with, said nothing to eliminate him from the category of eyewitness – the phrase “re-inventing the wheel” was used more than once. The supplying thereafter of the information that Mark was generally held to have produced his Gospel some 20 or more years before Matthew, elicited some (unprompted) consensus regarding the strategic value of Matthew using words, phraseology and stories that had been circulated in oral tradition exactitude for perhaps those two decades - an entire generation.

It was perceived by these ‘*tabula rasa*’s that “the reinvention of the wheel” could only serve to be a cause of confusion when a second version of familiar material was seen to be written in contradiction of the earlier, time-honoured one.

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

Matthew they reasoned, must not have been working to counter or to largely correct the content of Mark's version of the Good News, but rather to augment it with Matthew's own experiences and insights. Each canvassed person accepted without demur that Luke had done the same thing, and in his case had used the material he possessed to spell out the Word as it had come to him in the company of St Paul and other influential proponents of the taking of the Gospel to the nations. Similarly it seemed acceptable that both Matthew and Luke had interpolated material unique to each of them; ('Q' was left out of the equation for simplicity's sake).

Apart from the improvements Matthew makes in language terms, there is the probable motive of moderating or excising Markan theological positions. Significant among these may be the argument that can be made that Mark has an Adoptionist Christology which is evidenced in widespread early and continuing contemplation of the nature and provenance of Christ and which may be reflected in Mark's unique lack of prolegomena.

The Second Gospel commences with Jesus' Baptism, which describes the imparting of the Holy Spirit – for the 1st time in Israel's history, “dwelling” in a human being as opposed to descending upon an individual for a specific but ephemeral, short-term reason; (*cf., e.g.,* Genesis 41.38; Exodus 31.3; Numbers 6.17, 24.2; Judges 3.10, and 2 Samuel 23.2). Note also Ezekiel 2.2, 6.5 and 37.1 - and Joel's prediction at Joel 2.28-29 of the pouring out of the Spirit on more than one person at a time, as Peter *et al* experienced at Pentecost; (*ref.,* Peter's speech in Acts 2.17-21).

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Eusebius implies that Mark died in the eighth year of Nero's reign, 62 AD (therefore, before Peter and his wife's execution) – and if given credence, this datum sets a *terminus a quo* for the writing of Mark. However - in the opinion of the present writer, - it need not be as many scholars assert a necessarily considerable time –such as almost a generation (*ca.*, 20-25 years) before the mainly-dependent Matthew can have been written.

It is here averred that there is no firm basis –beyond scholarly tradition - upon which to make any determination of the time that must have elapsed between the 1st production and then dissemination of any Gospel manuscript copies and their sufficient availability to the Early Church communities.

All that is required is time to allow Matthew to redact and incorporate Markan material into his own Gospel as its framework and interpolate into that evidently largely acceptable structure his 'Q' «*λογια*» and the unique material designated 'M'.

Both of these latter sources may well have been available to Matthew and accumulated perhaps some considerable time before the Markan material fell into his hands. Indeed it is likely that Oral and some written Tradition had acquainted the 1st Evangelist with a proportion of the material Mark had incorporated (whether Petrine-sourced or otherwise). Such familiarity would further facilitate the task of composing his own account for a writer of evident gifting and experience.

Acknowledging the scholarly hypothesis of the general consensus of time frames, some years may be posited to have passed, but essentially only enough to account for the acceptance of Mark's Gospel by the Hellenistic Christian community of which he himself was part -with the probable authority of Peter's *imprimatur* - and the making available of copies of this brief and surely welcome document through the speedy and reliable means of Roman trade and military roads.

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

Nota Bene: the relatively contained-and-easy-to-travel geographical area covered by Paul and by 1st Century Christianity doesn't mandate a 20 year passage of time for influential Christians to travel round with copies of the new Scriptures. Paul had developed a distinctive Theology before Mark's Gospel was even written, and Paul had engaged in copious written exchanges with 'his' Church communities.

Also it is noteworthy that Christians should not be envisaged as individuals spread around cities as is our present experience, - rather they were gathered in communities or «ἐκκλησία», which would have facilitated access to the new writings, and they were evidently used to receiving itinerant preachers and prophets.

The '*Didache*' sardonically suggests that such was the volume of these, that some could be a drain on the community, its finances and probably its patience; (ref., p.79ff '*Didache*'). However some could also arrive bearing gifts 'hot off the press'.

And it defies logic that Matthew would not redact, as soon as was possible, this Markan document, - which he must have found broadly accurate in regard to fact if not to didactic-accessible style.

Also it is reasonable assume that Matthew would have made the redactions he considered mandatory, before utilising it as a teaching and preaching tool that did not necessarily reproduce his own theological and christological reflection.

Despite these arguments or never having considered them, most contemporary scholars still reject Matthean authorship of the 1st Gospel, arguing that an apostolic eyewitness to Jesus' ministry would not have used a secondary 'hearsay' source, yet the 1st Gospel relies on Mark for much of its material.

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

This view does not allow for the possibility that, as asserted above, Matthew was not setting up in potentially quite unproductive conflict with the traditionally Petrine-validated Second Gospel, but simply working in obedience to the Spirit to enrich and more closely define the various iterations of Christianity.

While the present writer sees no Pauline influence in the 1st Gospel, the latter writer's attitude towards the burgeoning of divisive sectarian enclaves would seem consistent with Matthew's unitive and christocentric purposes as explored below; (*ref.*, Paul's adamant assertions in 1 Corinthians 1.10-13 and again in 3.4-7).

Few critics entertain the notion that the 'Apostle copying a Roman comparative non-entity who wasn't even there' observation is not the 'trump card' it seems to be 'played' as. The present writer suggests that there are no signs in his Gospel that Matthew was presenting an 'alternative' or contradiction-purposed account in competition with Mark – nor does he play his own 'trump card' of (at least implied) eyewitness status. The general consensus amongst scholars, supported here, is that Mark's Gospel was available and known before the 'First' Gospel.

The assertion of the present writer in this Dissertation and its 'sequel' is that Matthew is by intellect and education a careful and brilliant agent of the « Εγώ γαρ παρελαβον απο του κυριου, 'ο και παρεδωκα 'υμιν» process invoked by Paul in the aforementioned Epistle (11.23). By nature, the 1st Evangelist is demonstrably self-effacing – particularly as compared with Paul or John the 4th Evangelist.

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Matthew's purpose is clear – he is not writing an evangelical treatise, he is writing for those who have long since or recently been added to the Christian fold. Thus there is no good purpose to be served as Matthew constructs his Gospel account, in his being distractingly adversarial towards Mark – and distractions from his didactic purposes are clearly, by reference to his writing, as unwelcome to Matthew as catechist/instructor as would a classroom-visible fight in the playground be to a modern school teacher. Indeed it serves his purposes to be able, for some of his catechumens, to build upon already assimilated data and to appeal to familiar phraseology.

Matthew evidently neither feels obliged to present that alternative account – nor does he feel obliged to treat Mark's account as "Gospel". Also consonant with Matthew's focus upon his catechumens, and differing from Luke's desire to reach outsiders directly are the adaptations each makes to the material –assumed to be 'Q' – which they have both accessed.

An example is the 'Parable of the Lost Sheep' (Luke 15.1*ff*; Matthew 18.12*ff*). The Lukan usage is purposed to justify Jesus' association with sinners, and is addressed to the Pharisees and Scribes. Matthew's version however is addressed to Jesus' disciples (and so also to Matthew's).

The audience change brings about a change of meaning. Luke employs the parable for the legitimate purpose of asserting God's desire to reach sinners (including, of course, Gentiles). Matthew has the parable serve his characteristic purpose of informing his catechumens of Jesus' desire for them to value and care for their own. The 1st Evangelist lives in a time of 'proto' - Rabbinical ready engagement with the Hebrew theocentric writings, canonical or otherwise.

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There was yet to be a move towards creating a Christian canon from the many works in circulation, of which the Second Gospel is merely one, even if being positively received (which may be assumed, but for which there is not the evidence of popular acclaim that Matthew's opus was to enjoy).

Thus Matthew's purposes are served by employing and redacting either the Markan account *per se*, or that document (perhaps given *gravitas* by its ultimate provenance in the teachings of Peter) and authenticated for Matthew by his own experiences and the Oral Tradition Matthew has received which is common with that used by Mark, plus further «λογια» from other sources (to be considered below).

En passant, John is most probably writing in a quite different milieu and not primarily focused on presenting his 'version' of the facts of Jesus Ministry and Passion, but rather sharing his own (Spirit-led) explications of Jesus' significance and teaching. He is of the demonstrable personality and awareness of his own special position as a close eyewitness, to construct a Gospel that pays little if any attention to the synoptic accounts – and which does not shy from factual contradictions.

Note ; such contradictory material would not have the force of modern historical writings where accurate data, unlike ancient accounts such as those of Josephus or Herodotus, are the primary concern). Matthew, on the other hand, avoids contradictions of a strident nature with his auctorial predecessor, and restricts himself to alterations of language and – significant but cogent - comparative minutiae. His readiness to employ Mark's writing is no more remarkable than his adherence to the received essence of the «κερυγμα», focusing on the Passion narrative, and his usage of the collected «λογια» referred to as 'Q': (*cf.*, below).

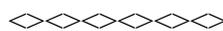
REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

A further argument for Markan priority is the observation that narratives that are coherent in the Second Gospel are not always so self-consistent and logical in Matthew or Luke: *cf.*, Mark 6.17-29 and Matthew 14.5-9. Note also Mark 15.6*ff* and Luke 23.18 which latter text only makes sense if the Markan narrative is understood to be its source (and familiar to Luke's reader[s]). Matthew and Luke seem to use slightly differing versions of Mark. Matthew reproduces almost all of Mark 6.45-8.26 while Luke has none of that material - suggestive of Luke's employment of an 'Ur-Marcus', and the 1st Evangelist, a later edition.

Gibbs suggests that the reason for the extra verses in Matthew may be lectionary-based. The present writer's respected North American tutor began working with Goulder in Birmingham UK, after he found convincing Second Gospel connections to a triennial lectionary made by C.T. Ruddick in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* (1969) and Lukan lectionary/festival links have also been claimed by other scholars.

This raises the degree of likelihood that all the canonical Gospels are constructed with an eye to liturgical use – by forging links with a Jewish Lectionary. The problem biblical research faces is that there are not at present clear signs that the Evangelists followed one common Lectionary, nor yet that any specific synoptic writer used in an annual synagogue cycle or a triennial system of readings - commencing (legitimately) either at *Nisan* (Passover is 15 *Nisan*) or *Tishri* (the 7th month).

However, Gibbs notes that all three Synoptics agree in the lectionary setting of the temptation of Jesus – with Gen 33.18 to 35.8; - the '*Tishri* 1' lection for Mark and Matthew, and the '*Nisan* 1' Hebrew Scriptural reading for Luke.



REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

THE LEGITIMACY OF THE MARKAN FRAMEWORK

Mark's Gospel consists of short anecdotal narratives strung together. However when the Passion Narrative is reached, from the Jewish plot during the Feast of unleavened Bread through to Jesus' burial and the discovery of the empty tomb is a continuous narrative with no signs of being cobbled together, but rather, as most scholars aver, a core narrative central to the identity of all the posited Christian communities. R. Bauckham (2006), p.243, asserts that many scholars date Mark's Passion Narrative to no later than the 40s with Jesus assumed to have died in 30 AD).

Dunn, (2003), p.765, opines, "The most obvious explanation of this feature is that the framework was early on fixed within the tradition process and remained so throughout the transition to written Gospels. This suggests in turn a tradition rooted in the memory of the participants and put into that framework by them" (through continuous recital).

Those first witnesses to Jesus (if not to His death and resurrection *per se*) include Matthew.

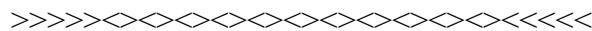
It is not impossible then, though not strongly asserted here, that the core of the «κερυγμα» may be Matthean in origin as a written narrative. By this hypothesis, obviously there would be (another) explanation of the essential identity of Mark's and Matthew's accounts to the end of the Second Gospel, and perhaps Mark's telling of those central events only goes as far as the empty tomb for the same reason as early catechists were not taught about the Eucharist until they had experienced it and therefore were not being asked to swallow something indigestible.

So by the same token, perhaps Peter's version in the Second Gospel keep the resurrection outside the public view, for the time when the neophytes received the Holy Spirit and thus had a basis upon which to found their belief in the resurrection and ascension.

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

It may also be averred that the very antiquity of the Passion Narrative suggests its authenticity; the empty tomb is so well attested to because it was empty, the varied detail surrounding the various accounts notwithstanding. By this hypothesis, of course, Matthew's Gospel would be confirmed as a manual-cum-curriculum for the already somewhat assimilated newcomers. Matthew's undisguised choice of reliance upon existent (most probably written) material is precisely due to his concentration on providing *par excellence*, community-focussed instructions for the every-person missional response to the Good News of Jesus the Christ.

En passant, no noteworthy stress is ever placed on the suggestion of multiple amanuenses for the group behind production of this Gospel, given its evident and consistent stylistic distinctives. Jülicher, quoted by Jaquier (1911), asserts, "The author's individuality is so strikingly evident in his style and tendencies that it is impossible to consider the Gospel a mere compilation". The majority of critics would agree with this latter observation – with the caveat that it does not address the question of apostolic authorship *per se*.



REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR DATING THE 1st GOSPEL;

ONE: THE ELUSIVE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE HEBREWS.

The language of the Gospel is a cogent factor in considerations of the separate and not insignificant, but problematical matter of determining whether the characteristics of the Greek Gospel indicate that it is a translation from the Aramaic, presumably from a number of unspecified Oral Traditional sources. Thus relevant to the matter of dating is the suggestion that Matthew wrote '*The Gospel according to the Hebrews*' - generally considered by conservative estimates as written between 80 and 150 AD, or by others as *ca.*, 50-90 AD; that would place Matthew's Gospel in the same timeframe of which the putative *terminus ad quem* is emphatically after the fall of the Second Temple .

Various scholars have from time to time attempted to reconcile the information furnished by patristic tradition with the results of the critical study of the 1st Gospel over the last two Centuries, - with the suggestion that by or at the beginning of the second Century, a Gospel may have existed that was written in Egypt and contained the narratives found in Mark and logia believed to have been gathered by Matthew in Aramaic. It has been thus mooted that the Greek Gospel ascribed to Matthew is a translation of this work, made by Matthew, or in the majority view, by some anonymous translator[s].

The '*Gospel of the Hebrews*', irrespective of auctorial provenance, is claimed by many scholars, including J.R.Edwards (2009), to have been widely known and revered in the Early Church; (Throckmorton. N/D).

Amongst a number of brief references in '*Eccles. Hist.*', Eusebius provides a reason for this popularity; 'And among them some have placed the Gospel according to the Hebrews which is the especial delight of those of the Hebrews who have accepted Christ'(ref.,Eusebius '*Eccles. Hist.*' 3.25.5).

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

(Unless specified as otherwise, citations herein are from Kirby's 'Early Christian Writings' eponymous website and in the Roberts and-Donaldson translations).

The Early Church Fathers present a united front regarding the assertion that Mathew wrote his Gospel in 'Hebrew'. This is the witness of Papias, in Eusebius (*H.E.*), Hegesippus (*'Memoirs'*) and Origen, who possessed a fragment as did others – and writers of more astute reputation; Epiphanius *'Panarion'* 30.3.7; Irenaeus *'Against Heresies'* 3.1.1; and Jerome who considered the copy he received to be an original work in 'Hebrew' written by Matthew (*ref.*, *'Against Pelagius'* 3.2.).

Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nazianzus, Epiphanius, John Chrysostom, and Augustine, with all the medieval commentators, were to aver that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew. Non-Christian evidence regarding this Gospel shows that this document was known to the Nazarene and Ebionite communities and to the Fathers of the Church, while this *'Gospel of the Hebrews'* was still apparently being circulated.

The patristic scholars uniformly refer to the document as authentic. However, the alleged Aramaic/Hebrew document has entirely disappeared, and the extant Gospel, (from which ecclesiastical writers borrow quotations as sourced from the Gospel of Matthew), is in Greek.

The *'Stichometry'* of Nicephorus, probably written before the 9th Century, includes in its *antilegomena* (a list of suspect/apocryphal books) the *'Gospel of the Hebrews'* claiming that it has 2,200 words (*cf.*, the 1st Gospel; 2,500 words).

According to Eusebius (*'H.E.'* 3.39.16), Papias had averred that Matthew collected («συνεταχτο»), - or, according to two manuscripts, composed, («συνεγραφατο»), «τα λογια» (the sayings, 'oracles' or maxims of Jesus) in the Hebrew language (or more accurately Syro-Chaldaic), and that each one, to cite the familiar phrase, 'translated them as best he could'.

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

The question immediately arises as to whether Papias refers to oral or written translations of Matthew, when he makes this observation. In addition there is the vexed question of whether the «λογία» of Matthew and the Gospel to which Early Fathers refer, were written in Hebrew or Aramaic.

In the time of Christ, the ‘national language’ of the Jews was Syro-Chaldaic usually referred to as ‘Aramaic’, - and when, in the New Testament, there is mention of the ‘Hebrew language’ («Ἑβραϊσ διαλεκτος»), it is generally considered to be this language that is implied.

It has been argued that, to be understood by his readers who spoke Aramaic, Matthew would have had to reproduce the original work in this language, and it is therefore unlikely that he would write in Hebrew, albeit a not dissimilar language, when it would have needed to be translated into Aramaic for general liturgical reading - a purpose for which it is averred by Early Church Fathers to have been used and for which it may have been designed.

Modern scholarship generally agrees that the ‘*Gospel according to the* [unidentified] *Ebionites*’ and the ‘*Gospel according to the Nazarenes*’ were both, in fact, probably with other lost ‘Gospels’ of similar provenance, *a posteriori* modifications of the authentic Matthean document. The latter, by the testimony of the Early Church Fathers was the primary written source utilized by the Church until Greek Christianity supplanted what began as one of numerous disparate manifestations of 1st Century Judaism.

The now generally-acknowledged fact of this variety of ‘Judaisms’ (*cf.*, Josephus) – means that this new iteration, centred on the near-incredible claim of an already-manifested Messiah, will have fought for ascendance with the numerous other messianic candidates evidenced even before 70 AD. Cameron(1982) provides a short list of brief citations from the apocryphal ‘*Gospel according to the Hebrews*’.

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These are gleaned from Cyril of Jerusalem *'Discourse on Mary Theotokos'*; Clement of Alexandria's *'Stromateus'* 2.9.45 and 5.14.96 (*ca.*, 190 AD).

That the lost work is not a 'first draft' of the 1st Gospel, is strongly indicated by Matthew's deft use of devices which are present in Hebrew literature but which only 'work' in Greek, in exactly the way that rhyming "fish" with "dish" will not produce a rhyme when translated into French as "*poisson*" and "*assiette*". A significant example of this difficulty is Greek *paranomasia* such as that used with subtle effect – lost, perforce to other languages including English, in Matthew 7.24-27. (*ref.*, Gundry (1964, p.136).

Clearly, no evincive evidence is to be found in the 1st Gospel to suggest that it is itself a translation, a datum that would be surprising in its complete absence (which even the best translated foreign technical manuals rarely achieve). Therefore if Jerome was not mistaken (*ref.*, *'Against Pelagius'* 3.2), it must be that the Gospel he saw was a translated copy – made by any scribe *au fait* with both languages, *ie* possibly, but not necessarily, Matthew himself. Either this, or in spite of the very evident stylistic and theological differences between the few surviving sentences from the *'Gospel according to the Hebrews'* and the canonical Gospel – and in spite of the former's Gnostic redolence – the apocryphal work might possibly be an early writing from the Apostle with no connection to his Gospel.

Should the position be maintained that the document was Matthew's Gospel in Syro-Chaldaic or Hebrew, this would require a revisiting of the arguments for Matthean priority – with Mark and Luke necessarily copying much of Matthew's Greek translation of his own (redacted) original opus.

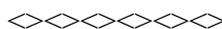
REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

The final point to be made regarding the Matthean authorship of the extra-canonical Gospel is the argument from illogicality. To posit a Hebrew or Syro-Chaldaic 1st Gospel begs the question of the compatibility of that assertion with the more surely-founded hypothesis of Markan priority- the evident fact of Matthew's (chosen) dependence on and frequent verbal agreement with the Second Gospel.

In other words, if Matthew 1st wrote in the language of his birth, at what point did he do so? Is it to be argued that he constructed his opus around Mark's Greek account, but was translating it (and perhaps the 'Q' «λογια») as he went?

His purpose would be evident, the making of the Gospel message accessible to Palestinian Jews who were not bilingual (or trilingual if Hebrew was in spoken use). However to produce a translated Gospel *before* constructing the extant Greek document seems somewhat absurd. Logic would dictate that the evident considerable verbal dependence upon Mark's account would require the redaction of the less elegant Markan Greek into the more well-crafted, more easily comprehended and sophisticated Greek of Matthew. Only then might the 1st Evangelist have a document which he could without difficulty translate into the Semitic language of his (now-irretrievable) choice.

In any event, the existence of the Hebrew Gospel, so uniformly attested-to by a significant portion of the Early Fathers, can be seen to have no perceptible effect on arguments concerning the dating of the 1st Gospel and therefore the likelihood that Matthew himself may be its author; certainly the data alluded to above does not place the probability of relatively early writing in any particular doubt.



REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR DATING THE 1st GOSPEL;

TWO: TRADITION AS MORE THAN ‘TRADITIONAL’

Language depends upon ‘theory of mind’. The 20th Century British philosopher Paul Grice pointed out that effective discourse requires that the speaker knows not only what is in the mind of the listener, but also that the listener knows that the speaker knows this. Much of conversation actually proceeds as a kind of shorthand, prompting a common stream of thought between speaker and listener (but) language is part of the mechanism by which we come to know and influence what is in the mind of others. What is alluded to here is ‘Tradition’ - a word referring to the act of delivering something intangible to another, such as the unwritten or oral delivery of knowledge or information, opinions, doctrines, practices, rites, and customs.

These are transmitted from father to son, from forefathers to descendants or from ancestors to posterity by oral communication, specifically without written information - but very often religio-culturally determinative and of considerable antiquity.

Biblical studies refer to this significant phenomenon as ‘Oral Tradition’ and it is the case that ‘tradition’ is a significant contributor to our Faith even though the word has accreted connotations of an almost pejorative nature, as though something to be distrusted or discounted. For noteworthy example, the «κερυγμα» itself, the backbone of the Christian body of knowledge was faithfully transmitted by the formal process noted below (pp. 41 and 61), referred to with considerable significance and asserted authority by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11.23.

This text is - to employ a legal term - ‘relied upon’ by many Churches as ‘The Words of Institution of the Lord’s Supper’; «Εγω γαρ παρελαβον απο του κυριου, ‘ο και παρεδωκα ‘υμιν, ‘οτι ‘ο κυριος Ιησους εν τη νυκτι ‘η παρειδοτο ελαβεν αρτον ».

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When it is acknowledged that ‘Tradition’ links each Gospel to its saint, this is a weighty assertion, given *gravitas* by History - and therefore a notion to be, if justified, countered as significant data, not merely dismissed out of hand. Thus, ‘Mark’ is ‘traditionally’ (*i.e.*, by the authority of Tradition) identified with the John Mark of Acts 12.12 and the ‘Mark’ of 1 Peter 5.13, mentioned *ca* 130 AD, by Papias, then Bishop of Hierapolis; similarly, Tradition identifies Matthew, the focus of this study, with «ὁ τελωνησ» of Matthew 9.9. Papias (cited by Eusebius, see below) is the 1st to attest to the author of the 1st Gospel being properly identified as the Tax Collector, asserting that Matthew was himself the 1st to gather together a collection of dominical sayings in Aramaic (Syro-Chaldaic) or Hebrew.

The corollary of this is that scriptural works of the non-epistolar kind –and specifically the synoptics – were constructed around Oral Tradition which itself had quickly become the blocks of material evident in those works- and treated with the respect afforded to the Hebrew Scriptures, and soon to the Talmuds and Midrashim.

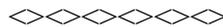
This suggests that, for example, 20 years of ‘cooking time’ would be more than adequate for the establishing of a ‘canonical’ Oral tradition – ready for the production of a written version as soon as one became necessary.

For much of the 19th century, scholarship was concentrated on finding possible common sources for the synoptic writers and consequently, theories of oral transmission went unexamined until the rise of textual criticism in the 20th century. The assumption of Form Criticism has been that it was impossible to preserve more than just short vignettes in memory. It may be averred at this point that copious fieldwork studies in anthropology have demolished this notion.

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A wide variety of cultures have been found to be able to preserve extended epics orally, some of these epics as long as 25 hours performed over several days. Compared to that, remembering the words of Jesus would be easy; the present writer has ‘performed’ both Mark and Matthew’s Gospels in less than two hours each– (without observing significant fidgeting or eye-glazing).

In the 1950’s, Bultmann suggested that central structures and narratives survive intact during oral transmission, arguing that a common oral source was indeed a possibility. Bultmann looked at orally-transmitted folklore as a basis to ascertain the validity of an orally-transmitted common gospel source. The scholar opined that an oral tradition would follow certain rules of structure that would encourage a consistency in phraseology while still allowing future additions to the material.



REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR DATING THE 1st GOSPEL;

THREE: LOOKING AT LUKE

The early pericopæ of the Third Gospel may assist in opening up the question of the majority scholarly view – that the Gospels post-date the letters of Paul by a considerable number of years. The introduction to Luke’s Gospel is often appealed to in relation to late dating of this time-specific account (*ref., e.g.,* Luke 1.1-5 and 3.1ff). So unusual amongst the Gospels is this meticulous historical contextualization, that Geisler maintains; “the key to dating of the Gospels is the book of Luke” (*ref.,* Geisler 1999, p.312). The text particularly adduced is Luke’s opening words to ‘Theophilus’; « Επειδημερ πολλοι επεχειρησαν αναταζασθαι διηγσιν περι των πεπληροφορημενων εν ‘ημιν πραγματωνμ καθως παρεδοσαν ‘ημιν οι απ αρχης αθοπται και ‘υτηρεεται γενομενοι του λογου...». The argument is that considerable time would have had to have passed to allow Luke to write of « (‘ο) πολλοι» who have «αναταζασθαι διησιν...πασιω ακριβως καθεζησ». However, the ‘many’ may be understood to have ‘arranged’, ‘set out’ or ‘composed’ « διηγησιν» (a ‘narrative,’ a leading-through’ or ‘history’) which was then «παρεδοσαν» from the root «παραδιδωμι» which Luke uses in the formal religious sense in 4.6 of God’s handing over of dispensational authority to Satan and «παντα» to Jesus in 10.22.

At least as a member of Paul’s entourage, Luke will have been familiar with the, again formal, significance of the Apostle’s usage of the verb in relation to the process of Oral Tradition, as is supremely exemplified in the often liturgically-invoked formula of the Institution of the Eucharist beginning at 1 Cor 11.23; «Εγω γαρ ρελαβον...παρεδιδοτο...».

This text may have a conscious near-paranomasia between the two verbs beginning with «παρεδ-» verbs, but it certainly has the status, as combined with «παρελαβον» , of the formula, as noted, for the transmission of Oral Tradition.

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The latter phrase is always used in the singular sense, but with the implication of the involvement of multiple agents. This formal usage, which is appropriate in Luke's first statement and perhaps significantly characterised by three «'απαχ λεγομινα» (*cf.*, «επεχειρησαν», «αναταζασθαι» and «διηγησιν »), allows for the assertion that the 'many' «πολλοι» 'passed on' «παρεδσαν» only one 'narrative' «διηγησιν» or tradition. This interpretation would give endorsement to the suggestion that no great passage of time need be inferred from Luke's words – a comment that is still apposite even if the reading posited here is rejected. Thus, this text may not bear much weight as an argument for dating, either late or early.

Other textual evidence often considered suggestive of a later provenance for the 3rd Gospel and Acts may inhere in Luke's salutations in both works to «Θεοφιλε» . Schoolboy Greek provides a simple translation of this name as a generic term, but the «κρατιστος» appellation indicates a person of rank in the Gospel, and one who has perhaps become a closer friend by the writing of Acts; (*cf.*, Luke 1.1 and Acts 1.1).

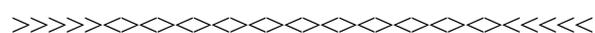
It has been mooted that, as an individual of such note as to be studiously acknowledged by Luke – himself of sufficient status and means to go on trips with Paul, « Θεοφιλυς» may be “a chief magistrate of some city in Greece or Asia Minor”, - perhaps of Luke's home town, Antioch (*cf.*, Eusebius p.67). This is posited on the grounds of Acts 22.26; 24.3; 26.35, where Felix and Festus are afforded what is likely to be a title used in their geographic areas of authority.

Germane to the question of dating of Luke (which may establish a location in time for the production of the other canonical Gospels, is that 'Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch' is the writer of Christian documents of which only '*Ad Autolytus*' survives, where are to be found the 1st mentions of the name “Christians” and the embryo of a Trinitarian doctrine.

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This apologetic letter is dated to *ca* 181 AD, thus creating a possible *terminus post quem* for Luke/Acts: (*ref.*, Thiel, 2008, *passim*).

Gibbs considers, on bases that include the Jewish literary tone of the 1st Gospel, that Mark and Matthew appear more closely attuned than do Mark and Luke – and also in theological terms, - and the scholar strongly doubts the argument that has been raised from time to time, known as the ‘Greisbach Hypothesis’, that Mark is a variety of synopsis of the 1st and Third accounts. This assessment Gibbs largely bases on the fact that such a harmonization would be very ‘light’ on Lukan material. Also this oft-cited *raison d’être* for the Second Gospel would greatly diminish the likelihood of Mark’s account surviving as part of the Canon. Given the observable overall submission of the 1st and Third Gospels to the authority of the Second, it is highly probable that Mark is the common source of the others’ material, and very unlikely that Matthew uses Luke. It is noteworthy that the fact that the 1st Gospel is a complex work is neither relevant to the questions of its temporal nor indeed its «θεοπνευστος» provenance. The assertions of J.A.T. Robinson *et al.*, - concerning the Gospel’s *Sitz im Leben* of the pressing need for written teachings after the 1st explosion of Faith chronicled in Acts 2.37-47, - would not preclude the production of this document in a matter of months. The evident caveat here would be that the use of a Markan manuscript by Matthew cannot, by the application of Ockham’s Razor, be dated to earlier than the promulgation of the 2nd Gospel, with the possible hypothetical exception of the ‘M’ material and the ‘Q’ logia, in oral or written form. Also Patristic evidence establishes the generally-accepted *terminus post quem* for the production of the 1st Gospel at the appearance of the early letter from Clement of Rome who has been noted as referring to three of the canonical the Gospels and the Pauline letters and thus becomes the earliest witness.



REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR A POST 70s DATING OF THE 1st GOSPEL;

ONE: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MAJOR ARGUMENTS FOR LATE DATING

The 1st impression the present writer obtained when commencing serious consideration of this matter, was the absence in the works of many critics of detailed, extended explication of this common view of late provenance for the Gospels. This datum seemed counter-intuitive to any Christian's 1st explorations of dating and authorship. It was as though it were a 'given' that none of the canonical Gospels *could* be afforded the assumption of authenticity of eyewitness accounts, despite the 'average' academic layman's rarely if ever encountering this late dating suggestion.

And the natural explanation for this lacuna is the, at least tacit, acknowledgment by the scholarly world of the serious challenge to most believers' Faith such theories would represent. Nonetheless an even cursory appraisal of the majority opinion of 20th Century Critics produces assertions such as the following. It has been noted that there are dangers inherent in basing one's spiritual life on books rather than a personal experience and relationship with God. This is exactly equivalent to a fan's obsession with a 'Celebrity' whom they only know through the fickle, sensation-driven media of television or equally titillating magazine gossip. This dedication is often to be replaced by abandonment of the fixation when circumstances – particularly a sudden fall from grace – allow a more nuanced view of the object of their 'worship.' Thus the somewhat cursory attention given to the matter of validating the effective assumption in the biblical-critical community of pseudonymous and presumably erroneously-inferred eyewitness authority of the Gospel accounts would seem surprising.

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And the most immediate explanation for this lack of emphatic evidence is the very longevity of this theory itself in the halls of academia, - as it were, another kind of ‘Messianic Secret’; or within that rarefied atmosphere that all too human phenomenon of the bowing before the societal pressures of “The Emperor’s New Clothes”: (*ref.*, H.C.Anderson. ‘*Fables*’; trans. H.V.Paull, 1872).

In no particular order of significance, some arguments for late-dating include the following; Jacquier (1911), in reference to Matthew (and *par* Luke’s) account of Jesus’ indictment of the Pharisees, moving into the lamentation of Matthew 23.29-39; writes; “he had heard of its fulfilment. He could hardly refer more unmistakably to the terrible scenes attending the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD, which Josephus so graphically describes (*‘Wars’* 5.12-6.9).

“It is idle in the presence of such a picture to say that Matthew does not show any knowledge of the fall of Jerusalem, and on the other hand it cannot have been very long after that event that he wrote so feelingly about the Holy City; «Ιερουσαλημ, Ιερουσαλημ...» ; (Matthew 23.37)”: *ref* Jacquier (1911). Moving beyond this passage of Scripture to 27.25, the astonishing (and surely apocryphal); «πας ὄλαος ειπεν’ το αιμα αθτου εφ ὑμας και επι τα τεκνα ἡμων»; Jacquier opines, “These words must have taken on an awful significance for a generation with the scenes attending the fall of Jerusalem fresh in their minds.

“Matthew records them for an age in sharp conflict with the synagogue, but he can hardly have dreamed of the long enduring bitterness against the Jews his words would engender” (*ref.*, Jacquier (1911) pp. 67-69).

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The academic pressure created by phraseology such as “It is idle...to say” and the psychological pressure of weighted expressions like “must have taken on an awful significance” exemplify an intrusion of polemic – still evident almost a Century later - into the convention of intellectual rigour assumed in regard to scholarly debate in any discipline, which ‘special pleading’ appears to specifically pervade, in biblical criticism, the advocacy of late dating for New Testament texts. This phenomenon appears to be owing, at least in part, to the *Zeitgeist* created by the previously noted turn of the 20th Century emergence in the rarefied atmosphere breathed by academic circles, of the new enthusiasm for scientific methodology - which had long existed in the arcane annals of history, but which gained general legitimacy, indeed became normative, to scholarly enquiry at that time.

The environment created, particularly, by Teutonic academics, clearly made non-sceptical views of the Scriptures as suddenly *démodé* as belief in fairies (*pace* Sir Arthur Conan-Doyle *et al*). This *volte-face* then, has flowed from the incursions of ‘Scientific Method’ into Theology which quite suddenly effected the dethroning of this discipline as the “Queen of the Sciences” which had been under siege since the European Enlightenment, especially in Germany where tertiary institutions were linked to specific denominations (as in North America where, for instance Harvard, Yale, Princeton and Boston Universities had had the training of Clergy as their primary purpose).

C.F. Gauss (1777-1855) had referred to Mathematics as the Pretender to Theology’s throne - and the Teutonic spirit chose to embrace the new rigorous discipline of the nascent ‘Scientific Method’ which seemed the pinnacle of rational enquiry, resulting in the intended-disinterested studies of the Church and its intellectual apparatus evident in the work of, for example, A. von Harnack (1908).

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It is reasonable to assert that this unbending rationalism presenting itself as objectivity, flowed from the 19th Century assertiveness of the German nation which led inexorably to the Great War and survived both global conflicts to influence European and North American Theology to this day. The absence in the 1st two Gospels of any *direct* suggestion of auctorial self-identification and of any manuscript evidence of the initial, immediate attribution to any of the Gospels of the ascriptions «κατα Μαθθαιον», «κατα Μαρκοω» etc, - these data have been engaged to support the majority view regarding Gospel dating of a later provenance, with a wide compass of years mooted.

As noted above, prior to the 19th Century, there was little serious questioning of the authorship and traditional dating of any of the four canonical Gospels. However, thereafter the seemingly eager attacks upon the Gospels' authenticity began with what seemed the most vulnerable Gospel, that ascribed to the former Tax Collector previously accepted as writing between 40 and 60 AD (and certainly before the national tragedy of 70 AD). But now a new set of voices was averring that the 1st Gospel was not written earlier than 85 AD, around the time when the Judaeo-Christians were considered by many scholars to have been forced out of the synagogues by Gamaliel's '*Birkath ha Minim*' and anti-heretical liturgical stratagem, involving the 12th of the 18 benedictions ('*shemonah esrah*'). Some scholars have mooted a date for the 1st Gospel as perhaps as late as 135 AD, (when Shimon Bar-Kokhba's revolt was crushed by Hadrian's armies and Jewish independence was lost along with Jerusalem, ploughed under and renamed 'Aelia Capitolina', closed to any Jew as a place to live - with Judea itself becoming 'Syria Palestina'). Clearly, late dating severs the link between the 1st Gospel and the Apostle Matthew - and such assertions thus compromised the credibility for so long enjoyed by Matthew's Gospel which had been, as noted, believed to be primitive, as reflected in the chronology-based ordering of the N.T. Canon.

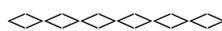
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(Nota bene; the designation of Matthew's account as '1st Gospel' herein, has no implication of a reassertion of Matthean priority).

Scholars endorsing the late dating of the 1st Gospel, often point to Matthew 21.33-26.6 as not so much about the events around 30 AD., but what was happening from the Church's perspective in 70-85 AD. "There is an element of truth in this. The Gospel was written in such a way that it was applicable to the people to whom he was writing. However application itself of truth does not by itself compromise the truth. We can't make too sharp a distinction between 'truth' and 'application' or 'truth' versus 'interpretation'.

"It is claimed that Matthew's ignorance of historical realities surrounding Jewish leaders in Jesus' day is nothing short of 'astonishing'": (L.Gaston, (1975) *The Messiah of Israel as teacher of the Gentiles* Int 29. 34; quoted by D.A. Carson, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew's Gospel: a Reappraisal*, JETS , (1976, p.161).

The Sadducees were no longer a force after 70AD. Knowledge of the doctrinal differences between Pharisees and Sadducees was allegedly fading 15 years later when Matthew was allegedly writing (assuming a date of 85 AD plus.), and Matthew therefore doesn't appreciate the doctrinal distinctions when he places them together (Matthew 3.7; 16.1,6,11,12). This, Carson (1976) avers, presupposes that we, living almost 1,900 years later, know more about "the doctrinally-nuanced differences than the author of Matthew writing 15 years after the destruction of the Temple. Matthew may place the Sadducees and Pharisees together to emphasis something beside their doctrinal agreement (sic)". Perhaps Matthew is emphasising their agreement in opposing Jesus (*cf.* Psalm 2 with Acts 4.21-31).



REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR A POST 70s DATING OF THE 1st GOSPEL;
TWO[a]. HISTORICAL ANACHRONISM.

A common argument for late dating of both Matthew and Luke is the claim that, *e.g.*, Daniel must answer, that apparently future-prophetic declarations are discernible as made after the events they describe. The Prophecies of Daniel purport to have their provenance in the 6th Century B.C., during the Babylonian Captivity. However, counter-intuitively, the descriptions of events and incidental detail from those times are inversely reliable to the more remote material which culminates in very accurate ‘prophecies’ of the events that befell Jerusalem in the Seleucid period, - specifically under Antiochus IV Epiphanes. It is from these latter pericopæ (Daniel 7.1- 12.13) that the Daniel 9.27 and 12.11, «‘απαχ λεγομινα» concept יִקְרָא יְהוָה מְשֻׁלָּם translated as «το βδελυγμα της ερημωσεως», variously rendered in English as “the abomination of desolation”(KJV), “the awful horror” (TEV), “the disgusting thing that causes desolation” (NWT), *etc.*, in Mark and Matthew at 13.14 and 24.15 respectively are sourced. Daniel, then, contains what are referred to as ‘*vaticinium ex eventu*’ - and a similar ‘charge’ of ‘prophecy after the event’ is levelled at the Synoptics. The word ‘charge’ appears thus because there is no deceptive intent to be necessarily found in such passages. Daniel originally found its niche amongst the ‘*Ketuvim*’ in the ‘*Tanakh*’, but migrated in the Greek versions of Theodosius and the Septuagint to the group of Classic and Minor Prophetic books where they still remain in the Christian-purposed translations. Thus, Daniel was written as an inspirational work, and correctly ‘filed’ with the poetic works; Psalms, Proverbs, Job, the ‘*Harnesh Megillot*’ of the Song, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther, in various orders (*e.g.*, b.Talmud *Bava Batra* 14 p. ff).

Thus neither the Daniel source nor the synoptic usages of it are intended to be *faux* prophecies, any more than is the much-abused ‘Revelation of John’.

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Mark 13.3ff, Matthew 24.3 ff and Luke 21.7 ff share the commonly sourced apocalyptic material, where numerous verbal agreements suggest Mark has been, as usual, employed by the 1st and Third Evangelists. However a notable difference between the Markan and Matthean iterations and that of Luke at the juncture of Mark 13.14 *par* Matthew 24.15 and Luke 21.20 leaves the latter writer with his picture of armies surrounding Jerusalem, which occurred, somewhat more vulnerable to ‘*vaticinium*’ adjudgments than the Markan and Matthean «το βδελυγμα της ερημωσης», which didn’t. Matthew, then, cannot be ‘charged’ with ‘*vaticinium ex eventu*’ pericopæ – not *e.g.*, at Matthew 10.17; «Προσεχετε δε απο των ανθρωπων παραδωσουσιν γαρ υμας εις συνεδρια, και εν ταις συναγωγαις αυτων μαστιγωσουσιν υμας». The expression «ταις συναγωγαις αυτων» is often pounced on as a ‘proof’ of post 80’s (ejection of Christians from the synagogues) writing. However this is a term of no pejorative significance in 4.23; 9.35; 12.9 and 13.34, which list of citations continues the simple non-adversarial meaning of ownership, after the often assumed-to-be schismatic implications of 10.17; «και εν ταις συναγωγαις αυτων μαστιγωσουσιν υμας» a somewhat arbitrary supposition which does not take account of the fact that no Jew could be flogged in the synagogue except as a *bona fide* and consenting member of that congregation. This word of warning from Jesus suggests that He had no expectations of the withdrawal of His followers from the synagogues, just an awareness of the intolerance of the local synagogues towards incursion of any points of view which even skirted heresy as the Pax Romana continued to expose even smaller towns to the challenges of multiculturalism. Thus the references in 10.16-18 to hostile reactions to the apostolic message can legitimately be considered proleptic on Jesus’ lips and in any event do not presuppose a situation beyond that reasonably predictable to the Matthean community in its missional efforts.

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There is no compelling reason to assume an eschatological tenor in these teachings, and there is no pressing reason to assume a retrospective cast, a feature that Matthew does not seem to evidence and a ‘waste of teaching’ if merely inserted to place a *faux* ‘prediction’ on Jesus’ lips. This would undermine the 1st Gospel as a source of present and future relevant instruction and reduce Mathew’s work to the status of a book of no more than historical interest, with no essential involvement of the divine presence.

Morris (1992, p. 253) asserts that the synagogues were meeting places not only for worship but for trials and the administration of justice. Acts 5.27- 40 provides evidence of the Apostles being whipped then let go at the urging of Gamaliel and «πασαν τε ἡμεραν εν τω ιερῳ και κατ οικον ουκ επαυοντο διδασκοντες και ευαγγελιζομενοι τον χριστου Ιησουν». If these experiences were happening to Christian evangelists at such an early stage , at the very least, there would be precedent for Matthew warning his catechumens through the lips of Jesus, - at best, Jesus Himself may well have experienced the lashing of apostates and heretics and had no difficulty projecting that into the near future for His original disciples. Thus there is here, again, no compelling reason to date the writing of the 1st Gospel late,- or thereby to tacitly accuse Matthew of aggrandizing Jesus by having him ‘do a Daniel’ and predict things that had already happened. The interpretations of Matthew’s intent in the texts cited, as reflecting a later *Sitz im Leben* for the writing of the 1st Gospel, require the reader’s assent to the notion that these pericopæ example Matthew’s response to his alleged experience of the serious rift between the Matthean ‘post-messianic advent’ Judaism and the mainline ‘pre-messianic advent’ majority view. This assertion of a later- interpolated ‘*vaticinium ex eventu*’ should be made with scholarly reluctance, as it sets the precedent for a dismissal of any and all future-prophetic declarations by Jesus, thus arbitrarily and effectively reducing tenable christology to, at best, Arianism.

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POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR A POST 70s DATING OF THE 1st GOSPEL;TWO[b]: TERMINOLOGICAL ANACHRONISM.

The argument from anachronistic terminology is often applied to the dating question: Jewish turn of the Century scholar with a rigorously apocalyptic understanding of Jesus' teaching, Friedlander, is understood by Murdock to cite the Matthean use of «Γεεννα», «Συναγωγή», «Συνεδριον» and «μαμμωνας», as terms to be considered anachronistic: (*ref.*, Friedlander, 2007, and Murdock, 2010, *passim*). However, «Γεεννα» is a word used twelve times in the New Testament to describe the fate of the wicked. The term is a particular favourite of Matthew who employs it six times, compared to Mark's sole usage of «Γε'εννα» in 9.42-48.

Matthew uses «της γεενναν του πυροσ» in 5.22, and 18.9; (*cf.*, Mark 9.43-47). Matthew 23.15 has «υιον γεεννης» and 23.33; «της κρισεως της γεεννης» (*cf.*, Luke 12.5 and James 3.6) and «συμφερει γαρ σοι 'ινα αποληται 'εν των μελων σου και μη 'ολον το σωμα σου εις γεεννα» in Matthew 5.29.

In New Testament times, the dominant concept is destruction (*cf.*, 2 Thessalonians 1.19; Philippians 1.28; 3.19; Hebrews 10.39 *et al.*) and this motif of immolation relates well to the image Jesus employed of the Jerusalem dump. Further, for the «γεεννα» image to be a construct of Jesus' own devising is not contradicted by any extant text, Hebrew or Christian.

There is no evident reason to consider that any further elapsed time is mandated beyond the 30's AD, and an early provenance for the 1st Gospel, for the development of the effective dominical «γεεννα» image to the point where it has become «της γεεννα» and redolent of the «το πυρ αιωνιον» concept.

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It is here suggested that Matthew's preference for «γεννα» reflects Jesus' own choice of 'hellish' image, as opposed to the Hellenistic «'αδης», which, if it is not a particularly weighty argument for apostolic authorship, is at least not one against it. «Συναγωγή» as adjudged an anachronous term is a notion that does not find support in the Scriptures. With its nearest Hebrew cognate 'יָצַד' in Psalm 74.8, its provenance is equivalent to that of «εκκλησια» («εκ» 'out of' «καλεο» 'called'); «συναγωγή» («συν» 'together', as in 'Synoptic' «αγω» 'bring'); *ref.*, Matthew 25.26; «συναγω 'οθεν ουδιεσκορπισα»]. This is significant because both terms began as words descriptive of gatherings of people *per se* before also being used to denote specific buildings. Scholar in Hebrew studies, R.D. Mock, asserts that Sabbath worshippers met together in congregations called «εκκλησιασ» worshipped in the «συναγωγαισ» or in the «'ειρον» in Jerusalem: (*ref.*, Mock (1993)).

It is also noted that «εκκλησια», treated with suspicion in the 1st Gospel when arguments of early dating are produced, (*ref.*, Matthew 16.18; 18.17) also appears in Acts, Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians *et al* - all of which date before 80 AD and possibly a decade earlier than that - and 1st Thessalonians 1.1, the 1st canonical writing to use the word «εκκλησια», is dated to *ca.*, 50 AD.

«Συνεδριον» is a name claimed by Murdock (2010) (following Friedlander) to have not been in common usage until the exigencies of the aftermath of the Jewish war forced this supreme council which had reached the zenith of its power and significance in the foregoing years, to relocate to Yavneh, then to Usha as the Empire-recognised 'Palestinian Patriarchate' in 80 AD.

After several other moves, it ended up at Tiberias in 193 AD where *ca.*, 270-290, it was to change its name to 'Beth Ha Midrash' as a response to persecution, and seeing its last meeting under Gamaliel VI in 425 AD, but already effectively disempowered in 358.

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However, the «συνεδριον» had been thus known since the security-conscious renaming of the Council of Elders in the 70's BC, and existed in two forms – the council of 23 sages that sat in every city – and the Great Sanhedrin which comprised of 71 men, in this iteration not restricted to the [presumed apolitical] learned.

The appearance of Hillel at the turn of the 1st Century B.C., marked the beginning of a near-dynastic headship of the Great Sanhedrin – that role being referred to as '*Nasi*', breaking the hold of the High Priests. Given this historical data, it is hard to see the Gospels' use of «συνεδριον» being temporally inauthentic.

'Mammon' is the familiar English translation of the Aramaic loan word from Hebrew, Hellenised as «μαμμωνας». As is indicated by the Aramaic Targum of the liturgical extension of the Jewish quintessential '*Shema*' (שׁוּמָא) of Deuteronomy 6.4-5, - the original Hebrew has a wider application than the now-common usage as a pejorative for 'money'.

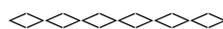
An accurate translation would be the neutral term 'strength' or 'might', so that 'mammon' could be a means of loving God – as also in 2 Kings 23.25; (*ref.*, Matthew 22.27 *par* Mark 12.30 *par* Luke 10.27). A modern equivalent would be the colloquial usages, "Some of my stuff" and "He has the right stuff" 'Mammon' is simply 'property', including but not limited to money, and in itself has no sinister connotations. Like the Beatitudes (esp. 5.8), this statement is a call for the unity of the person; see the vacillation expressed in 'doubt' «εδιστασας» in Matthew 14.31 and 28.17 [«εδιστασαν»] exemplifying "Matthew's *radical* dualistic understanding of discipleship that allows no middle ground (*ref.*, 12.30)" (*ref.*, Boring, 1998, p.210).

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Thus any claim of anachronistic usage of «μαμμωνας» must be based on an arbitrary assumption that ‘mammon’ as a deified personification, perhaps based on the Lukan equivalent dominical teaching involving the imagery of «οικετης», «κθριοις», «μισησει» and «αγαπησει», developed through the common historical phenomenon of popular belief following the visual imagery of Church Art.

Also, on a theological level, there is the evidence of the ‘*Didascalia*’ and the works of Gregory of Nyssa who considered ‘Mammon’ to be coterminous with ‘Beelzebub’; (*ref.*, Herbermann (1913, p.580). Arguments from anachronism are often raised in regard to the dating of the 1st Gospel but fail to convince especially in the light of Paul’s astonishingly developed christology, arising as it did more out of his constant sharing of the dominical tradition than a conscious attempt at a Systematic Theology.

It is here asserted that the Gospels do not provide support for any argument of titles being given to Jesus that were not in existence earlier than the turn of the 1st Century AD.



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POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR A POST 70s DATING OF THE 1st GOSPEL;THREE: 'REVERSE' ANACHRONISM,

A further aspect of the late-dating hypothesis for the 1st Gospel requires the cessation of daily life in Palestine as it had been in the 60's. For example, Matthew 12.16 (*cf.*, Mark 3.6) lacks mention of the Herodians, and adherents to the late dating view argue that this omission reflects a post-70 AD milieu. However it is also true to say that the Sadducees are often mentioned, despite being emphatically irrelevant beyond the destruction of the Temple.

Also, it is sometimes argued as evidence of an accommodation over time to Roman Rule – which certainly was a factor in the rapid spread of the Gospel; (*ref.*, von Harnack, 1908) - that Matthew exonerates the Roman authorities in the matter of the death sentence pronounced upon Jesus and the concomitant 'white-washing' of «'ο 'εγεμων» six times referred to thus, and five times named as «'ο Πιλατος » - in all but his introduction in Matthew 27.2, - in contexts of the assigning of blame or exoneration to Pilate (27.17, 22, 24), or the Chief Priests and Elders,(27.1,12,20) or even to Jesus' silence, (27.14).

This virtual exculpation of Pilate, is sweetened further by the parenthetical reference to his wife's (surely unwelcome?) intercession on behalf of this «δικαιω». Pilate is a proven villain, a man judged by history to be an execrable, ignoble autocrat. If this Matthean 'whitewashing' serves some good purpose in the mind of the writer then the motive for this attitude to Roman authority – a graciousness not ostensibly extended to Pilate's «σπειραν» (*ref.*, 27. 27-31) it cannot be based merely upon even a generation's worth of wound-healing time since the most impactful national nightmare for the Jewish people from that time until the Second World War's pogroms which resonate to this day – more than two generations later - in the psyche of Judaism and the constant stream of visitors, pilgrims, to the Los Angeles Centre named for (the actually now discredited), Wiesenthal.

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The present writer considers it likely that an inevitable and considerable degree of resentment for Roman soldiery would have resulted from the War and the desecration and near-destruction of the Second Temple. This was an instance of the common occurrence wherein both sides will have committed atrocities, (*pace* the revisionist accounts of Josephus, who, for example, explains the burning of the Second Temple as a variety of accident caused by the defenders; (*ref.*, Josephus ‘*War*’ 6.4.2.(p.236-66)).

So, were Matthew, (therefore pseudonymously-named) to be writing in the post-war years, he would have been ill-advised, given the Jewish cast of his Gospel, to write in neutral-to-positive terms of the occupying troops; *ref.*, *e.g.*, Matthew 5.41. And the «μῆλιον ἐν» requirement (*ref.*, Davies and Allison, 2004, p.84) - a Roman reference strategically very poorly placed immediately preceding a climactic point in the dominical discourse and omitted by Luke in the equivalent text from their exclusive common source; (*ref.*, Luke 6.27ff).

Similarly unwise would be the reference to «ὁ εκατονταρχος» in the immediate context of a reference to Moses, presented as «οὐκ ἵκανος» (*ref.*, Matthew 8.5ff) and even more ‘inappropriate’, the very significant intrusion of another Centurion into the sacred narrative of Jesus death : (*ref.*, Matthew 27.54; *cf.*, Luke 23.47; *ref.*, «κεντυριον», Mark 15.39 and *ref.*, Acts, *e.g.*, 27.42ff).

It is here suggested that such an attitude towards a senior Roman soldier would be as impossible to justify after the War and the horrors of 70 AD as would an accepting, indulgent approach to Quisling’s collaboration with the Nazis in the Norway of 1939. The revulsion and repressed anger would be hard to contain after the local tragedy of the loss of the little synagogue at Capernaum.

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A ‘Matthew’ who was writing *ca.*, 90 AD, would be pressing his finger in an old wound – and passing on a story that would have been dropped from the ‘Q’ oral sources after the devastation – and the new Diaspora.

However, if the 1st Gospel is written in the context of pre-cataclysmic Palestine, then the ‘luxury’ would still be available of internecine squabbles between the various ‘Judaisms’ of the early and mid-1st Century – including the ‘realized messianic’ iteration of Judaeo-Christianity.

It is noted that the Centurion at Golgotha is, in the 1st Gospel, accompanied by Roman guards – an atypical example of Matthew adding detail to the otherwise more dramatically-economical account. This would be due to the Evangelist’s personal experience of seeing Roman officers always accompanied by troops, anywhere in the occupied territories.

This is a detail that may well escape the Hellenistic Gospel writers, but not a Judaeo-Christian audience. This detail is not definitive of provenance in regard to its place in history - but while allowing pre- or post-70 AD dating, does most naturally suggest a Palestinian milieu, rather than, for example the less fraught *Mise-en-scène* of Pella, of Caesarea Maritima or Syrian Antioch.

There is a further datum that might seem ripe to be enlisted as an (anachronistic) indication of late dating – with the corollary of pseudepigraphal authorship - a ‘charge’ not generally levelled by the academic community at Mark , Luke or Paul - and of little moment if invoked regarding the Johannine writings as no significant arguments in relation to historicity depend on them.

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The matter in question is the use of the title ‘Jesus of Nazareth’ a liberal translation of «Ιησους του Ναζωραιου» in the Gospels (and Acts). The evidence for the acceptance until and into the 20th Century of the reference of any word like «Ναζωραιου» above as meaning ‘from Nazareth’ includes, for example, the pericope marginal heading in the ‘Thompson Chain Reference’ KJV of 1908 and the in-text superscript, ‘Jesus is rejected at Nazareth’ found in ‘Today’s English Version’(1992); the similar superscript in the (1970) ‘New English Bible’ *et al.*

The textual basis of this formerly-unchallenged assumption includes Matthew 2.23[b]; «‘οτι Ναζωραιος κληθησεται» in the context of Joseph moving to a «πολις λεγομενη Ναζαρεθ».

However there is no Hebrew Scriptural source for Matthew’s unmistakable but apparently fabricated proof-texting, although Davies and Allison (2004) note; “given the striking links between Matthean Christianity and Nazoraean Christianity as known through the Fathers, as well as the fact that Syrian Christians commonly called themselves ‘*Nasraya*’, it is quite possible that members of the Matthean community referred to themselves not as ‘Christians’ (a term missing from the 1st Gospel) but as ‘*Nazoraeans*’: certainly that would have given 2.23 an even greater impact: Jesus’ followers bear the name He bore”(ref., Davies and Allison (2004), p.34).

It is noteworthy that Paul’s letters are not susceptible to any arbitrary assignment to post-70 AD provenance for various close-to uncontested reasons including the general acceptance of the year of writing of 1st Thessalonians as 52 AD (ref., Brown 1997; ‘Introduction’ pp. 456-466) and the chronology that supports dating his execution to the mid-60’s; (ref., White, 2004, *passim*).

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Paul, from his special experience of the Risen Lord, shares with Matthew and John a deeply personal response to Jesus as more than the promised Messiah – and must have also shared with them the struggle to accommodate that personal experience – a quiet epiphany – with the bed-rock Jewish assertion of the existence of only one God of all that is, the God of Abraham, Isaiah and Jacob; (*cf.*,Exod 3.6 and Matthew 22.32).

Thus, by the end of each of their accounts, the Evangelists have essayed to habilitate two dominical titles handed down to them by Oral Tradition – the more contentious of which has been the assertion that horrified Judaism and been a major factor in its decrying of the nascent Church as ‘*Minim*’ alongside the Gnostic communities.

Given that the christological concepts and their designations as alluded to above can be demonstrated to have evolved – even passing the otherwise impermeable barrier of rigorous monotheism – it is relevant to consider whether the notion of divine sonship in the New Testament, - and in the present context, particularly for Matthew, - developed through the model of adoption, particularly as understood by the Hellenistic world.



REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR A POST 70s DATING OF THE 1st GOSPEL;FOUR: THE ‘DIDACHE’

The ‘*Didache*’ (‘D’) also referred to by what may be its earlier title; (*The Teaching of the 12 Apostles*), is a document often appealed to by scholars supportive of late dating for both works. von Harnack, in 1902, (pp. 319-368) placed the work at the change-point from individual ‘pockets’ of Judaeo-Christianity to the cohesion of the Church («εκκλησια»). The seminal German scholar dates the document on the basis of its utilization by Clement of Alexandria, suggestive of a *terminus ad quem* at 165 AD – and the assertion at his time of writing, that ‘D’ evidenced a dependence on ‘*Barnabas*’ and the ‘*Shepherd of Hermas*’. Neither of these is yet reliably dated but nonetheless providing a *terminus a quem* of ca., 135 AD.

von Harnack believes ‘D’ to be the product of a schismatic Gentile-Christian community, where Sabatier (1885) argues on firmer ground for a mid-1st Century provenance in Syria (*ref.*, Draper, 1996). The general trend is currently against a previous consensus that the ‘*Didache*’ evidences borrowings from the 1st Gospel - an argument based on text such as the following from the 1st chapter of ‘D’: “Now the words of this teaching are this: Bless those who curse you and pray for your enemies, and fast for those who are persecuting you. For what credit is it if you love those who love you? Do not the Gentiles do the same thing? But love those hating you, and you will not have an enemy. Keep yourself from fleshly and bodily cravings. If anyone hits you on the right cheek, turn the other one to him also. And you will be acting maturely. If someone should force you to go one mile, go with him two. If someone takes your coat, give him your shirt also. If anyone should take from you what is yours, do not demand that he give it back, for you cannot”.

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Certainly the material concerning Baptism and the Eucharist are not Matthew -sourced, and the text quoted above is introduced with “Now the words of this teaching are this” which the present writer posits may be a semi-formulaic preface, suggestive of Oral tradition, similar in import to Paul’s «Εγὼ γὰρ παρελάβον ἀποτοῦ κυρίου ὁ καὶ παρέδωκα ὑμῖν» of 1st Corinthians.

The short block of teaching which is ‘D’, does itself have elements found in Matthew 5 and Luke 6, so can therefore be asserted to be sourced from some collection of ‘Q’ material. A corollary of the newer hypothesis is that, as ‘D’ is also being considered as produced at the turn of the 1st Century, the 1st Gospel with which ‘D’ shares a number of characteristics, will be the more stridently urged as dating from a similar closely-defined time period, *i.e.*, *ca.*, 90-100 AD by scholars who endorse later dating.

However, in 2005 van de Sandt challenged the long-standing averral that ‘D’ cited either Matthew or a combination of the 1st and Third Gospels. His grounds are that “the internal logic of theological orientation and pastoral practices of the Didache runs decisively counter to what one finds within the received Gospels”; (*ref.*, van de Sandt, 2005, p. 63).

The scholar had come to the conviction that ‘D’ was not the product of cobbling together pre-existing documents, but rather a discrete entity. In consequence of his studies, he dates ‘D’ to the middle of the 1st Century as opposed to the commonly accepted date of composition as beyond the 80’s. van de Sandt notes the clear indications of the existence of an Oral tradition which brought together the teachings found in ‘D’. Such teachings are often referred to in oral terms, so that, for example, the novice in the somewhat monastic-styled community, is enjoined to honour “the one speaking to you the word of God” as opposed to ‘teaching’, ‘reading’ *etc.*; (*ref.*, ‘D’ 4.).

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Also the Hebrew Scriptures are cited in terms of things “said in the Torah” instead of ‘read’; (*ref.*, ‘D’ 14.). The novice is also given (written) instructions regarding the teachings he is hearing, as though ‘Lecture Notes’ (*e.g.*, 7).

This *modus operandi* of oral didactic requires a community milieu, as opposed to an individual-based learning process – which characteristic is confirmed by eschatological ‘D’ caveats to be “gathered together” (4 and 16.). Also the discipline of erring community members is discussed in terms of refraining to speak to or about the miscreant until he has repented; (15.3). Thus ‘D’ is the work of “a culture of high residual orality which nevertheless communicated significantly by means of literary creations” in the opinion of specialist scholar P.J. Achtemeier, writing in support of the contention that late Western antiquity was characterised by that oral approach to written as well as oral tradition communication of didactic material: (*ref.*, Achtemeier, 1990, pp. 3-27).

van de Sandt (2005) discovered from personal ‘experimentation’ that ‘D’ was easy to learn as a to-be-spoken narrative and could be successfully transmitted *via* that medium.

All these points find resonance in the 1st Gospel, where, for example, the groupings of threes, sevens, *etc.*, chiasmic structures large and small and other mnemonic aids are clearly evident. However, the differences between Matthew’s community and that which produced ‘D’, centre on the disciplining or ‘apprenticeship’ structuring of the latter and the lack of a stamp of auctorial individuality upon the material; a situation very different from that of Matthew’s community.

van de Sandt opines that the ‘D’ community did not have access to the Matthean community’s dominically-mandated procedures for dealing productively and community-cohesively with individuals, and presumably groups or factions: (*ref.*, *e.g.*, Draper, 1996).

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The ‘D’ community’s briefly stated disciplinary instructions are redolent of a Jewish provenance and evident a somewhat severe and paternalistic attitude reminiscent of many monastic rules, while the Matthean community seems to have inherited a way of approaching potentially divisive behaviours that has the firmness, graciousness and openness that Jesus displays in the Gospel accounts.

The vocative expression “my child” in ‘D’ strongly suggests a settled community that wished to instruct its young members in the manner found in the Hebrew Scriptures amongst the ‘Writings’. On the other hand, Matthew’s didactic and instructions are clearly for adults- and these adults are not described as having in their number handmaidens and slaves, as the ‘D’ community clearly does.

A further difference is that ‘D’ contains material that is inclusive of women and does not evidence the subordination of them. For the present writer Matthew seems less comfortable with women and nowhere teaches anything that is other than male-oriented, including his ‘conflict resolution’ material.

The mandated procedure begins with a one-to-one effort to resolve a contentious issue, (*ref.*, Matthew 18.15) which has the same aim as all the New Testament instruction concerning Church Discipline, «εαν σου ακουση, εκερδησας τον αδελφον σου» (*cf.*, *e.g.*, 2 Thessalonians 3.6-14 and 1 Corinthians 6.1-8); a private and contained explication of the grievance involving (the Jewish) two or three witnesses. These presumably agree that the matter is serious enough to warrant attention, then if necessary «ειπον τη εκκλησια » - which only refers to the local Christian community.

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There is no evincive evidence that the various communities involved themselves in each other's internal affairs – failure at the community level produces a further step which at 1st sight seems like an ejection of the miscreant redolent of the aforementioned monastic-style severity; «εαν δε και της εκκλησιας παρακουση εστω σοι ‘ωσπερ ‘ο ζθνικος και ‘ο τελωνησ» - but on mature reflection is an accurate evocation of the necessary interaction with the unrepentant person.

When Matthew chooses to write about ‘Gentiles’ and ‘Tax Collectors’ he does not speak in general terms, but rather how the Christian community he is fashioning is being taught to relate to «‘ο εθνικος και ‘ο τελωνησ» - which is an approach to people outside the community, aimed at bringing them into the community.

From the attitude to discipline of the ‘D’ community - which seems suited to an established Judaeo-Christian cohort looking to continue to thrive exactly as it is , but interfacing with its Gentile neighbours through a novitiate or a proselytic intake – and different in purpose from the New Testament general *modus operandi*. van de Sandt (2005) suggests that ‘D’ as both document and community do not evidence awareness of dominical teachings on discipline.

It is noted here that the so-called ‘Golden Rule’ found in Luke 6 (but not in the equivalent pericope in Matthew 5) appears in ‘D’ in the Hillel negative form “do not do” from the well-known ‘standing on one leg’ incident; (*ref.*, Babylonian Talmud. *Shabbat* 31[a]).

Therefore it is reasonable to aver that the dating of the ‘*Didache*’ may be prior to 70 AD, as championed herein for the 1st Gospel – and therefore also for the 2nd Gospel. The complete lack of reference to the fall of Jerusalem and the partial destruction of the Second Temple supports an early dating.

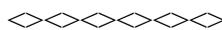
REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

That a Judaeo-Christian community with no precedent set in extant texts by the eschewing of mention of the tragic events and results of the Jewish War, should choose to avoid all mention of this extended national and spiritual trauma beggars belief.

Therefore the two communities, not at all necessarily remote from each other in time, may be seen as providing two separate developments of Christian community life and outreach. And of interest is that both communities have been introduced to the Trinitarian formula - (for the 'D' community used in its baptismal rites, (*ref.*, '*Didache*' 7 and the similar context in Matthew 28.19); they both have similarly-shaped Lord's Prayers, (*ref.*, '*Didache*' 8 and Matthew 6.5-13). Also both evidence having received itinerant apostles and prophets, some authentic and some not so; (*ref.*, '*Didache*' 11-13 where the matter of such visitors is handled in considerable detail but briefly mentioned in Matthew 7.15-23 and 24.11 and 24).

The 'D' community has liturgical rubrics and formulae, indicating an established sacramental system not evident in the 1st Gospel. Similarly 'D' gives instructions regarding Bishops and Deacons. Thus the community at least partly ordered by the '*Didache*' appears, as noted above, to be focused on community cohesion and personal discipline and piety, with a liturgical emphasis. In contrast Matthew's community seems focused on transmitting and inculcating the dominically-mandated 'lifestyle' with an emphasis on missional activity.

The noted lack of mention – to a mainly Jewish-provenanced community like Matthew's – of 70 AD, alone precludes a late dating for the '*Didache*' and therefore that brief document cannot be appealed to as an indicator of late, therefore non-apostolic, provenance for the 1st Gospel.



REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR A POST 70s DATING OF THE 1st GOSPEL;

FIVE[a]: JEWISH – CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS CONSIDERED AS ENDED:

THE ‘BIRKATH HA MINIM’.

Schnackenburg, to invoke a recent New Testament scholar, writing in 2002, (*ref.*, Schnackenburg. pp 1, 6,7) typifies the aforementioned majority view that the 1st Gospel was written after the destruction of Jerusalem, - the ‘Mecca’ of Judaism - and the fall of the 2nd Second Temple – the figurative dwelling place of God.

Schnackenburg presents the assertion that the 1st Gospel was composed after 70 AD, citing as material supportive of his interpretation, the following texts as indicating that the schism with Judaism had already occurred: Matthew 10.17; 23.34 and 27.25. - and opining, “The tension with these circles (*ie, those led by the Pharisaic Scribes*) who now lived according to strict interpretation of the law, is discernible”.

The scholar also avers “the self-awareness of the Church as the ‘people of God’ has been reinforced” by the time Matthew writes, citing 21.43; “Accordingly, the composition of this work is to be dated around 85-90 AD”. On the other hand, Schnackenburg acknowledges that no textual evidence points to a crisis situation regarding the undoubted but more probably gradual schism. Further, he cannot find evidence of the depletion of the ranks of the Christian communities by ‘backsliding’.

Schnackenburg (2002) notes, intriguingly, “That (Matthew’s) community continued to participate in the life of the synagogue is beyond question.”

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This would seem to raise further doubt regarding the comparatively late dating-range, given the historically-evident fact of the Judaeo-Christians' effective and quite deliberate exclusion from synagogue attendance, or discovery if they attended incognito; by the insertion into the liturgy of benediction, the '*Shemoneh Esreh*' (ca. 84 AD), of the anathema against 'the Nazarenes' (or '*Nazoreans*') and the *Minim*'; the '*Birkath ha Minim*' as the twelfth 'benediction': - "For the apostates let there be no hope. And let arrogant government be speedily uprooted in our day. Let the *Nosrim* and the *Minim* be destroyed in a moment. And let them be blotted out of the Book of Life and not be inscribed together with the righteous. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who humblest the arrogant";(*ref.*, Mietziner (1906).

The Talmud was to state clearly "Whenever someone made a mistake in any benediction" (any member of the community could be called upon to officiate in public worship) "he was allowed to continue, but if it had to do with the benediction of the *Minim*, he was called back to his place because supposedly he was a '*Min*' (*ref.*, 2002, p.236).

For the present purposes, despite the probable fact that '*ha Minim*' was not an epithet coined in specific regard to the nascent Church, the terms "*Nosrim/Nazoreans/Nazarenes*" and the '*Minim*' may be treated as referring to the same targets, as confirmed by the finding of the asserted-original Palestinian text in a fragment from the Genizah found at the ben Ezra synagogue, Fustat).

This pointed malediction was placed immediately after the daily synagogue benedictions which are preludal in the liturgy, at the suggestion of R.Gamaliel the Second - and was formulated by Samuel the Small, with the clause it is suggested may be intended to imply that the 'Nazarenes' were setting up an 'alternate' Empire).

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

On the other hand Friedlander (2007, p.34) proposes that the Judaeo-Christians broke away from Judaism in reaction to the intensified ‘heat’ created by 70 AD, and withdrew *en masse* to Pella at that time, as opposed to being forced out of the synagogue by the *Birkath ha Minim* (*ref.*, pp.106,165) which, as noted, some scholars aver was targeted wider than the nascent Church and more concerned about the resurgence of Gnosticism which was probably encouraged by the new realized eschatology of the follower of the “new and living way” (*cf.*, Hebrews 10.20; Acts 9.2; Eusebius ‘*H.E.*’ 35).

In any event, Kilpatrick avers that the appearance of the ‘*Birkath ha Minim*’ in the synagogue liturgy will not have been a spur-of-the-moment device, but rather it will have been the culmination of gathering negative experiences of the new eschatologically-focused group and of their sober assertions concerning the shamed and discarded Jesus: (*ref.*, Kilpatrick, 1950, pp.101-23).



REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR A POST 70s DATING OF THE 1st GOSPEL;

FIVE[b]: JEWISH – CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS CONSIDERED AS ENDED:

HARSH CRITICISM OF THE PHARISEES

Some scholars, including the present writer's 1970's tutor, Dr. James Gibbs, assert that the Pharisaic focus of Matthew 23.13 *ff*, indicates a post-70 AD provenance for the 1st Gospel, as the Pharisees are generally acknowledged as dominating Judaism thereafter. However the diatribe against this group is inextricably entwined with Temple cultic references (*cf.*, *e.g.*, 23.16, 18, 23) and refers to practices that represent a purposeless anachronism if held to be writer after the mid-60's, (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Matthew 23.29). Also it is not certain at what point the Pharisaic dominance of post-70 AD. Diaspora occurred; although the Sadducees lost their privileged position immediately because of the sack and partial dismantling of the Second Temple. It defies logic that other iterations of Judaism which were not cultic-based should spontaneously vanish or be absorbed into the previously numerically-restricted 'club' whose strict rules of entry are not likely to have been relaxed after their expulsion from Jerusalem, quite the reverse in fact.

The Mishnah records the 'flavour' of Pharisaism in its survival-ensuring adaptability as a pietistic fraternal society, a political party, a scholarly enclave and a potentially cohesive social force - as it was *before* the fall of the Temple. What is evidenced for that final Second Temple-centred period is a clear attempt to reproduce the cultic practices of Second Temple life.

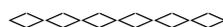
No doubt this was informed by the «Διασπορά» accommodation to the geographic remoteness of the holiest of holy places'.

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

Just as the retention of the (cold) ‘British way of life’ survived in (hot) Australia into the latter part of the 20th Century, so the distinctives of Second Temple-focused life and cultus, - begun in the signature Jewish cohesive characteristic still evident in Judaism these many centuries on - had simply continued in the exigency of deportation to the ‘strange land’ of the Diaspora and was to be brought back in its adaptations - exemplified by the synagogues - to the Holy City. Sociologically typical of such ‘scatterings’, the Judaism that developed away from Palestine became ‘more Jewish than the Jews’ (as the expatriate version of British society became ‘more English than the English’ throughout the British Empire). A prime example of this heightened sensitivity to Jewish distinctives is found in the Sabbath observance dispute of Matthew 12.1-8 (*ref.*, 12.1ff; Mark 2.23 *ff*; Luke 6.1 *ff*).

Thus the Pharisaic program that grew from the return from the 70 years of Babylonian Exile which had begun in 597 BC, was characterised by a Second Temple-cultic piety that imposed, for instance, the Second Temple’s purity laws including dietary restrictions, upon the home life of the people, essaying to produce the ‘Kingdom of Priests and a holy nation’ mandated in Exodus 19.

These foci are evidenced in the 1st Gospel and can face criticism as unnecessarily anachronistic if Matthew, in common with all the N.T. writers, is studiously ignoring the ‘elephant in the room’ of 70 AD, while emphasizing through *faux* dominical didactic, the Temple-centred allusions of 5.55 *et al.*



REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR A POST 70s DATING OF THE 1st GOSPEL;SIX: TEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS.

In support of this generally-accepted post-70 AD dating of the 1st Gospel, Harrington (2007, *ref* p.8) represents the majority view when this Jesuit scholar asserts that there seems to be within the Gospel itself, “a few” references to the destruction of Jerusalem. He cites the text most often invoked in support of later dating, *viz* Matthew 22 1-ten (and v.11-14). The focus is on the detail, «*ὁ δε Βασιλευς ωριασθη, και πεμψας τα στρατευματα αυτου απωλεσταν τους Φονεις εκεινους και την πολιν αυτων ενεπρησεν*», the specifically relevant phrase here italicised; 22.1*ff*.

Two Matthean texts often invoked as part of the evidence relied upon for a quite late dating, are 27.8 and 28.15 where the similar adverbial phrases «*εως της σημερον*» and «*μεχρι της σημερον*» are used.

The assertion is often made that the phrase ‘to this day’ indicates that the writer is talking about a significant length of time, not shortly after the resurrection as some have attempted to place the composition and emergence of this Gospel. In fact we do not have any mention in the historical record of the story of Christ’s body being stolen having been spread among the Jews until the second Century.

“It is possible that this particular verse was not added until that time, which means that it is not original to the Gospel and that Matthew certainly is not its author. Also, Luke’s Gospel discusses an apparent myriad of preceding Gospels «*παρεδοσαν ἡμῶ οἱ ἀπ ἀρχῆς αὐτοπται και ὑπηρεται γενομενοι του λογοω*».

The phrase «*ἀπ ἀρχῆς*» likewise implies a passage of time, as does the fact that there were «*πολλοι*» who preceded Luke in writing Gospels”; (*ref.*, Murdock 2010) .

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

It is noted that the preceding quote examples the ‘special pleading’ approach that often typifies these debates –on both sides of the fence. Biblical Academia may not appeal to a ‘scientific’ methodological objectivity (in reality, rarely achieved in any intellectual exercise involving evaluative aspects) when quasi-polemical devices are employed. A case in point is the sentence above that begins with the innocuous, “it is possible that...” and concludes a few words later with “...Matthew is certainly not the author.”

Also failing to lend support to late dating based on alleged anachronistic christology is Matthew’s narrative detail of the crowd at the ‘Entry into Jerusalem’ «ουτος εστιω ‘ο προφητης Ιησους ‘ο απο Ναζαρεθ της Γαλιλαιας» does not indicate the use of a title, rather a limited understanding of who Jesus is: (*cf.*, Matthew 21.1-11).

In regard to the use of the dominical title «Ιησους ‘ο Ναζωραιος», Matthew’s Gospel does not employ the descriptive except on the lips of a scoffer in the negative context of Peter’s Denial (Matthew 26.71). John displays a comparable seeming-ambiguity about the title, using it twice in negative contexts - on the lips of Jesus’ captors and of Peter’s tormentors, and once again in the similarly derisive context of the superscription on the Cross.

From this (albeit not extensive) textual evidence it may tentatively be hypothesized that Jesus’ original band of disciples did not think of Jesus in terms of ‘Jesus of Nazareth’ – nor as ‘Jesus the Nazarene’, and that this does not *per se* lend support to a late, therefore not eyewitness, writing of the 1st Gospel – nor have import to sceptical critical considerations of the 4th Gospel’s authorship.

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

Note; The Babylonian Talmud records the Rabbinical interpretation of this modest and vulnerable entry of the Messianic claimant into the life of God's Chosen People and His Second Temple in these words, "If Israel was worthy, the Messiah would come on the clouds of Heaven, if they were not worthy, - lowly and riding on an ass". The soteriological appositeness of this Rabbinical word to Jesus' role in God's plan of redemption is exquisite.

Mark moves beyond the 'End Times' discourse with «Hν δε το πασχα και τα αζυμα μετα δυο ημερας. Και εζητουν οι αρχιεπεις και οι γραμματεις πως αυτον εν δολω κρατησαντες αποκτεινωσιν» (Mark 14.1). This segue back into the story of Holy Week would be unremarkable were it not for the Matthean version of the device, «Και εγενετο οτε ετελεσεν ο Ιησους παντας τους λογους τουτους ειμεν τοις μαθηταις αυτου, οιδατε οτι μετα δυο ημερας το πασχα γινεται και ο υιος του ανθρωπου παραδιδοται εις το σταυρωθηναι. Τότε συνηχθησαν οι αρχιερεις και οι πρεσβυτεροι του λαου εις την αυλην του αρχιερεως του λεγομενου Καιαφα» (26.1 ff).

This opening material (Matthew 26.1-5), a significant pivot-point in this Gospel, precedes yet another introductory phrase «Του δε Ιησου γενομενου εω Πηθανια εω οικια Σιμωνος του λεπρου», which authentically sets the scene for the woman with the alabaster jar. And in that theatrical metaphor, it is here asserted, is the *raison d'être* for the 1st six verses of Chapter 20. The preamble in vs. 6 is usefully linked to the narrative that is to follow and, as such a device is intended to do in dramaturgic terms, the audience's attention is captured by the passing reference to Jesus being in the house of a presumably familiar character, «Σιμωνος του λεπρου».

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

Mark's primitive use of this material, including therefore the double introductory device, only redacted by Matthew for reasons of plot advancement and character focus, (ie, not on but Jesus and the woman) (*cf.*, Mark 14.3 (a); *cf.*, Matthew 26.6) strongly suggests that the Second Evangelist, like the 1st, feels the need for what in culinary terms would be a 'sorbet'; a cleansing of the mental palate after the here asserted unfamiliar 'taste' of the Apocalyptic Oral Tradition that Mark has received.

Luke eschews entirely the «βδελυγμα της ερημωσης» of Mark 13.14 *par* Matthew 24.15, in favour of a reference to armies surrounding the city, a far less arcane prognostication which nonetheless invokes the spirit of the 'abomination' prophesy by employing the significant «η ερημωσις»; (Luke 21.20; *cf.*, Mark 13.14 and Matthew 24.15).

Often invoked in relation to the assertion of late dating, is the argument that Mark, - generally regarded as primitive to the other Gospels, - has no Birth and Infancy Narratives such as appear in Matthew and Luke (and are supplanted by the «λογος» poetic explication in the 4th Gospel). The implication is that the supernatural aspects of both Matthean and Lukan prologues indicate a developed Christology not deemed authentically attributable to early views of the nature of Jesus.

As with the opposing appeal to the high Christology of Paul, universally accepted as including the earliest extant Christian didactic, this writer suggests that the difference between Matthew's attitude to a supernatural Infancy Narrative and that of Mark, may reside in the differences of their personal provenance; Matthew evidencing a Palestinian background, where Mark's provenance is clearly Hellenistic.

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

Thus it may be argued that Mark would have been familiar with the existence of virgin birth stories regarding such revered personages as Plato, Pythagoras and Alexander the Great. Hellenist-provenanced Mark may therefore have eschewed the Oral Tradition that will have been behind both the 1st and Third divergent accounts on the reasonable grounds that any miraculous birth mythos would effectively diminish Jesus' status to parity with the aforementioned notables.

It may be for Adoptionist reasons that Mark does not use of any of the Infancy Narratives that doubtless became attached to the «κερυγμα», or it may be precisely that Hellenist Mark was all too aware of a plethora of miraculous births that surrounded Greco-Roman stories of heroes and Gods and did not want to subject the Lord Jesus to the diminishment of popular Myth.

Luke, although evidencing a Græco-Roman cultural expression of Judaism, would appear to have access to a tradition with a cultic-focused Infancy Narrative and elects to invoke it – a datum supportive of a pre-catastrophic dating for the Third Gospel, otherwise an insensitive reference to the lost Second Temple, as atypical of the character of Luke revealed in his letters as it would be for Matthew. The latter Evangelist would not necessarily harbour any considerable Hellenistic cultural sensitivities, as a Palestinian Jew evidently steeped in proto-Rabbinical knowledge and hermeneutic methodology.

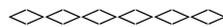
«Εως της σημερον» usually rendered as “to this day” is appealed to on the grounds of scholars' inference that the phrase(s) refer to a notable passage of time, equivalent to the execrable current *patois* - “back in the day”. This comparison is apposite, as it is a contemporary example of the uncertainty of any quantification of the phrase.

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

“Back in the day”, is a phrase used in as wide a spectrum of contexts as, for instance, the 1920’s – but may also be legitimately employed when asking a person of the previous generation about circumstances obtaining ‘in their day’ and thus referring to perhaps 20 years previously.

Matthew’s usage of the phrase is the most legitimate place to seek its meaning for him. Firstly we may aver that the words «εως της σημερον» cannot simply be taken to be interchangeable with “in these times”, as the New Testament offers no examples of a Greek equivalent – the nearest temporal, but not epochal-descriptive references are found in Paul’s letters; (*ref.*, *e.g.*, Romans 11.8 «εως της σημερον / ημερας». *Cf.*, also Galatians 1.13.23; Ephesians 2.2 *et al.* where «ποτε» is used).

Thus, in the absence of evidence that other uses of the phrase may have provided, «εως της σημερον», may not seem to be conclusive, or strongly indicative of either opposing view of the dating of the 1st Gospel. However the specific *Sitz im Leben* of Matthew’s use of the above phrase does suggest a pre-70 AD composition for the 1st Gospel.



REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR A POST 70s DATING OF THE 1st GOSPEL;SEVEN: THE MOST ‘POPULAR’ ARGUMENT FOR THE DATING OF THE 1st GOSPEL BEYOND THE JEWISH WAR AND THE FALL OF THE TEMPLE

The matter of the writing of the Gospels as happening before or after the personally and nationally traumatic cataclysmic event of the fall of the Second Temple, is a most crucial issue regarding dating. Indeed, the most frequently encountered observation, treated as though *prima facie* evidence for the defence of late dating is the argument from Matthew 22.2ff.

This 1st pericope of the chapter takes the form of a parable, as indicated by the use, in verse 2, of «ὡμοιωπθη»; (*ref.*, Matthew 13.24(b); *ref.*, 13.31 «ὁμοια εστιω»; *par* Mark 4.30 «ὁμοιωσωμεω»; *par* Luke 13.18 «ὁμοια εστιω» and Matthew 13.33 «ὁμοια εστιω» *par* Luke 13.20 «ὁμοιωσω».

A commonly rehearsed fallacy is inherent in statements like the following from Bredin; (*ref.*, Brenner, 1996, p.99); “a similar parable is also found in Luke 14.16-24. However Matthew adds; «δε βασιλευς ωργισθη, και πεμψας τα στρατευματα αυτου απωλεσεν τους φονεις εκεινους και την πολιν αυτων ενεπρησεν» (22.7). This verse intimates that the destruction was real and painful to some of the Matthean community living in Jerusalem. This would argue a strong awareness of the volatile Palestinian setting on the part of the community”. While the latter argument holds true for any time in the 60’s, the prior assertion verges on bathos for any person dwelling in the ‘burned city’. (*ref.*, Spilsbury (2002).

The assumption by some scholars that ‘some of the Matthean community living in Jerusalem’ were thus living in such an inhospitable burned-out city is counter-intuitive.

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

Most significant of all, and the datum most frequently relied upon to ‘indicate’ late dating, involves the common association of Matthew 22.1-14 with Luke 14.15-24, found not only in most Commentaries, but also given the *imprimatur* of footnotes in most Bibles that contain them, which is here asserted to be somewhat misleading.

The most cursory comparison of the two texts, while suggesting a similar or identical provenance in Q, also reveals that only the setting of the parable, the identity of its protagonist and the fact of unwise refusal of the King’s invitation link these pericopæ. Matthew’s version is drenched in blood and related to invited guests from another city, whereas Luke’s King is far less implacably volatile and the objects of his ire are ‘locals’. Luke also omits the ‘Part Two’ of Matthew 22.11-13, which provides a very anticlimactic conclusion to Matthew’s torrid tale. All this suggests that Matthew has merely made the story more vivid and arresting by interpolating the reprisals imagery discussed below, and added a caveat to the Lukan version which requires no worthiness whatsoever for the newly-invited. This is a didactic weakness in the 3rd Evangelists’ use of the ‘Q’ material that Matthew would have detected and overcome by his verses 11 to 14. The Parable of the Wedding Feast for the King’s Son, then, varies in context, content and didactic purpose from the Lukan equivalent,(14.15-24) and therefore cannot be compared with it to establish a Matthean interpolation into an essentially ‘identical’ narrative, of the critical phrase, which is «την πολις αυτων ενεπρησεν».

This theatrical detail in a dramatic parable is, as noted above, appealed to as *prima facie* evidence of the post-70 AD provenance of the 1st Gospel, despite the distancing detail of the description ; «την πολις αυτων».

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

For Matthew to make an element of his parable that obfuscating detail which makes questionable the identity of the Kingdom ruled by the protagonist, would be atypical of a teacher/pastor wishing to provide any adequate acknowledgement, however cursory, of the unspeakable horrors of the failed war. Were it an embellishment on the part of Matthew of a received story, it *could* be asserted that the destruction of the foreign city may be an oblique reference to the razing of Jerusalem. Even then, the image would not be as effective as some allusion to the destruction of the Temple. Moreover, the city survived the Josephus-alleged-as-accidental burning of the Temple and subsequent Roman reprisals, to the extent that 60 years later there was huge loss of life on both sides while the Romans breached the city walls to take back Jerusalem after the successful *Bar Kochba* Revolt and occupation of the city.

The fact that no other version of this parable exists diminishes the force of this already tenuous argument, as also do other factors in the pericope, including its structure and its multiple didactic purposes; (*ref.*, Matthew 22.2–14 below).

Apart from any other consideration of this passage there is this latter question of its intended purpose.

Contrary to the dictum of Jeremias that Narrative parables typically have only one point, (*contra* ‘The Sower’, Matthew 13.1-9; 13-20 and parallels), there are already more than sufficient lessons (*ref.*, 22.7,10[a], 10[b], 13 and 14) to be learned from the three parabolic teachings juxtaposed in 22.2 – 14, *ie*, Matthew 22.2-7; 8-10 and 11-13 - plus a ‘detached saying’ with yet another lesson in v.14.

For there to be in this already multi-focused pericope, any conscious Matthean allusion to the events of 70 AD would be a very questionable variety of «ἀπαχ λεγομενον» in the whole text of the New Testament.

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

Moreover, as alluded to above, it would be quite atypical of the writer in his oft-demonstrated skill as a teacher, for Matthew to make passing reference to the New Testament's only virtual dishonesty-by-omission, if all but some writings of Paul are asserted to postdate the Fall of Jerusalem, the burning of the Holiest of Holies, - the ending of lives, cherished identity and hope. Josephus attests to 97,000 people taken captive and 1,100,000 killed during the siege, indicating that huge numbers of Passover pilgrims were (predictably) in the city as Titus attacked, leading his seasoned warriors against disorganised masses of 'tourist' families.

Thus the alleged allusion to the massively traumatic experience of the holocaust which was 67 to 70 AD suggests execrable (mis)communication - as an inessential detail in a story illustrative as, severally, are others, of the grave and historically common inadequacies of the priorities of the Chosen nation that are behind the refusal of God's new and gracious offer in Christ, (Matthew 22.2-6) and Jesus' oft-repeated caveat concerning such failure (20.7-8).

The text continues without pause - and therefore with a very 'un-Matthean' lack of any pastoral reference to this alleged 1st allusion to the fall of the Temple *et al*, - into an illustration of Jesus' confronting assertions - in Matthew 21.31, (*par* Luke 3.8) and Matthew 3.9-10 *esp.* 10 [b] - of the lesson of Amos 5.18-20 and 21-24.

Then there follows an excursion into the individual's responsibility of proper response to God's gracious invitation and His righteous judgment of each individual's choices (11-13) concluding with a dominical teaching that does not truly encapsulate the foregoing text, but adds a further dimension of the reminder of God's right to judge, to the self-inculpation implicit in the individual's misuse of their God-gifted freedom of choice.

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

No teacher makes a passing allusion to a very significant event, then moves on to other material, - the casual allegation is absurd. It would be strange indeed for Matthew, this most dyed-in-the-wool Jewish believer in Jesus' authentic messiahship to evince no more trauma, grief and disbelief over the horrors of, at the very least the fall of Jerusalem into Roman hands and the razing of Herod's Temple than any of the other Gospel writers – of whom only John may have been the Palestinian former-Jewish source or the author himself of the 4th Gospel. This latter work bears unmistakable signs of a developed theology and Christology – and would reasonably be expected to display an acclimation to the deep wound to his (Palestinian-nurtured) faith as he focused his writing on the implications and the explication of his experience of Jesus, the Christ.

Such a visceral attachment to the Temple would not be expected of Paul, - another seminal theologian and Christologist – who came on his 'Crusade' from nearly 600 miles away in Tarsus.

The passage in question, Matthew 22.1ff, speaks of the manner in which worldly concerns so easily deafen God's chosen people to His invitations in vv.2-19; and vv.11-13 expect that each one will show their humble appreciation of the honour offered to them; in each case they are warned of the reality of God's righteous judgment.

Further diffusing the hortatory and didactic thrust is the somewhat bathetic non sequitur of «Πολλοὶ γὰρ ἐθσιῶ κλητοὶ, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοὶ» which would more appositely state “but few chose to respond”. The attachment of the latter short saying (Matthew 22.14) to the ('second') parable, similarly to the placing of the 'detached' «λογία» of Matthew 20.14 and 25.13 to 20.1 and 25.1 respectively, is clear evidence of third-party redaction.

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

As a teacher by former profession, this writer could imagine being quite affronted at any suggestion of such an elementary error in educational technique, and thus he protests on Matthew's behalf that neither the author nor the Lord Himself would have crafted 22.1-14 as it appears. Also it may be again asserted that the clear signs of redaction in all four canonical Gospel accounts is not *ipso facto* evidence in either direction for the auctorial provenance of the available text, and may be considered a 'necessary evil, except where the adjustment reflects an extrinsic theological position.

No passage in the 1st Gospel could be less suited to being the vector of the sole dominical prophecy of the fate of Jerusalem than Matthew 22.1-14. Few passages could provide less objective support to the argument – the accusation - of *post hoc* prophetic utterance and thus ineluctable late dating of the Scripture – with the seemingly-inevitable corollary of a rejection of the eyewitness *gravitas* of Matthean authorship.

Thus the common appearance in 'post-Teutonic' criticism to this day, of cognates of the phrase, "Matthew 22.7 provides an example of textual material which points to/indicates a dating of the 1st Gospel after the Fall of Jerusalem";(*ref.*, e.g., Harrington, 2007, p.306; Davies and Allison, 2004, p.xii, *et al*) suggests to this writer an argument seeking a *raison d'être* – equivalent to Augustine's apology for the Baptism of Infants.

It is further observed that, just as Matthew's use of colourful imagery in his complex 'Wedding Feast' parable is unsolid ground to bear much of the weight of the argument for post-Jewish war authorship, given what would have to be an otherwise very careful, but pointless avoidance of the national trauma.

Such also would be a sudden Matthean 'admission-by-implication' of the author's considerable temporal distance from the events he describes with regard to Jesus, nowhere else in terms of history from two generations on.

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A further textual point, an argument from silence in essence, is the lack of any provision for Gentile neophytes of the answers they would surely need to the significance of the events of 68-70 AD. to the nascent Church.

The unabashed attitude towards the Second Temple evidenced in Matthew's record of Jesus' sayings in this regard, does not readily support a post-70 AD dating for the 1st Gospel. Also *contra* the tacit allegations of most scholars that Matthew 24.1-2 is a fabricated dominical 'prophecy' inserted *post hoc* as a prelude to the therefore also logically-questionable future- prophetic teachings of Matthew 24.3-28; (*ref.*, Mark 13.1-13; Luke 21.5-6, 7-19) – there is also the evidence of Matthew 5.35, which treats of not swearing («ομοσαι») by Jerusalem «'οτι πολις εστιω του μεγαλον Βασιλεως».

This represents, as noted, an atypical Matthean choice of insensitive imagery if provenanced after the fall of the Second Temple - and written, it is noted, without the precedent of a similar pericope in Mark (or Luke).

Further, Matthew 24.1-2 does not require a *post hoc* interpretation: Matthew 24.15 (*par* Mark 13.14 *par* Luke 21.20-24) indicates the signal event of the beginning of the Eschaton which is not the Fall of the Second Temple, but rather the setting up of «το βδελυγμα της ερημωσεως το ρηθεν δια Δανηλ του προφητου εστος εν τοπω αγιω», which requires the Second Temple to still be standing.

Zukeran notes that no canonical Gospel, - after the records of dominical prophecy in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 - takes up the opportunity to build on those references, and thus aggrandize Jesus, *a posteriori* to the cataclysmic event which robbed the chosen people of their only place of sacrifice, the only location where God's presence could be known without doubt, similar in import, if not more so, to the Christian view of the 'sacramentum': (*ref.*, Zukeran, 2000).

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This latter was the unique assertion of the divine promise of the Spirit's presence in the Eucharist and Baptism as understood by the Protestant Church and extended to further rites by the Latin Church. Zukeran (2000) also notes the evidence-by-absence in Luke/Acts where no reference is ever made to the events of 70 AD, nor yet to the deaths of Peter or Paul, where the demise of lesser *dramatis personae* such as Stephen and James are faithfully recorded, creating a *terminus ad quem* for Luke's writing before the executions of 64 AD (*ibid*).

Thus the absence of any reference to the widespread death and destruction surrounding the Jewish War of 67-70 and the eventual destruction of the Second Temple, with the eschatological expectations these traumatic events would evoke, presents a knotty problem for scholars supporting the post-70 AD dating of any Gospel. This later dating would logically require a massive collusion of the canonical writers, as unlikely to be successful as the revisionist efforts of those who deny the historical authenticity of the 'Holocaust' (*ref., e.g., 'David Irving' (Ku Klux Klan); online references*).

The same observation can also be made in relation to the 1st community-traumatic event experienced by the Jewish-Christians in 64 AD, described in vivid detail by Tacitus ('*Annals*' 15.44.6), with the placing of the blame on those in Rome by the psychopathic Nero, intent upon rebuilding the city, for seven out of the ten precincts of Rome going up in flames over a protracted period (including one near-extinguishing of the fire suspiciously failing).

The negative reaction of Rome itself was in part due to Nero's propaganda machine and also partly because the Christian community did not assist in fighting the fires, seeing them as the predicted beginning of the Eschaton.

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Nero's subsequent excesses in persecuting the Christians were so shocking that in the next chapter of Tacitus' account, he records that public sympathy swung the other way. The backlash on the Christian communities, perceived as a Jewish sect, until this time tolerated, now was characterised by hatred and disgust and the upsurge of sympathy for the 'Jewish sect'. But by then graphic tales of the atrocities committed for the 1st time against the Christians were enough to cause a general exodus to Pella in Pereia.

Prior to this unfortunate occurrence the Church had flourished as one of the apolitical Jewish sects. Though the Roman Empire was wary of Jews this did not result in assertive action against the new sect until according to Acts 18.2, Claudius expelled all Jews from Rome, an action recorded by Suetonius. Consequent to his mother performing some political and murderous manoeuvres, Nero ascended to the throne *ca* 58 AD, and tradition asserts that Paul arrived in Rome to face interrogation on the day Nero responded predictably to the threat he perceived in the continued existence of his mother and his brother Britannicus.

In 64 AD the famous incident occurred. Again, as with the events of 70 AD, there is no reference or even veiled allusion to this sudden persecution in any canonical writing. Although this was not the unthinkable nightmare that the horrors of 70 AD proved to be, there was at the time no 'benchmark' for Jewish trauma.

Thus mention of the martyrdoms and the exodus to Pella could have been engaged as very significant - and consonant with prophetic texts and tradition. They were not invoked at all. This suggests that the provenance of Matthew's account was even prior to 64 AD. The deaths of the beloved leaders Peter and Paul could similarly not have been overlooked or held as best left unmentioned.

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In 66 AD, two years later, Nero's edict regarding his own assumed deity triggered the Jewish Revolt, begun by the Priesthood. Josephus, formerly the Jews' best General, attests in his *Wars of the Jews* to an earthquake and a 'great noise' in the Temple at Pentecost - followed by the words, "let us remove hence".

Only the Judaeo-Christians understood this warning and withdrew quietly to Pella (later renamed Decapolis) where they were to become known as 'Nazarenes' - the name by which the Christians still attending their local synagogues were known in the 'benediction of the *Minim*'.

Nero's death by his own hand in 68 AD would have given the community some respite, but the end of the War and the destruction at Jerusalem will have massively disquieted them and the 'Nero Redivivus' myth was to continue the sense of the apocalyptic.

Some scholars aver that this was the location and situation in which Matthew wrote, but the world the 1st Evangelist describes and the mission within it that he prepare his catechumens for is impossibly remote from the traumatic reality of life in Pella in and after that time, even when the causes of continued dread were only known through the word of messengers and itinerants: (*ref., e.g.,* Burgen (1896), Tacitus and Josephus).

If, *e.g.,* Davies (2004) and Harrington (2007) were right in their acceptance of the majority view of Matthean dating as after the fall of the Second Temple, and their opinions of the import of the unique Matthean narrative, - there would be a tacit implication of very poor teaching skills being, probably unintentionally, ascribed to the 1st Evangelist. Matthew would be invoking not only a lost Second Temple but also his readers' experience of the '*fiscus iudaicus*' - both of which are triggers to a resurgence of still-raw feelings of humiliation which would unhelpfully overpower the Matthean 'lesson plan'.

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This concerned the far less impactful and gentle promotion of pastoral sensitivity towards those who remain part of the legitimate mission field. Only in a continued context of co-existence with ‘orthodox’ Judaism in its varied manifestations could this pastoral didactic be effective - and worth Matthew retrieving it from his unique source, designated ‘M’ in discussions of the ‘Synoptic Problem’ - and here maintained not thereby to be precluded from being his own reminiscences.

Therefore, as a Palestinian Jew and one very evidently steeped in Jewish Tradition and *au fait* with the then-recent proto-Rabbinic developments, it cannot be credibly argued that the author was less evidently concerned about the availability of the Second Temple as the place where God resided – (asserted herein to be a primary factor in the dating of the 1st Gospel) - because he had been acclimated to practicing his faith outside the Country. Viljoen notes: “The destruction of Jerusalem could have been experienced by the Jewish-Christian community as the judgment of God on Israel”; (*ref.*, Viljoen, 2006).

It is the case however that none of the canonical Gospel writers is tempted by the “Kick Me” sign that a post -70 AD *Sitz im Leben* would surely attach to the rump of the Early Church’s competitors. Other observations to be made include the datum that the parenthetical remark that the field bought with Judas’ rejected payment by the Chief Priests and elders (27.3ff) is known as the « αγρος αιματος εως της σημερον» is nonsensical, indeed egregiously insensitive, if the Second Temple is levelled and the Holy City and surrounding area a devastated and deliberately despoiled site of former terrible carnage. The Matthean detail of v.8 would be exactly equivalent in its pointless lack of tact to comments made about the area around the Twin Towers in New York as though it was still as it had been on Sept 10th 2001.

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This comment also obtains to Matthew 5.23-24; 17.24-27 and 23.16-22, none of which dominical assertions make logical, didactic or pastoral sense in the context of a destroyed Second Temple. The phrase ‘rubbing salt into the wound’ is apposite should a provenance later than the outbreak of the War be maintained; (*ref.*, Conte (2007, pp.370-76), for an alternative dating of the Fall of the Second Temple to 56-57 AD, which if ever finding consensual agreement, does not alter the arguments stated herein, but rather requires a similar thirteen to fourteen-year retrojective adjustment). J.Moffatt (1911) remarks concerning the personal, national and cultural impact of the events leading up to and concluding in the horrors of 70 AD; “We should expect . . . that an event like the fall of Jerusalem would have dinted (*sic*) some of the literature of the primitive church, almost as the victory at Salamis has marked (*Æschylus*’ drama of Xerxes’ loss to the Greeks) the Pesae (*sic*, Persae).

It might be supposed that such an epochal-making crisis would even furnish criteria for determining the dates of some of the NT writings. As a matter of fact, the catastrophe is practically ignored in the extant Christian literature of the 1st century”.

Similarly C.F.D. Moule (1967); “It is hard to believe that a Judaistic type of Christianity which had itself been closely involved in the cataclysm of the years leading up to 70 AD would not have shown the scars - or, alternatively, would not have made capital out of this signal evidence that they, and not non-Christian Judaism, were the true Israel. But in fact our traditions are silent.” This is, to borrow J.A.T Robinson’s phrase; “as significant as the silence for Sherlock Holmes of the dog that did not bark”.

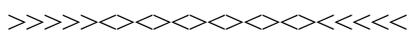
Matthew, in tandem with the other synoptic Evangelists, makes constant allusions to things that would not have survived the depredations of the Roman object lesson, to employ Voltaire’s famous phrase, “*pour encourager les autres*”: (*ref.*, ‘Candide’ (1759).

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Thus, for example, assiduous use of Ockham's razor suggests that Matthew unhesitatingly assumes that the site of the 'Potter's Field' is well-known and may be visited; to mention this detail for any other purpose than authentication of the ongoing narrative would be pointless. This argument redoubles for the Second Temple; - no positive outcome could be expected for treating the lost supreme Holy Place as still the tangible focus of Israel's covenant relationship with God. This would be an unfathomable '«ἀπαχλεγομενεον»' in Matthew's otherwise exemplary didactic methodology.

An effect of the hypothesis of late provenance has been not only to divorce the Gospel from the person of an apostolic witness to the Christ Event, which tends to rob the 1st Gospel of legitimate authority. It also deleteriously 'saws through' the link between the old and new covenants and draws attention away from what the 1st Gospel may provide, which is the Palestinian provenance of Jesus and the continuously Jewish nature of this climax of the *Hielsgeschichte*. Further, more than a century has passed since (at least Western) Christians have had the reassurance that the voices of authentic eyewitnesses, who travelled with Jesus, may legitimately still be heard and that no significant accretions of myth have obscured the 'historical' Jesus and His (reasonably) unadulterated message.

The 'classic' view however is, as noted, not without its credible proponents, as referenced above; for example, Blomberg holds that the traditionally asserted writers are probably the actual authors for all Gospels. Blomberg avers, regarding Matthew, that as he was "a former hated tax collector, he would have been the most infamous character next to Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus!" (*ref.*, Strobel, 1998).



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POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR A PRE-70s PRODUCTION OF THE 1st GOSPEL;

ONE: MATTHEW; A CLOSE SECOND IN THE GOSPEL MARATHON.

Murdock asserts; “The currently accepted dates are as follows, from the earliest by conservative, believing (sic) scholars to the latest by liberal and sometimes secular scholars; Matthew; 37 to 100 AD, Mark; 40 to 73, Luke; 50 to 100, John; 65 - 100 AD.

Many reasons have been given for these dates, from one end of the spectrum to the other, the earliest dates being based on the events recounted in the Gospels themselves.

The later dates are based also on this timeframe, but the difference is that they account for the mention of the destruction of the Second Temple which occurred in 70 AD. According to this scholarship, the Gospels must have been written after the devastation because they refer to it. However, conservative believers maintain the early dates and assert that the destruction of the Second Temple and Judea mentioned in the Gospels constitutes ‘prophecy’, demonstrating Jesus’ divine powers”: (*ref.*, Murdock, 2010, p.12).

Once again the choice of vocabulary (and parentheses) in this extract is illuminating; (*ref.*, *e.g.*, “conservative, believing scholars. liberal and sometimes secular scholars” and “constitutes ‘prophecy’ ”; for a possible explanation of the frequent occurrence in the writings of respected critics, of this somewhat dismissive tone which seems to allow the biblical scholar a choice of stances alarmingly restricted to ‘believing’ as in ‘gullible’ –or ‘liberal’ as inclusive of ‘atheistic’).

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

There was a rumour which Matthew is at pains to scotch – even attending to it while in the last climactic narrative of his Gospel - concerning the theft of Jesus' body by his disciples being spread among the Jews 'to this day'; («μεχρι της σημερον»).

This is held by some scholars to imply a considerable remove from the Christ Event. This is asserted because there is no extant historical record of the calumny that can be traced further back than the 2nd Century. However, to aver that this argument of collusion by Jesus' followers might be given any credence begs the question of actual motive. There are no signs that the disciples had believed Jesus foretelling of His necessary death, and so, unsurprisingly, they did not register his predictions of His being raised from the dead; (*ref.*, e.g., Matthew 16.23 *ff*).

Therefore no *a priori* or for that matter, many *a posteriori* reasons can be adduced for the promulgation of this subterfuge – and certainly not beyond the early proclamation of Christ's resurrection which began very soon after the crucifixion and would have been instantly vulnerable to rational dismissive arguments – just as is any 'unbelievable' news, until confirmation comes of its authenticity- or evincive evidence throws it out. For 'orthodox' Judaism, even in all its varied iterations in that period of time, to fail to counter immediately, while the metaphorical paint on the astonishing picture was still wet, the primary claim made by Jesus' followers of a divine act of restoration of the claimed-Messiah's life, is counterintuitive.

A late assertion of a 'conspiracy', with no mention of it any earlier, would be far less convincing to people who had recently witnessed the evidence of salvific history and were accepting or moving towards acceptance of the Resurrection and all that it implied regarding the true divine status of Jesus.

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If their own experience was surmounting that enormous barrier to belief and pulling people away from ‘pre-messianic’ Judaism, the assertion of an unverifiable mundane theory would prompt derision, not a sudden realization that they were participating in a hoax with little or no benefit to accrue to those who believed it, unless the doubtful glories of martyrdom were being sought. Foster sees the Matthew 28.11-15 pericope in the same light as he does the mixed references to ‘the’ and ‘their’ synagogues (4.23; 9.35; 10.17; 12.9; 13.54 and 23.34) and the narrative concerning the Temple Tax in 17.24-27 as familiar evidence that Matthew’s Gospel is so fashioned as to provide contemporary references for his audience; (*ref.*, Foster, 2004, p.5).

It has intrigued scholars that in the narratives of the Passion and the Resurrection of our Lord and other stories elsewhere that are seemingly manifest fulfilments of numerous Rabbinically-acknowledged messianic Hebrew scriptural prophecies are not cited by Matthew, a writer who is clearly cognizant of antecedent tradition in this area – and who is unlikely to have been deterred from quoting familiar Scriptures by Mark’s not doing so. However, it seems consistent with the probable nature of this writer, illustrated by his focus on passing on a lean and efficient sharing of his own undoubted reverence for the Kerygmatic tradition that has grown up since Christ’s resurrection), - that Matthew would eschew adding to that established Oral Tradition by interpolating Hebrew Scriptural references that he considered to be redundant to a Jewish-provenanced proselyte.

It is very characteristic of Matthew’s teaching and instruction to forge a strong link between Jesus’ challenges and expectation of suffering about which He warns His disciples (and therefore Matthew’s neophytes too) as exemplified in the dominical observation, not inconceivably delivered with a touch of wry humour, «ειτον οικοδεσποτην Βεεζεβουλ επεκαλεσαν, πασω μελλον τους οικιακους αυτου»; (*ref.*, Matthew 10.24 *ff*).

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And the ‘head of the household and family members’ imagery again supports Matthew’s constant theme of the presence of Jesus with the missionaries at all times, even when ‘out of the house’. This would have been a novel concept for Jewish and Gentile converts alike. Also thus reinforced is the central theme of Matthew’s understanding of what ‘faith in Jesus’ is. It is not, as newcomer Gentiles might presume, a matter of learning a special ‘gnosis’, or of juggling with Hellenistic dualistic syncretism and mystery religions like Mithraism. The 1st Evangelist is at pains to inculcate into his catechumens the deep understanding that ‘faith in Jesus’ is following Him as Matthew himself has done.

And he limits the use of the word «ακολουθειν» (*e.g.*, 10.38) to following Jesus— and following Him is not just in the sense of following His teachings, but following the present Christ out in to the world that needs Him – and them too as His helpers. (It is interesting that the *Qur’an* describes Jesus’ disciples as His ‘helpers in God’s cause’; (*ref.*, *Qur’an* 3.52-53). Muslim exegesis mentions some of the disciples and includes Matthew as the only easily recognisable name); (*ref.*, Kahn 2009). It is further noted that at the end of the Chapter Ten pericopæ, (*ref.*, Matthew 10.40ff), the 1st Evangelist returns Jesus to the immediate future so that He may assure the missionaries that small acts of graciousness made toward them will be rewarded by God. This may well have helped overcome the natural desire of many of them; not to be a nuisance’, ‘not to impose’ because to refuse small kindnesses would be to deny the one offering them the particular blessing of God.

This is not most naturally dominical instruction for a long-established Church, but for a community made up of Jewish folk familiar with the ‘Rabbi and Disciples’ esoteric lifestyle and also some Gentiles who would have no specific cultural model to follow.



REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR A PRE-70s PRODUCTION OF THE 1st GOSPEL;
TWO: GAMALIEL'S JOKE.

Israel Yuval reported a find *circa* the year 2000 that suggests Matthew could have been written significantly earlier than the aforementioned currently prevalent view of 85 to 90 AD provenance for the 1st Gospel. Yuval reported that R.Gamaliel wrote *ca* 71 to 73 AD or possibly even earlier, a “sophisticated parody of the Gospel according to Matthew”.

Blomberg (1987) asserts that study of the parody's wording indicates that it was based on existent text and there are good reasons for believing that text to be from the 1st Gospel:

(*ref.*, Yuval 1999). What is referred to is one of R.Gamaliel's stories to be found in the Babylonian ‘*Gemara Shabb*’. 116 [a and b]. The story tells of one Imma Shilan, his sister, the wife of the renowned R.Eliezer, and a certain Judaeo-Christian Judge.

The ‘tongue-in-cheek’ tale features a pronouncement by the Judge which appears to be an irreverent quote from Matthew 5.17, the 1st dominical teaching about the Law in the vv.17 to 30 sequence unique to the 1st Evangelist. The implication is that Gamaliel's burlesque requires that the Matthean text be sufficiently well-known to Palestinian Jews as well as to Judaeo-Christians, that such a jest would be understood and enjoyed.

(*ref.*, Blomberg 1987). The existence of the parody also necessitates the Gospel being acceptable reading matter for ‘continuing’ Jews; from the early period when what was to become known as ‘Christianity’, or ‘The Way’ was still generally acceptable among Rabbis of Gamaliel's stature as a messianic developmental stream of Judaism .



REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR A PRE-70s PRODUCTION OF THE 1st GOSPEL;
THREE[a]. THE ACCEPTABILITY OF A PLETHORA OF JEWISH SECTS,
CURTAILED BY THE FALL OF JERUSALEM.

Modern readers seldom appreciate the flexibility and fluidity of 1st Century Judaism which was continuing as it still does, to seek better and better and ever more comprehensive and authentic interpretations of, in particular, the Torah.

It is also here asserted that there is no reason to assume that Matthew's, possibly quite brief professional misstep in a moderate-sized town would necessarily follow him after his years as a follower of the young Rabbi Yeshua. R. Gamaliel himself is referred to in positive terms in Acts 5.34 which itself forms part of a convincing iteration of credible history (*ref.*, Acts 5.27-42). Moreover Gamaliel is cited as Saul's well-respected Pharisaic teacher in Jerusalem. This datum minimally does not preclude some sense of *simpatico* between Gamaliel's messianic perspective and that later developed by Paul after his conversion. It further serves to illustrate the gradual nature of the schism between the numerous 'Judaisms' of the Palestinian Pharisees and that of Jesus as Matthew describes it: (*ref.*, Daube 1992, *passim*). It may be asserted that at least certain factions within the Judaisms of the 1st Century endorse Matthew's continued adherence to Torah. There are arguable citations of his words, such as the statement in the Babylonian Talmud (*Shabbat* 11.6 [b] ; "I come not to destroy the Law of Moses nor to add to the Law of Moses" – a declaration that examples the common (because mnemonically effective) use of repetition, of words (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Matthew 6.19-21) and phrases (*cf.*, *e.g.*, 6.14-15; 7.17-20) . The view of Saldarini finds endorsement in the observations made above; "It seems clear that he (Matthew) sees himself and his group as part of Israel and that he hopes to attract members of the larger Jewish Community to his form of Judaism": (*ref.*, Saldarini, 1994, p.195).

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It is probable, however that the reader should underscore the word “hopes”.

Other passages in the 1st Gospel are probably also reflected in Rabbinical discussion, but they suffer the enforced anonymity reserved for actually acceptable notions which find their origin in ‘*Minuth*’ - heretical writings produced by ‘*ha Minim*’ (any stripe of Jewish heretics but increasingly predominantly Christian ones. If the hypothesis to be supported herein regarding the person of the 1st Evangelist is substantially correct, Matthew /Levi is the prime candidate for being an acceptable liaison between (at least) the two groups he and Gamaliel, in the early years represent. It should not be forgotten that over a generation had passed by the time Gamaliel the Second’s anathematisation of these particular *Minim* was to be evident: (cf., ‘*Birkath ha Minim*’).

The dating of Gamaliel’s work may not prove that the 1st Gospel was completed by ca 72 AD, but it certainly requires the circulation of Matthew’s version of Jesus’ teachings prior to that date. Matthew 24 reflects quite accurately the then-current Jewish belief regarding the Parousia as expected to occur some significant time after the recent (and unexpected) shocking destruction of the Second Temple.

However, somewhat supportive of a comparative tolerance of the Church – and therefore an argument for a pre-catastrophe *sitz im Leben*, is Judaism’s preparedness to acknowledge the sect at all, even in mockery: (cf ‘Gamaliel’ above).

There is ample, but not copious, documentary evidence of both the influence of Christian Oral and/or written tradition on Rabbinical teaching: (ref., Allman and Crowder, 2003). Thus, the Talmud (ca 70-72 AD), refers to Jesus’ family, cites passages found in Matthew’s Gospel and records a group of names of men deserving death for their apostasy. Four of these names are unfamiliar – but the fifth is Matthew.

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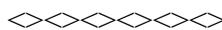
He may even have participated, some students of Hebrew writings suggest, in the development of the ‘*Torah Shebeal Peh*’ - as the Talmud mentions him as a follower of ‘Jesus the Nazarene’: (*ref.*, Klauck, 2003, *e.g.*, p. 36).

Of considerable significance to the debate on Matthean temporal provenance is the datum alluded to above, that Gamaliel 2, son of the teacher of Paul, parodies the Gospel in a story about a Christian Judge - and makes a clear reference to the ‘lamp’ of Matthew 5.16; (*ref* Bradshaw and Hoffman (2009). This is logically indicative of the Gospel’s being sufficiently well known to the proto-Rabbinic world that such a mocking treatment was warranted.

Thus also most naturally suggested is that a post-70 AD dating for the writing of the Gospel is doubtful, given that - *in extremis* – it is normal for stances to be immediately hardened in circumstances such as burgeoning patriotism at the outbreak of war, or dogmatic distinctives made the more intractable in religious confrontations:

(*cf.*, Blomberg (1987) *et al.*).

Gamaliel’s sally indicates that the Talmud evidences the acknowledgement of the new sect, certainly in dismissive terms which were to solidify into an implacable anathematization of the Judaeo-Christians themselves, which extended to the families of converts, to whom the apostate was considered ‘dead’.



REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR A PRE-70s PRODUCTION OF THE 1st GOSPEL;
THREE[b].THE EARLY ACCEPTANCE OF JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN TEXTS.

Demonstrably, Matthean eschatology finds numerous parallels in Rabbinic writings – and some evidence exists suggestive of there having been some areas of good relationship surviving between the Jews and the Judaeo-Christian ‘*minim*’ as late as 300 AD when Saphra, a noted Rabbi, was engaged by ‘*ha Minim*’ to provide a satisfactory account of certain Scriptures which Diaspora Jewish Scholars were unable to do:

(*ref.*, Babylonian Talmud, *A Zar.* 4). From the then still-existing connection to be found in various Jewish documents between the person of Matthew and his former peers and also the evidence of the Gamaliel (1st)’s reference to the Evangelist’s work, a dating may be mandated as prior to the period where R.Gamaliel 2nd was to eventually use the writing skills of the Small to add an extra line to the otherwise celebratory opening liturgy of weekly synagogue worship, the 12th ‘Benediction, which was calculated to be odious, indeed impossible to pray, to still-attending Judaeo-Christians. The confidence that this addition and the ‘*Birkath ha Minim*’ was effective has diminished with the evidence of Pionius, 3rd Century Bishop of Smyrna, who protested invitations given to his flock to attend the synagogue: (*ref.*, ‘*Martyrium Pionii*’ *ca.* 130 AD).

There is also John Chrysostom’s 4th Century diatribe (*ref.*, ‘*Adversus Judaeos*’; [against Judaizing Christians’]), protesting Christians regularly visiting their local synagogues and even seeking dispute resolutions there: (*ref.*, Lieu 2002, and 2005, *passim*).



REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR A PRE-70s PRODUCTION OF THE 1st GOSPEL ;
FOUR: THE ACCEPTED DATING OF THE WRITINGS OF PAUL.

M'Clymont, in 'The New Testament and its Writers' (1989) posits, regarding the 1st Gospel, "It may have been as early as 60 AD, at the close of the two years which Luke spent with Paul at Caesarea, or it may possibly have been during Paul's imprisonment in Rome (61-63 AD) or even some years later, but in any case anterior to the Book of Acts, as the preface to the latter implies".

F.F Bruce (1969) had added to the arguments supportive of an early provenance for all the Gospels, that Paul cites Luke's account in 1 Timothy 5.18. Deuteronomy 25.4, is cited in 5.18[a] then v.18[b] quotes vs.7, verbatim: (*ref.*, Bruce, 1969, p.12).

Thus Paul juxtaposes Deuteronomy, one of the primary formative Holy Books for Judaism, with an accurate citation from the 1st of Luke's letters to Theophilus, of a *logion* also found in slightly different form in Matthew ; (*ref.*, Luke 10.7[b]; Matthew 10.10 [b]).

The implications of this «λογιον» for the very early acknowledgment of the divine 'otherness', even of letters written by a friend and co-traveller, are second only to the humanly-inexplicable acceptance of «ουιος.. Ιωσηφ»; « οτου τεκτοωος υιος»; «'ο τεκνωω, ουιος της Μαριας» as « 'ο υιος του Θεου».

The hugely significant datum here is that Paul cites 'Scripture' in its standard usage as implying not merely "writing" – the literal meaning of the Greek – but as (Holy) Scripture, in its full canonical sense (as is confirmed by the same usage of «γραφη» in the frequently-cited 2 Timothy 3.16; «πασα γραφη θεοπνευστος» as referring, without question, to canonical writ.

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It is noted that the Deuteronomy citation is by context judicial; the Lukan quote is the pivot point between Paul's instructions regarding support for «πρεσβυτερου» (indicating that the modern congregations' tacit assumption that preacher/leaders do not work for a living has ancient precedent!) – and presumably-established Christian community jurisprudence.

Confirmation is thus given of the availability of the Third Gospel prior to Paul's death. Similarly, the Pauline context, using «πρεσβυτερου» is indicative of an ecclesiastic structure, extant at least in Pauline-providenced Christian communities, at an early stage in Church history – as Sociology, - and particularly the study of Community development *in extremis*, - would expect but much biblical scholarship dismisses.

Paul operates in an essentially identical environment to Matthew's, though some years earlier. It is noted that in the aforementioned 1st letter to the Christian community at Thessalonica, after encouraging them in the situation of Jewish opposition to his own extension of the Gospel to Gentiles and attempting to re-establishing his own *bona fides*, Paul writes, (significantly to the present focus on dating) in terms of instructions for the ongoing life of the community (*cf.*, 1 Thessalonians 4.1-12).

He then addresses the concerns of their apocalyptic expectations (v.14) which in the immediacy of their hopefulness he does not discourage.(v.17). The Apostle indeed writes to revitalize that expectation of the «παρουσια» in his second letter to this Macedonian community, written to confute the intriguing development of realised eschatological assertions.

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And not only does comparison of Matthew's personal *Sitz im Leben* with that of Paul confirm the need seen by both writers to guide the ongoing behaviours of their communities, - without denying the immediacy of the Eschaton, - it also demonstrates the rapidity with which christological and eschatological reflections were stimulated.

In relation to the specific matter of Matthew's writing, the argument is often advanced to promote the late dating of the 1st Gospel, of the sophistication of Matthew's christology - but this assertion reckons without the evidence of Pauline Soteriology, not presently questioned in its very early provenance.

This contributes another argument in support of the notion that the appearance of evolved Theology and particularly a developed christology does not mandate late provenance: or to be more precise, the universal acceptance of the early dating of Paul's letters in itself answers the arbitrary assignment of any sophistication of christology, soteriology or ecclesiology to *circa* the turn of the 2nd Century.

Vermes notes that the Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp, - written in the 1st decade of the 2nd Century, - concludes with a greeting "in our God, Jesus Christ", suggestive of an established high christology already expressed at a comparatively early stage, an astonishing development which loses its impact at a nearly 2,000 years remove: (*ref.*, Vermes, 1995). Moreover it is here considered beyond dispute that Greisbach *et al* ; *cf.*, the 'Two Gospel Theory' (though initially persuasive to the present writer), falls before the impartial juggernaut of common logic.

Such a perspective insists, for example, that while a more gifted and erudite author may correct and enhance the workmanlike product of another writer (even with the 'transferred credibility' of Peter behind him), it is barely conceivable that the poorer craftsman would deliberately mar a better and more attractive work without a readily evident reason.

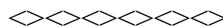
REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

The appearances of «ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ» in Paul's Letters to the Romans and to the Galatians evidences the early adoption of the singular dominical title, at least in the Hellenistic Churches – and provide a significant *imprimatur* from the former Pharisee for its adoption by Judaeo-Christians.

Galatians was probably written *contra* 'Judaisers' *ca.* 47-48 AD; Romans may be a call to evangelism made by Paul, in failing health, but planning to reach Spain and the West, and written in 57 AD: (*ref.*, Kulikovsky, 1999).

Thus both a Jewish-influenced community and a Judaeo-Christian-founded but 'mixed' Hellenistic Church in Rome must have been amenable to the otherwise distracting and contentious «ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ» dominical designation, between almost 20 and 10 years *before* the dissemination of Matthew's account.

It is consequently here asserted that the two discussed - of a number of titles bestowed upon Jesus, do not mandate a late dating for his work.



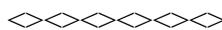
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POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR A PRE-70s PRODUCTION OF THE 1st GOSPEL;FIVE: JESUS' LOGICAL –BUT SOMETIMES ERRANT – PREDICTIONS,

Matthew 10.17 is a focus of the late-dating argument; «Προσεχετε δε απο των αωθρωπων, παραδωσουσιν γαρ υμας εις συνεδρια, και εν ταις συναγωγαις αυτων μαστιγωσουσιν γαρ υμας». The use of «αυτων» in this prophetic pericope is often perceived to be distancing, – suggestive of a real-time schism between the Jewish Christians and the Traditional Jews; (*ref.*, 10.17 as pseudo-prophetic).

On the other hand, a simpler, less fraught explanation for the genitive pronoun presents itself. Examination of the Synoptic uses of «ταις συναγωγαις αυτων» raises the suggestion that the phrase is simply descriptive, to identify the meeting place of the faithful of a particular town visited by Jesus, or to be entered by His Apostles in the future; (*ref.* 10.17). This hypothesis is supported by reference to 4.23; 9.35; 12.9; and 13.54). Some scholars appeal to the usages of the expression, «ταις συναγωγη [συναγωγαις] αυτοω» in 9.35; 10.17 *et al.*, to indicate a later dating, *i.e.*, after the general schism with the Jewish cultus - while others take a more nuanced view: *ref.*, 9.35; 10.17.

Further, Jesus' warnings to the Twelve (10.16-23), lack authentic relevance if produced not in the future- predictive context of the fall of Jerusalem, but rather the ousting of Jesus' followers from synagogue worship. The prediction of «εν ταις συναγωγαις αυτων μαστιγωσουσιν υμας... » requires that the Judaeo-Christians disciples will still be maintaining their voluntary submission to the disciplinary rights of the «συνεδρια», without which consent they could not be flogged. (*ref.*, 10.17).



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POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR A PRE-70s PRODUCTION OF THE 1st GOSPEL;SIX: THE PRIMITIVITY OF THE ACCOUNTS; THE UNVARNISHED TRUTHS

A significant issue in regard to authenticity is the reliability of the authors themselves in terms of personal integrity. Logic insists that any manuscript can be trusted that can, as is the case for any putatively accurate document, be reliably dated to within the lifetime of the writer and also any other (potentially critical) eyewitness to the words and actions of, in this context, Jesus of Nazareth. The very “warts and all” tenor of the Gospel and Epistolar texts suggests an early provenance for these Scriptures, given the common human proclivity for excising negative data regarding popular heroes now dead (*contra* Mark Anthony’s famous eulogy of ‘Julius Caesar’; Act 3. Sc.2).

Thus Peter, in particular, does not benefit from the work of ‘image consultants’ of his day or the ‘cosmetic’ attention given while individuals are becoming legends. Also, there is no uniform shying away from, for example, Jesus’ daunting declarations in Matthew 10, *e.g.*, vv.34 and 35 and the narrative of His encounter with the Canaanite woman (15.22ff) providing cogent evidence of this laudable honesty: (*ref.*, 15.22ff; *cf.*, 1 Corinthians 15.19).

It is also significant that the four canonical accounts survived with no successful early attempts at harmonies, despite the ‘*Diatesseron*’ and later cognates – and notwithstanding the Synoptic Gospels’ undisguised borrowing and enhancing or redacting of extant material. To these observations regarding the integrity of the writers, may be added the lack of any *post hoc* appeal to Jesus’ prediction of the fate of the 2nd Temple in *e.g.*, 24.1- 2.



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POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR A PRE-70s PRODUCTION OF THE 1st GOSPEL;
SEVEN: PETER - LONG DEAD, RECENTLY DECEASED OR ALIVE?

With regard to Peter, the unique focus upon him in the Matthew 16 ‘Caesarea Philippi’ context; (*cf.* 1 Enoch 13 for the probable Hebrew redolence of this location) is a puzzle to scholars such as Harrington (2007) who notes; “What is striking is the continuing interest in Peter. If Peter died *circa* 60 AD, and Matthew wrote around 85 AD, why did Matthew and his community retain their special interest in Peter some 20-5 years later” (*ref.*, Harrington (2007, p. 250). The Jesuit scholar returns to this conundrum with “It is hard to be sure about the role of Peter in the Matthean community’s controversy in the late 1st century. It is significant that 20-25 years after his death Peter retained at least a historical importance; beyond that is speculative. But within the community, Peter may have functioned as the founding Apostle or patron saint. Perhaps the leaders traced their spiritual pedigree through Peter much as the Rabbis did through their teachers”.

‘Shaving’ this seemingly intractable puzzle with Ockham’s razor, the biblical critic may ‘lather up’ with the fact that Harrington (2007) himself asserts that this was a Judaeo-Christian community and that all evidence points to Mark’s Gospel to be reasonably considered as based on Peter’s teaching amongst the Romans, like Paul’s.

Also Harrington (2007) is assuming that Matthew’s community is as concerned with the significance of Peter as Matthew himself is - and if Peter were the central referent of this community nothing would have prevented them from ascribing, or allowing the ascribing of this Gospel account to Peter, rather than the massively less consequential, ‘minor player’ and embarrassingly-provenanced Matthew.

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It seems to the present writer that, although, as Harrington (2007) and numerous others aver, the matter is ‘speculative’ - a ‘clean shave’ with Ockham’s Razor can be achieved by positing that the 1st Gospel is the work of the Apostle himself, and it is he, personally, not his community, who wishes to promote Peter as titular head of the Church.

It is unlikely that this would mean that Matthew would defer to Peter in the area of the ‘Judaean’ component of Christian life as the one is an evident scholar, the other a fisherman. However it is also reasonable to consider that Matthew, used to the *de facto* Petrine leadership of the inner core of Jesus’ disciples, was by nature and preference not a charismatic leader as Peter was and it seems John aspired to be (by his unsubtle, and probably unnoticed, competition with Peter).

The ‘companion piece’ to the present Dissertation (D.D. Thesis: ‘*Why Levi, Son of Alphaeus...?*’ Edwards. K., 2012) will attend to the mooted personal dynamics between Matthew and Peter; suffice it to note here that Matthew’s particular promotion of Peter as Jesus’ anointed ‘Joshua’ figure may in part explain why there are no signs of Pauline influence in the 1st Gospel as Peter and Paul ‘locked horns’ - probably more frequently than the major personal schism at Antioch that Galatians 2 records, and Luke in Acts 15.36 perhaps circumnavigates. (*ref.*, White 2004, pp. 110, 148 *ff*).

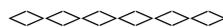
It is also quite likely that Matthew would neither feel a sense of *sympatico* with the ebullient Paul, nor approve of his abandonment of his enviable education by one of the greatest of Jewish turn of the Century Rabbinical scholars, Gamaliel – so revered that like Julius Caesar, his name became practically an honourific, finally appearing as the name of the last ‘*Nasi*’.

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En passant, Mark's account (or redaction) of Peter's place in the *Hielsgeschichte* may be seen as following Peter's own sense of ambiguity concerning his rapidly-established high status – at least equal to James' in Jerusalem. Therefore the definitive dominical anointing of 'the Rock' is omitted in the Second Gospel, possibly because the usage of the nickname «Πετρος» was universal, thus invoking Jesus' giving of the name and His purpose in doing so.

Jesus, by Mark's account gave others nicknames (*ref* Mark 3.14-17), however «Βοανηργες, 'ο υιοι βροντης» bears no imputation of *gravitas* but rather speaks of Jesus' dry sense of humour.

It is noteworthy that Matthew's equivalent to the Markan text (Matthew 10.2-4) avers that was «'ο λεγομενος Πετρος» while the other apostles are identified by relationship, provenance or, in Matthew's case, of course, former profession. Matthew does not want Peter to share the kudos of a special name with anyone.



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POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR A PRE-70s PRODUCTION OF THE 1st GOSPEL;

EIGHT: THE JEWISH LITERARY BACKGROUND OF THE PRIMITIVE

2nd GOSPEL AND THE MAINLY - DERIVATIVE 1st ACCOUNT.

In illustration of the characteristic Markan literary devices noted above, Mark 1.1-45 provides one early example of asyndeton (1.3) and of the aforementioned verb-placement (1.4); over 45 ‘ands’ « και»; and nine examples of the Markan ‘signature phrase’ «και ευθυσ» which often has no particular value in the narratives in which it is used. There is also an example of a common Jewish poetic device, synonymous parallelism, in Mark 1.32 «φιας δε γενομενης, ‘οτε εδυσεν ‘ο ‘ηλιος».

In this same area, Matthew’s Gospel immediately reveals itself as a Judaeo-Christian work - even to a reader unskilled in the identification of reliable characteristics of Jewish literature, - through much of its didactic content which would not be readily accessible to a Gentile disciple.

Thus Matthew 5.17-20 focuses on «του νομου»; 5.33-37 teaches «εγω δελεγω ‘υμιν μη ομοσαι ολωσ μητε εω τω ουρανω, ‘οτι θρονος εστιντου θεου....μητε εις Ιεροσολυμα...» ; 6.1-4 «...‘Οταν ουν ποιησ ελεημοσυνην, μη σαλπισης εμπροσθεν σου...» ; 6.16-18 «...συ δε νηστευων αλειψαι σου την κεφαλην και το προσωπον σου νιψαι...» ; 23.1-36 « Τοτε ‘ο Ιησους ελαλησεν τοις οχλοις...λεγων επι της Μωυσεως καθεδρας εκαθισαν οι γραμματεισ και οι Φαρισαιοι.παντα ουν ‘οσα εαν ειπωσιν ‘υμιν ποιησατε και τηρειτε... ».

Similarly arcane to a non-Jewish-literate reader would be the 1st Gospel’s multiple citations of Hebrew scriptural passages considered by 1st Century Jews to be messianic prophecies - and in the new scriptures, referent to Jesus.

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Consider, *e.g.*, Isaiah 7.14 [Matthew 1.23]; Micah 5.2 [Matthew 2.6]; Hosea 11.1 [Matthew 2.15] and Jeremiah 31.15 [Matthew 2.18]). Matthew 9 provides a further indication of the Jewish focus of Matthew's didactic and somewhat evangelical writing – strengthening the case for not only a Jewish (proto-Rabbinic) background for the Evangelist, but also a necessarily comparatively-early dating to authenticate that Jewish focus.

Of all the Gospel writers, Matthew would have the best 'excuse' for concentrating on the Gentile mission field, in order to give himself a slate that can never quite be clean amongst his own people.

However, in Matthew 9.36 *ff* there is a credible Mosaic typological hypothesis to be asserted in relation to Matthew's Christology and thus his chosen modes of expression.

Matthew has extracted the Markan «προβατα» sentence (Mark 6.34) from its *Sitz im Leben* in the already overtly Mosaic-redolent Feeding of the 5 Thousand, and - perhaps by association with the 1st Evangelist's predilection for Mosaic typology, - he sets it down in the (didactic) context of his own understanding of the Numbers narrative where Moses requests a successor from God, as he himself will soon fade from sight; (*ref.*, Leithart N/D).

It is here asserted as significant that Moses, given God's response in the divine choice of Joshua, places Joshua under the authority of the priest Eleazar whose role is intercessor with God for the People and conduit of God's commands.

Thus the unique role undertaken by Moses as leader and, in essence, priest, is not passed on to Joshua, - he is to be a legitimate leader, but will be himself under another's priestly authority.

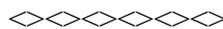
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This typifies for Matthew the situation into which he imports the «προβατα μη εχοντα ποιμενα» of Numbers 27.15ff. Jesus the Shepherd is gone; (cf., Matthew 26.31 *par* Mark 14.27; John 10.11ff; Hebrews 13.20 and 1 Peter 2.25); so who now is to be shepherd? Matthew's catechumens may be 'putting their hands up' and saying, "You?" – Peter is not an option as he is almost certainly dead, as is Paul.

Matthew's response to the question is made with the same recourse to prayer enjoined by Jesus (Matthew 9.38), Matthew contextualizes the incident by the «ποιμενα» reference, but he then mixes his metaphors with the «θερισμος» allusion which serves to break the parallel with the Mosaic context where a successor is being sought.

Jesus is the ultimate bearer of the torch handed down from Moses – and he is going to 'disappear' like Moses but not to die privately, rather, as Matthew (alone) is at pains to teach, Jesus has promised to continue His active leadership – and is right now keeping that promise.

Thus what the disciples are to pray for is «εργατας» - a prayer to which they themselves were to be the agents of the immediate answer- and now the members of Matthew's community are to see themselves in the same light.



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POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR A PRE-70s PRODUCTION OF THE 1st GOSPEL;NINE: THE ABSENCE OF PROVABLY-ANACHRONISTIC CONCEITS

Regarding the Trinity, the final verses of the 1st Gospel *may* contain the only Gospel allusion to the concept. The clause «βαπτίζοντες αυτους εις το ονομα του πατρος και του υιου και του ‘αγιου πνευματος» (28.19) has the characteristics of a formula and begs the question for many scholars of the existence of such a liturgical construction at the time when the 1st Evangelist is honing his magnum opus.

No other New Testament writer employs the Trinitarian formula so there is no canonical evidence of even the decade wherein this baptismal-provenanced construction became normative. Therefore there is no compelling reason to doubt the authenticity of this celebrated pericope to which Davies and Allison (2004, p.548) respond to the presence of the Trinitarian device with a suggestion that the formula invokes Matthew 3, where the Father speaks, the Son is baptized and the Spirit descends upon the candidate.

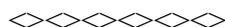
That narrative is unquestionably learned tradition for Matthew, and is his redaction of Mark 1.9-11's reductionist account - probably reflecting the Second Evangelist's unease with any aggrandizement of John the Baptist, who is clearly still a competitor with Jesus as a religious focal point in the Hellenistic milieu where Luke's very brief account of the Baptism of Jesus elegantly – and it is to be assumed, appositely - excises the Baptist entirely from the narrative, once John's 'forerunner' Elijah function is completed. However, significantly, the 1st Evangelist retains the specific invocations of the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

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Moreover to make the unnecessary assumption that the formula «εις το ονομα του πατρος και του υιου και του αγιου πνευματος» (Matthew 28.19[b]) necessarily implies a ‘*homoousios*’ doctrinal position is as unreasonable as would be asserting that Elijah, Moses and Jesus were all equally Messiahs, or more nonsensically equally ‘Sons of God’ in the ‘post-messianic’ meaning of that title.

The 1st Gospel, as a community-focused document *somewhat* similar to the ‘*Didache*’, does not require a post-70AD. to specify the invocation of God the Father, the ‘Son of God’ and the involvement of the Holy Spirit in the new rite which has, by the attestation of Acts, become more than the lustration offered by Jewish practice and employed by John.

The juxtaposition of the Three, the Heavenly Father, Jesus the Christ and the Spirit of God (or, *cf.*, Romans 8.9, the Spirit of Christ), does not imply a Trinitarian doctrine, *per se*, that was to be long in gestation and may have had its inception with the liturgical formula, as opposed to the other way around; (*cf.*, Augustine’s development of the notion of ‘Original Sin’ to provide an aetiology for the Baptism of Infants). But the lustration and reception of the Holy Spirit was clearly a very early development in the Church as is exemplified by Paul’s question to the believers at Ephesus who have received the baptism (lustration) of John but not the baptism Paul is to give them and the laying on of Paul’s hands which was accompanied by the coming upon them of the Holy Spirit, of whose new presence they have not previously heard; (*ref.*, Acts 19.1-7).



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POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR A PRE-70s PRODUCTION OF THE 1st GOSPEL; TEN: MATTHEW'S JESUS; A 'PROTO-RABBINIC' (i.e., pre-70 AD) TEACHER AND THE ASSERTIONS OF THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS

The theory of Oral Tradition in relation to the *Hielsgeschichte* was developed by Gerhardsson who studied the Oral Traditions of a number of 1st Century Jewish communities, - which already had a very strong Oral Tradition encouraged by Rabbinic teaching. A system of precise verbatim memorization was a common teaching tool in these communities, with teachers requiring their students to repeat lessons and parables back to them exactly *before* the meanings were revealed. This was much like the instructional tactics of some Early Church communities who submitted their neophytes to Baptism and the Eucharist before explaining the latter.

In the ancient Eastern world "it is evident that the more detailed and the more voluminous the scope of information stored in the memory could be shown to be, the more impressive it was." The ideal was to recall exactly, "as detailed as possible," though obviously the ideal would have limits. Among the Jews, Rabbis were encouraged to memorize entire books of the OT, indeed the whole OT, and all of Jewish education consisted of rote memory.

Students were expected to remember the major events of narratives - although incidentals could be varied, if the main point was not affected; (*ref.*, Wilk 1995, p. 32). What is being described here is, importantly, the practices which had grown in the relative calm of Jewish society before Jesus' time, – and which would not have survived unaltered in the vastly different situation of the post-70s 'Diaspora'.

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Before the watershed of desperate urgency begun in the late 60s AD and in view of the fact that the earliest conveyors of the Jesus tradition were all, without exception, Jews, it would naturally be expected that disciples of a given Rabbi would treat the teachings of their master with as much respect as did the disciples of other Jewish teachers such as Hillel and Shammai.

This is all the more likely if, as happened with Jesus of Nazareth, the teacher suffered an untimely and unexpected end and was highly criticized by some Jews. The need to remember, preserve his wisdom and defend him against false charges would be acute: (*ref.*, Holding 2009, *passim*).

Gerhardsson credibly avers that as Jesus was a member of this culture and familiar with these Oral Traditions, He would have required his followers to learn his teachings in exactly the same manner – and they would expect this too. Thus, oral transmission, rather than being adjudged an unreliable source of information, probably had been a mechanism which preserved the integrity of the particular message. Indeed scholars assert that the Oral Tradition was often considered more authoritative than written material, presumably because faulty oral recital could be challenge by its hearers, where a document cannot be immediately disputed: (*ref.*, Gerhardsson 2001). Despite claims made to the contrary, Holding (2009) notes that oral historians are every bit as much concerned with historical accuracy as writing historians. They will also find themselves corrected in mid-performance by the audience if they err, as this writer has observed with delight in Aboriginal ‘Dreamtime’ presentations.

This instinct for accuracy seems historically to have provided an essential antidote to the corruption of narratives and data such as genealogies in many ancient cultures. Indeed, none have survived better than the early history of the seed of Abraham and the unique ‘bargain’ Yahweh offered to him.

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The facility for oral transmission accuracy is indeed evidenced in relation to the Gospels, where there are an impressive 80% Oral Tradition-based agreements regarding the words of Jesus: (*ref.*, http://www.tektonics.org/harmonise/gospel_precision.html).

Many of the disagreements that do exist are cultural in provenance, as when Luke, out of consideration for his Gentile readers, eschews the Jewish (probably dominically-employed and repurposed) Danielic term «ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου» where Matthew and to a lesser extent Mark do not.

Here, it is important to recognize the place that ancient Jewish educational practice gave to the memorization of both oral and written tradition. C.F. Reisner (undated online) has produced a thorough study both of educational practices within the 1st-century Judaism, as well as the evidence within the Gospels' tradition related to Jesus and his teaching methods. He has concluded - quite apart from a dependency on Rabbinic parallels - that memory of sacred teachings and traditions was a vital part of both Jewish life in general and Jesus' teaching program in particular;(cf., Jeremias 1969). And G.M. Miller (2010) has added in this regard: “Part of this growing confidence in the accuracy of oral transmission, is the growing awareness of the easy-to-memorize structure of many of Jesus sayings”.

Stein writes; “It is now clearer than ever before that Jesus was a teacher. In fact the Gospels describe him as a teacher 45 times and the term 'Rabbi' is used of him 14 times. One of his prominent activities was teaching. Like the Rabbis, He proclaimed the divine law, gathered disciples, debated with the religious authorities, was asked to settle legal disputes, and supported his teaching with Scripture.

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He also used mnemonic devices, such as parables, exaggerations, puns, metaphors and similes, proverbs, riddles, and parabolic actions, to aid his disciples and audience in retaining his teachings. Above all he used poetry, ‘*parallelismus membrorum*’, for this purpose”: (ref., Stein, 1978, p. 200).

In light of all this, it is evident that Jesus “carefully thought out and deliberately formulated [his] statements” (Gerhardsson 2001). Boyd (2007) also notes that general studies of oral transmission have shown it to be more reliable than critics would presuppose. Studies by anthropologists such as Jan Vansina (1988) have demonstrated that the transmission of traditions in oral societies follow a generally fixed, if flexible pattern - similar to the type witnessed to in the Gospels themselves. Related to this, contemporary psycholinguistic studies have served to confirm that the techniques that characterized Jesus' oral teaching methods would have made for 'very accurate communication between Jesus and his followers' and would have 'ensured excellent semantic recall.'

If we come to the ministry of Jesus as 1st-century historians, and forget our twentieth-century assumptions about mass media, the overwhelming probability is that most of what Jesus said, he said not twice but 200 times, with (of course) a myriad of local variations. Thus, even if the mnemonic nature of Jesus' teaching asserted herein is challenged; even if the tremendous capacity of the oriental memory is discounted (as it is by the ‘Jesus Seminar’), it is the present writer’s view that whatever Jesus taught, He would, like any teacher, have taught it many times. For example, He is canonically described as teaching on the road, - enough times so that, literate or not (and there is no critical consensus on this), His disciples would have the entire set of lessons we find in the Synoptics committed to memory. However, noting the interest in preserving the words of Jesus, there is good reason to believe

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that Jesus' words were transcribed early, perhaps as early as during His earthly ministry.

Contra to this idea, sceptics often assert that the early Christians, since they believed in the imminent return of Jesus, had "no interest" in recording the words of Jesus on paper. But this assertion is challenged by the evidence: as Christianity was evangelistic, even if proof existed suggesting a widespread notion in the Early Church that Jesus' return was imminent, this would actually support the idea of recording the words and deeds of Jesus on paper, since there were only so many Apostles and evangelists to go around, whereas documents could be sent all around the Roman Empire, and be left behind when the Apostles moved on. The Rabbis had 'talmidim', disciples who travelled round with them most of the time and would be sent out on their own when deemed ready; (*ref.*, Lyon, 2012, *passim*).

Each Rabbi had a 'yoke', his own method of teaching and interpreting scripture. The *talmidim* were constrained to learn that approach, take on that yoke. To call Jesus' followers (*ie* those who literally followed him around) His 'disciples' is to strongly imply that he was their (itinerant) Rabbi – just as (before the Internet) there could not be a *bona fide* 'student' without a 'teacher'. It has been noted that Jesus uses 'proto-Rabbinic' techniques such as answering a question with another question, as did the *Hasidim* – as opposed to the post-70AD Rabbis who worked exclusively with the midrashic technique. And the dominical invitation, found only in the 1st of the Gospels (*ref.*, Matthew 11.28- 29); «Δευτε προς με παντες οι κοπιωντες και πεφορτισμενοι, καγω αναπαυσω υμας. Αρατε τον ζυγον μου εφ υμας και μαθετε απ εμου, οτι πραυς εμι και ταπεινος τη καρδια...» is thoroughly explicated by the aforementioned Rabbinic expression; (*cf.*, Acts 13.10; Galatians 5.1 and 1st Timothy 6.1). Lyon (*ibid*) describes the four levels of meaning available to Rabbis in exegetical or didactic modes. 'P'shat' [Peshat] referred to a simple, evident sense; 'Remez' (a

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hint or clue) denoted an allusive meaning; ‘*Midrash*’ or ‘*D’rash*’ meant an interpretative methodology and ‘*Sod*’ indicated an esoteric import.

‘*Remezim*’ required a familiarity with the text for which a deeper meaning is asserted; the ‘Cry of Dereliction’ is an example in Matthew 27.46, where Psalm 22 is quoted by Jesus on the Cross, (and often misused by Preachers by the suggesting that Jesus expected those who heard Him to mentally follow the lengthy Psalm through to its comfortable ending; thus the human reality of Jesus and His connectedness to the rest of humanity is dangerously eroded).

An intentional allusive citation, however, is found in Matthew 21.15-16, where Psalm 8.2 is appositely invoked. Matthew atypically employs the midrashic mode of interpretation in Matthew 1.22-23, which may be derived from an existent distortion, probably LXX-based, of the Isaiah citation by earlier messianic-prophetic interpreters.

The ‘*Sod*’ method requires a fore-knowledge of extra- scriptural factors to educe a ‘Gnostic-type’ hidden meaning. For example, the study of the esoteric discipline ‘*Gematria*’ in the Bible including the 1st Gospel, produces some fascinating, if not disturbing observations in regard to names, constructions, etc.

Thus, disciples in the early Jewish *Sitz im Leben* were (rote) learners, and also memorizers and performer/reciters. This was, as averred, the way Jewish educational processes worked. In fact it was the staple of all ancient education, including Graeco-Roman education....those who handed on Oral Tradition would not have seen themselves primarily as creators but as preservers and editors.

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However, even without that boundary provision, - as Boyd (2007) avers, (p.125); “it is often assumed in post-Bultmannian circles that an apocalyptic movement, such as early Christianity, would not have been interested in writing down and codifying their ideas and their histories...(but) in Qumran we find a thoroughly apocalyptic group doing just this. Though they expected an imminent end to the world, they nevertheless took great care in composing volumes. Hence, however we construe the Apocalypticism of Jesus' early group, we have no reason to aver that they would not have been, from the start, involved in writing”.

Wenham asserts, “There is a growing body of evidence and arguments that supports the thesis that the disciples (and sometimes even the audiences of Jesus) 'took notes' during or immediately after His words/deeds” and “It is now clear that even during the Rabbinic period the Rabbinic teaching process was not exclusively oral.” – Wenham then cites the works of Reisner, Gerhardsson, E.E. Ellis, *et al*: (*ref.*, Wenham 1992).

Gundry adds “The only hypothesis with enough flexibility to meet the requirements is that a body of loose notes stands behind the bulk of the synoptic tradition. The wide use of shorthand and the carrying of notebooks in the Greco-Roman world, the school practice of circulating lecture notes and utilizing them in published works, and the later transmission of Rabbinic tradition through shorthand notes support this hypothesis.

As a former ‘publican’, the Apostle Matthew would have been admirably fitted to fill a position as note-taker in the band of uneducated apostles”;*(ref.*, Gundry 1975, p.xii).

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It is interesting to note that experts in the field of Oral Tradition have observed that written text was often held to be less authoritative than scrupulously transmitted Oral Tradition, as a piece of written text cannot be critiqued as a live 'performer' can. Moreover, since Christianity began as a sect within the numerous 'Judaisms' of the 1st Century, and began experiencing serious exclusion from the mainstream' Judaism in the early 30's - as evidenced by the stoning of Stephen and persecution of Saul (*ref.*, Acts 7.8), it is reasonable to posit that the new community of Faith were constrained to do what others before them had. They would have written down the dominical material for use by new converts and by new churches (as did Qumran).

And, over time, as the worship services and gatherings were driven 'underground', and the leaders martyred, the need for written materials would have become increasingly necessary for the preservation of the «κερυγμα» *et al.* And the prescription for such writings would be the preservation of believed-authentic Oral tradition to define the «κερυγμα» , to transmit authentic dominical teaching expressed in story and «λογια» – and to provide, where possible an authentic connection of the Good News in its received forms, with the various Jewish lectionaries (an aim that was credibly achieved with the 4th Gospel, but only hinted at by the Synoptics, perhaps because of the very plethora of Lectionaries, three year, one year and commencing at different times of the liturgical year.

The change of status from just one of the Jewish groups or sects extant before the Jewish War to the seminal influence on the 'new Diaspora' Judaism which traces unbroken to present day Jewish orthodoxy, this cannot have happened 'overnight'.

It is counter-intuitive to posit that any self-coherent group who have been forced to abandon their familiar milieu would initially do anything other than gather closer together spiritually to survive the traumatic changes wrought upon them.

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It is also to discount the exclusivist nature of the Pharisaic ‘Club’ and the traditional lengthy time of preparation for full entry into this rigorous lifestyle, similar in many ways to a monastic vocation, to assume that the group, however successful their iteration of Judaism may have proved to be in a return to the Diaspora circumstance *sans* Temple which engendered them, would suddenly open their doors to just anyone.

Even in the absence of documentary evidence of the gradual assimilation of other iterations of Judaism into the Pharisaic, the necessity for a process to have occurred, makes the positing of Matthean dating as coinciding with that ascendancy post-70AD, well beyond the fall of the Temple – and not within more than a generation, any more conceivably accommodated-to by the new Diaspora Jewish society-in-tatters than the comparatively much less traumatic experience of the fall of the World Trade Towers has proved to be.

For the central focus of this dissertation, the temporal provenance of Matthew’s work, the 1st Gospel ‘ticks all the boxes’ emphatically – except regarding a connection to a specific Jewish Lectionary.

The Gospel however, lends itself to liturgical usage sufficiently for it to hold pride of place for centuries in denominations that thrive on Scripture- based homiletics, rubrics and structured Worship.



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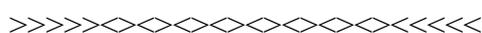
POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOR A PRE-70s PRODUCTION OF THE 1st GOSPEL;
ELEVEN: JESUS' ACTED PARABLES INTRODUCING
THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE TOTALLY-FUTURE ESCHATON.

Lyon (2012), lends support to the early *Sitz im Leben* of Matthew's writing when the scholar posits a hidden (future-eschatological) meaning in the 12 basket left over from the Feeding of the 5,000, and the 7 remaining after the 4,000, as alluding to the Hasidic designations of the areas surrounding the Sea of Galilee. The 12 baskets are asserted to invoke the 'Land of the 12' the Hebrew Tribes; the pagan inhabitants of the southwestern corner of the lake, the Decapolis area, are considered as inhabitants of the 'Land of the 7' referring to the tribes driven out by Joshua. Thus the disciples' obtuse misunderstandings of the dominical 'bread of life' teaching, have led to them missing the 'Sod' reference to Jesus as the life-giver to both the '12' and the '7'. This interpretation is given considerable credibility by reference to Matthew 15.32-16.12, where the Feeding of the 4,000 (otherwise vulnerable to dismissal as a mere repetition or to fanciful eisegesis), is followed by the at first sight *non-sequitur* of the 'request', «πειραζοντες» of the Pharisees and Sadducees for a sign from heaven, (Matthew 16.1ff) Jesus responds with another apparent *non-sequitur*, berating them for not seeing the 'signs of the times' and then He tersely refers to «το σημειον Ιωνα»; (16.4[b]).

Changing the scene again, «Και ελθοντες οι μαθηται εις το περαν επελαθοντο αρτους λαβειν», the sequence of seeming *non-sequiturs* continues with Jesus' warning about «της ζυμης των Παρισαιων και Σαδδουκαιων» and (vs.7) «Οι δε διελογιζοντο εν 'εαυτοις λεγοντες 'οτι αρτους ουκ ελαβομεν» regarding which superficial thinking produces an upbraiding by Jesus and a reminder of the two Feedings with «και ποσας στυριδας ελαβετε» a repeated for both references, apparently to illustrate that He was not talking about bread *per se*.

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This leads to their insight, «‘οτι ουκ ειπεν προσεχειν απο της ζυμης [των αρτων]αλλα αποτης διδαχης των Παρισαιων και Σαδδουκαιων». The reader, however, is intended to perceive that all of these pericopæ are one unit, from 15.32-16.12, (leading on to the climactic recognition of Jesus’ status at Caesarea Philippi). The ‘acted parable’ of the Feedings and their 12 and 7 baskets, indicating the eschatological truth of God’s provision for the Jews and the Gentiles alike as the latter come to worship Him, links directly to the Pharisees and Sadducees being unable to see that the expected End Times are upon them. All they need is a reminder of Jonah’s failed attempt to avoid God’s command to him to preach to the sinners of Nineveh. And the sequence is concluded with the Disciples’ slowness to understand the significance of the Feedings, especially the 12 and 7 baskets, and the eventual insight that they must eschew the teaching so the Pharisees and Sadducees –who have nothing in common with each other apart from the shared emphasis on Jewish exclusivism, the refusal to even consider the fate of the nations or what God may require of His Chosen People in relation to them. The obtuseness of the Disciples described in 16.7-11 suggests to the present writer, along with the hypothesis elucidated above, that the Disciples (therefore also Matthew’s disciples in ‘real time’) are being slow to perceive the implications of universality in the Eschaton being initiated by Jesus’ ‘First Coming’. Matthew’s purposes may also include the countering of the discomfort felt by the Judaeo-Christians at the presence among them of Hellenist-Christians. All of the above, - including the use of Rabbinic teaching methodology growing out of Hasidic didactic practices, a pre- 70 AD, - again does not preclude an early dating of Matthew’s work as the most logical assumption to make similarly, the focus on criticisms of the Pharisees does not require the latter group to have the ascendancy imputed to them by most Biblical historians after the fall of the Temple.



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EVIDENCE FOR A PRE-70s PRODUCTION OF THE 1st GOSPEL ASSESSED:

ONE: AUTHORSHIP REVISITED

As noted above, significant scholars of the ilk of Blomberg, Bruce and Boyd, maintain that the Apostle Matthew wrote 'his' Gospel personally. Their assertion is that, as a former tax collector, Matthew would not have been a feasible candidate for the false ascription of a Gospel, especially in the absence of any evidence of other such controversial pseudonymous writers - the evident usual *modus operandi* being to link a new work to an accepted authoritative individual, often on the grounds of a similarity of approach - as found in the products of 'schools'.

Particularly, an assertion of late dating for the 1st Gospel, therefore claiming the concomitant pseudonymity of the writer, in some manner identifying with the outcast 'Levi' seems an unnecessary 'stumbling block'. It also contradicts the evident auctorial diligence of Matthew, who eschews any distractions from his didactic and instructional purposes.

The writer of the 1st Gospel would not voluntarily stigmatise himself for no compelling reason. There is not even the reasonable possibility that the name as a *nom de plume* was invoked to point to the gracious forgiveness and renewed life Jesus came to bestow. Matthew takes part in no critical incidents –not even his own banquet in Matthew 9 – and he does not appear to warrant any didactic-purposed attention by Jesus. Certainly it would not have been necessary or merely politic to pseudonymously ascribe the 1st Gospel to the most embarrassing disciple after Judas.

It is noteworthy that, while Matthew does not have a 'speaking role' in the Gospel drama, he is amongst the 'elite' of the Twelve to be reliably mentioned in extra-canonical, non-Christian writings, where for instance Bartholomew, Thaddeus and 'the Cananaean' are not.

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Thus there are multiple attestations to his existence, which suggests the real historical significance of the ‘original’ Apostle *contra* arguments of his passive role as a name upon which to ‘hang’ pseudonymous authorship. Form Critic M. Eugene Boring ((1995) argues that the assertion of Matthew as an unlikely choice for pseudonymous authorship “runs aground on the fact that practically every character in early Christianity, major and minor, has a Gospel attributed to him”;(ref Boring 1998, p.107).

However the observation may be ‘refloated’ by noting that the very plethora of candidates available mitigates against the choice of the only disciple who shared some degree of notoriety with the deceased Judas, who by his appellation «Ιουδας ‘ο Ισκαριωτης» may have been one of the notorious ‘Sicarii’ (*cf.*, Matthew 10.4; «Σιμων ‘ο Καναναιος», *c.f.*, Luke 6.15[b]; «Σιμωνα τον καλουμενον ζηλωτην») where Matthew, agreeing with Mark may be disguising both Judas’ and his own ‘shady’ past, perhaps out of habit formed at the time).

Also there is fact of Matthew’s account finding no real competition amongst works with more propitious ascriptions, such as ‘according to Peter’ or ‘Thomas’, nor the assumed-Petrine-provenanced and already extant 2nd Gospel – nor even the 4th Gospel which alone stridently claims eyewitness apostolic authorship.

The application of disinterested ‘common sense’ to the matter of the identification of Matthew leads immediately to the observation that Jesus’ disciples must have readily accepted the Tax Collector into their scarcely-yet bonded number. This inheres whether the time they may have had together by the 1st Gospel’s attenuated account of the period before the Call of Matthew (Matthew 9.9) or Mark and Luke’s more seemingly brief timescale.

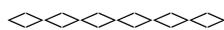
REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

It would be a step away from the seeking of historical realities to unconsciously import our long-held-from-Sunday School picture of St. Matthew, briefly encountered while working in the Capernaum Tax Shed instantly ‘converted’ by a word of invitation or command by Jesus. All the *dramatis personae* of the Gospel accounts were ‘real’ Jewish people. It is beyond hazarding whether Jesus had to overcome an acculturated distaste for this contemptible creature betraying his own people and their God by collaborating with the enemy, Rome.

However there are no grounds for assuming a thoroughly atypical bland acceptance of this “low life” (and therefore we may note of Jesus subsequent seeking out of such ne’er-do-wells and their female equivalents, prostitutes). So it speaks well of the men Jesus selected that they could pass the test of accepting one such into their number after no great time of learning at the feet of their astonishing Master.

And the situation in which they were placed by Jesus’ astonishing choices, whereby a Tax Collector, one, (Simon the Zealot) ‘Cananaean’, or perhaps two, adding Judas Iscariot, pugilistic hot-heads and later even women – rag-tag ‘leftovers’ whom only a very desperate Rabbi would enrol in his school – this situation must have been hard to accommodate for subsequent Jewish-provenanced neophytes.

The development of the Early Church would thus not be served strategically by adding to the already stupendous burden of belief required to accept a young Galilean as Messiah by dressing a Gospel writer, unnecessarily, in the uniform of the enemy.



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EVIDENCE FOR A PRE-70s PRODUCTION OF THE 1st GOSPEL ASSESSED:TWO: TEXTUAL INDICATIONS OF THE *SITZ IM LEBEN* OF THE GOSPEL

En passant, it is noted that references to miraculous healings, ‘peak’ in Mark 18.17-18, the acknowledged-earliest Gospel account, and become increasingly somewhat muted as successive Scriptures are circulated, this reluctance being detectable in the Third Gospel which avoids healing references for as long as possible in following Mark’s outline of events and intersperses healing pericopæ sparingly in the later portions of Luke’s account.

What is evidenced is a retreat from Spirit-engendered phenomena still evident in the 20th Century from von Harnack *et al.* to the popular Scottish exegete, William Barclay and many current critics. The former datum is here asserted to be consonant with a relatively early provenance for Matthew’s Gospel and its quite focused part-purposing as a ‘training manual’ which balances preaching with healing and exorcising duties in the preparation of disciples being equipped for mission.

The general consensus among Scholars is that Matthew’s contemporaries were living in an anticipated near-future time of an Apocalypse, *ie*, a conclusion placed upon human history by God as Judge of the Nations in their obduracy, similar to the concept of the Noah Narrative. In consequence they conflated situationally-driven apocalyptic, which ‘The Revelation’ examples, with essentially atemporal prophetic eschatology such as Isaiah, Ezekiel *et al.*

Therefore they lived in the expectation of seeing in their daily lives some telling signs of the immediate presence, as opposed to the signs of the imminence of Day of the Lord, (as seen in a ‘pre-Amos’ optimistic light). In the 1st Gospel, Jesus’ generalised warnings about the ‘signs of the times’ are expressed in terms of imminent beginnings, but long term future trauma.

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So the disciples are warned not to attend to false messiahs (Matthew 24.23-26) and the description of the Parousia that follows on from these verses (vv.29ff), is an easily misunderstood allusion to the End, «Ευθεως δε μετα την θλιφιν των ἡμερων...». However the climax of the 2nd Coming is bracket by imagery depicting a lengthy period of time, «πολεμους και ακοας πολεμων ... λιμοι και σειςμοι κατα τοπους παντα δε ταυτα αρχη ωδινων..πολλοι ψευδοπροφηται εγγεθηρηθησονται...και κηρυχθησεται τουτο το ευαγγελιοω της βασιλειας εν ὄλη τη οικουμενη...και τοτε ἡξει το τελος»; and (Matthew 24.34ff) «αμην λεγω ὑμιν ὅτι ου μη παρελθη ἡ γενεα αυτη ἕως αν παντα ταυτα γενηται».

This is followed by perhaps the most evident parenthetical auctorial interpolation in the Gospels save John 21.23, «Ὁ ουρανος και ἡ γη παρελευσεται, οι δε λογοι μου ου μη παρελυωσιν». The purpose of each of the synoptic writers in this latter text from Mark (*cf.*, Luke 21.33) is clearly to 'hose down' apocalyptic expectation, which certainly for Matthew would distract from his program of teaching and instruction. Regarding such concepts as 'The Day of the Lord' then, a possible commonality between the 1st three Gospels is here asserted to be demonstrated by the seeming insertion into each work of the Apocalyptic Tradition known to Mark. Each writer employs the Temple setting of the Markan material, which is not in itself remarkable.

However, Mark's apocalyptic pericopæ are presented with minor language enhancements in Matthew's version. Vermes (1995, pp.120-121) considered one such to be the use of «ὁ χριστος» in Matthew 24.5, which replaces the «εγω εμι» of Mark 13.6 and Luke 21.8 – where the divine designation of, for example John 18.5-6 – is not implied. Rather, there is a reluctance to place upon Jesus' lips an anachronistic self-identification as the Christ which is reserved for the Trials that are to come.

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Matthew's insertion of the messianic title suggests an absence of Hellenistic sensitivities regarding this claim, replaced by the *a priori* identification of Jesus' unique status for Matthew's community. Additionally to the, in itself not determinative, fact of the minor redaction of the Markan Tradition, there is posited to be further support for an insertion of this material *en bloc* into each of the Synoptics in the distinctive manner in which these apocalyptic pericopæ are linked to the material which follows them.

Historically, in regard to the quite rapid injection of Gentiles into the Church, it is interesting to note the fatalism of the Christians in Rome, who accepted Nero's efforts at urban renewal as a sign of the End – meaning there was no point in putting the fires out.

It is possible that this attitude of resignation and passivity suited the mood of the Roman Empire to the East, given the uncertainties of its state and increasingly tarnished glory during the post-Tiberius years. 37-69 AD saw the chaotic and brief reigns of Caligula and Nero with the weak Claudius in between; then the 'year of the four Emperors' concluding with ten years of Vespasian, 69-79 AD, two of Titus then fifteen of Domitian, one of Nerva and then Trajan before the new Century had even begun.

It may be, then, that the eschatological structuring and certainties of Christianity and its rapid expansion (*cf.*, von Harnack 1908) attracted Hellenists bewildered and alarmed by the also rapid degeneration of the Empire's leadership after 63 years of stable rule.

Even the pragmatic persecution of Nero with its shocking excesses may have proved a cohesive force for the Jewish- provenanced and Hellenist proselytes, four murders and two 'encouraged' suicides by 69 AD with its 'revolving door' Emperors must have erased the former reality of the '*Pax Romana*'. Christian apocalyptic would have been an antidote to the chaos afflicting the once-glorious Empire.

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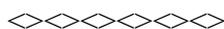
Matthew is untrammelled by Gentile precedents regarding the miraculous provenance of the Christ, given some precedence by the miraculous departure of Elijah, the significant Hebrew religious entity (*ref.*, 2 Kings 2.1-12; *ref.*, Matthew 11.14; 16.14; 17.3.10*ff et al*), and the supernatural attributes of Elisha's remains (*ref.*, 2 Kings 13.21).

It is noted that the final moments of Elijah parallel Jesus' teaching on His own going and the assumption of His 'robe' of the indwelling Spirit by the disciples that was to occur at Pentecost.

So from the present perspective, the foregoing brief study of Judaeo-Christian 'popular' eschatological mythos (for the concept: *ref.*, Eliade 1963,p.8); firstly gives no evincive evidence of chronological provenance for the 1st Gospel, but is suggestive of earlier dating.

Secondly, Matthew's usage of Mark's apocalyptic material, (itself a compilation of Oral Apocalyptic suggested here to have been received en bloc by the Second Evangelist), the dissonance between the style and distinctive theological foci of both Evangelists and this seemingly unassimilated material. Also there is Matthew's redaction, particularly, of Mark's pointed re-entry into his Narrative schema – all these are here asserted to indicate a lack of personal interest in the details of eschatological programs other than for their potential to serve the purposes of christocentric didactic.

Moreover, if, as the textual evidence suggests, Matthew does not perceive a (distracting) significant interest in Apocalyptic within his community, then not only are the sack of Jerusalem and the burning, (possibly accidental in terms of scale) of the 2nd Temple not weighty enough matters to require pastoral support and theological interpretations, but these traumatic matters also deemed not even noteworthy by Matthew.



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EVIDENCE FOR A PRE-70s PRODUCTION OF THE 1st GOSPEL ASSESSED:
THREE: INDICATIONS OF THE ESCHATOLOGICAL *SITZ IM LEBEN*
OF THE 1st GOSPEL

An indication of the date of ‘publication’ seems, to the present writer, to inhere in the following: the early centuries of the Church evidence a burgeoning expectancy regarding the apocalyptic figure of the ‘Antichrist’ that is the antithesis of the Messiah, as a major ‘player’ in the drama of ‘future history’ which is mapped out, for the 1st Gospel, in the Olivet discourse of Matthew 24.1-31. The degree of development of this figure, from an individual entity with its roots in Jewish Apocalyptic through to a category of persons (parallel to the name of WW2 notorious collaborator ‘Quisling’ becoming a term for any traitorous person in the mid 20th Century); - such a morphology warrants attention as a possible indicator of the point in that development at which the 1st Gospel was written, by comparison with the use of the anathematic concept in the other canonical books. Paul, in 2 Thessalonians 2.3, writes of «ὁ ἀνδρῶπος υἱὸς ἀνομίας, ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας» - referring to an individual entity who is yet to appear in the pre-ordained economy of the Eschaton, and writing by general consensus *ca.*, 51 AD. The different titles may suggest that the necessity for the double identification exists because no one name is universally in use.

The usage of the «ἀντιχριστός» concept in the ‘categorical’ sense the writer of the 1st Johannine seems to be encouraging in his readers, might lend some weight to a dating of Matthew to the commonly accepted period of 80 to 90 AD, as the 1st Evangelist is the Gospel writer most likely to have his fingers on the pulse of Jewish-based

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Christian eschatological developments or present enthusiasms. It is also to be acknowledged that the concept of a personal ‘Antichrist’ certainly had currency in the 2nd and 3rd Centuries, but this would move beyond the useful purview of the present studies: (*ref.*, Jenks 1991, pp. 27-40). 19th Century scholar, Pink posits a number of somewhat tenuous allusions to the ‘Antichrist’ in the 1st Gospel but makes his most pressing case , along with other Dispensationalists, for Matthew 24.15; (*ref.*, Pink, online doc., 2001).

Matthew 24.1-45 is developed from Mark 13.1-32, which pericopæ are also redacted by Luke (21.5-37). Of the two derivative accounts, Matthew’s cleaves most closely to the Markan original (which itself is almost certainly a compilation of Jewish Apocalyptic material partly based on Hebrew Scriptures including Daniel, 1st Isaiah and Joel, and fashioned by Tradition into a schema. Both 1st and Second Evangelists include an ‘aside’, a parenthetical remark addressed to «’ο ἀναγινωσκῶν» - entirely atypical of either author and therefore suggestive of a familiar pericope of ‘popular’ Apocalyptic concerned with the Dan 9.27 prophetic vision of pagan desecration of the Temple. No doubt the horrifying image was brought into particular relief by the stories of Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the very much more recent threat of Caligula in 40 AD to have his own image placed in the Temple at Jerusalem.

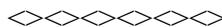
All three Synoptic writers, with the 4th Evangelist, fail to refer to any anticipation of an antichrist figure, in their apocalyptic pericopæ or elsewhere. What the Synoptic writers share is an essentially identical attitude towards apocalyptic expectation, each discouraging a premature identification of the trigger events and components of the final days and the seductions of «ψεθδοχριστοι» : (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Matthew 24.118, 32-37; Mark 13.5-8, 28- 33; Luke 21. 7-9, 29-33).

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The synoptic writers share a marked lack of interest in the great figure, Elijah - central to much Jewish “End Times” speculation. This classical prophet was not so much expected to return *qua* prophet but as the uniquely – with Elisha - *anointed* prophet, unique because ‘anointing’ was for Priests and Kings (*ref.*, Malachi 4.5).

Such was the eschatological expectation of the 1st Century AD, that the familiar Deutero-Isaianic 61.1ff, which Jesus appropriates to Himself (Matthew 11.5 and Luke 4.18), was consistently understood as referring to Elijah. Connections between Elijah and Jesus “seem to be more the concern of Matthew, Mark and Luke’s sources than Matthew, Mark and Luke themselves”. (*ref.*, Poirier (2008)).

The consensus of the Synoptic writers on the fading relevance of Elijah in specifically Judaeo-Christian Apocalyptic suggests that all were writing at broadly the same point in the development of Christian eschatology - lending weight to the argument for early provenance for all three, which other factors suggest - including the ‘still-standing’ status of the Temple and the constant synoptic references to it.



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EVIDENCE FOR A PRE-70s PRODUCTION OF THE 1st GOSPEL ASSESSED:

FOUR: MATTHEW'S AMBIGUITY REGARDING THE NEW UNIVERSALISM

There is still much debate amongst Matthean scholars regarding the Evangelist's attitude to both Jews and Gentiles: has he 'written off' the 'Judaisms' of his day? Is he exclusivist regarding 'the nations', or accepting their incursion into his own 'realised messianic' Judaism as a *fait accompli*, or actually embracing and teaching the new-found acceptability of those beyond the border? Indeed, - does examination of his Gospel indicate that he was himself a Gentile as some have asserted?

It is intriguing that a vocal minority of New Testament scholars adjudge the 1st Evangelist's attitude towards the then-contemporary 'Judaisms' and the largely (ultimately) negative response to the challenge to repentance (turning around) made to them by Jesus, to evince the dismissive verdict of a Gentile writer in the Gospel according to Matthew.

It can be argued that such a provenance for the 1st Evangelist would explain his adoption of the name of the Tax Collector, either as a symbol of the writer's own distance from the gated community of Judaism – or more pragmatically, because he was not deterred from invoking the name of this particular Apostle . He may have made his choice of pseudonym based on the scant, or seemingly non-existent claimants to Matthew's notoriety from a Jewish perspective, where, by comparison the more 'popular' Apostolic names were probably 'over-subscribed'.

Significant to the question of Matthew's *Sitz im Leben* as potentially revealed by his personal perspective on Gentiles, his perception of his fellow Jews who have not embraced the new gift of God in Christ Jesus – and in particular the Pharisees, is the probable point in the history of these relationships that he inhabits.

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Has he ‘given up’ on unresponsive Jews, similarly the Pharisees who are singled out for severe criticism by Jesus but should properly be regarded as one of the less numerically significant groups within the various iterations of Judaism; is he unequivocally ready to embrace «οἱ ἔθνικοι» as Paul evidently has already been?

The answer to these questions is no more susceptible to partisan ‘proof texting’ than would be the assessment of any country’s attitude to ‘foreigners’ by the citing of lurid stories in the tabloid Press or Holiday promotions in the Travel Industry. Matthew rather evidences a considerable spectrum of attitudes to each of the three groups in question.

The 1st Evangelist writes in approving terms, (*e.g.*, 7.28); compassionate terms (*e.g.*, 9.35); reproving terms (*e.g.*, 11.16 *ff*); and extraordinarily extreme terms (27.25) in relation to ‘the Jews’ («οἱ πολλοί») similarly, though often writing in severe criticism of the Pharisees, (*e.g.*, 9.34 and 12.14). He also records quite mild reproofs (*e.g.*, 9.14 and 12.2 *ff*) although he cannot go so far as to record the friendly response of individual members of the group he (26.7 *ff*) and Mark (14.3 *ff*, *cf.*, John 12.1 *ff*) will presumably have found in the ‘Anointing of Jesus’ triple-attested narrative which Luke records in 7.36 *ff*.

What may be assumed is that Matthew will attempt to avoid taking a stance that he had not seen Jesus adopting. In regard to the Pharisees, as with the other groups examined here, he may be seen to reflect the dominical attitude of a sliding scale of frustration and disappointment with the Pharisees.

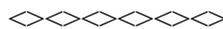
Jesus has told the people to do what the Pharisees say, not what they do: (*ref.*, 23.2-3). The context of this «λογιον» is Matthew 22.41 which adds the Pharisees to the crowd and the disciples as witnesses to His words. Keeping this actually strange-bedfellow audience in mind, the reader experiences the not-unexpected diatribe against the Pharisees which is expressed in direct terms as verse 13 arrives and the «Οὐαὶ δε ὑμῖν» series begins.

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The ‘stage directions’ do not change the scene or the audience until 24.1. This may be taken as implying that the Pharisees endure Jesus’ ‘tongue-lashing’ to its end. Attention to 23.2-8 reveals a set of observations about the Pharisees’ behaviour suddenly changing on the pivot of «ραββι» to the instruction, «υμεις δε μη κληθητε ραββι». This teaching makes no sense if it is addressed to «ο πολλοι», but gains considerable significance if verses 8-12 are addressed, even obliquely, to the Pharisees. «Ουαι δε υμιν» then takes on the character of a *cri de coeur* -an expression of Jesus’ angst-driven disappointment with the actually quite small group of (according to Josephus) 6,000 men who have decided to commit to a lifestyle which honours the law scrupulously, but still have feet of clay and haughty looks.

Thus this set of dominical «λογια» may be seen as consistent with Jesus’ characteristic compassion and patience, stretched to near its limit and issuing in the poignant «Ιερουσαλημ Ιερουσαλημ...ποσακις ηθελησα επισυναγαγειν τα τεκνα σου ‘ον τροπον ορνις επισυναγει τα νοσσια ‘υπο τας πτερυγας και ουκ ηθελησατε».

Matthew’s ambiguity towards Gentiles – and Samaritans – moves across a spectrum from Matthew 10.5-6; a dominical instruction to the twelve missioners to avoid Gentile and Samaritan towns, to inclusivity in the kingdom. (*ref.*, 24.14 and 28.19 *ff*).



REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

EVIDENCE FOR A PRE-70s PRODUCTION OF THE 1st GOSPEL ASSESSED:

FIVE: MATTHEW'S ACCOMMODATION

TO JESUS' ELEVATION OF WOMEN

An indication of the early stage in the life of the Early Church that Matthew experiences and relates to, sees him also struggling with the new concept of moving women from the periphery of the community of Christ to greater public involvement. Also they are to be no longer perceived as being archetypal victims and secondary 'players' but to begin to share centre stage.

Kopas sees the women in Matthew's genealogy as in the category of victim/survivors, but as individuals who have triumphed over their circumstances to their own and the community's benefit; (*ref* Kopas, 1984). They only have in common that they are foreigners and each one referred to in Matthew's genealogy (Tamar (Genesis 38), Rahab (Joshua 20), Ruth (Ruth) and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11) each one appears in the Hebrew scriptures in a sexual role and has a significant part in the *Hielsgeschichte*. (*ref.*, Herrern. N/D).

It is noteworthy that Matthew traces Jesus' Davidic lineage through Mary and his positive attitude to women is confirmed in Matthew 2.13ff (the flight into Egypt) and Rachel (Matthew 2.18) where each is a victim but both survive. Kopas sees significance in Jesus' 1st reference to women in Matthew 5.27-32, where the dignity of women is implied. An allusion to the nascent equality of women appears in Matthew 5.31-32 (*par* Mark 10.10-12). The women Jesus cures are proactive or responsively active in regard to their cures.

Matthew 19.35 expresses a dominical emphasis upon the demands the Gospel places on women, which is reinforced by 10.37 where Matthew records references to fathers and mothers *and* daughters.

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Of particular interest is Matthew 22.23-33, in the encounter with the Canaanite woman, Jesus treats the supplicant just as (presumably) He would a non-Jewish man. There is none of the sexual role with its subordination of women. However, there is, in this incident a strong sign of the pull of Jewish culture on both Jesus and His chronicler.

Gravity may be afforded to occasions when Matthew breaks his own rules of verbal economy, as when in 15.24 he adds Jesus' teaching that he has been sent only to the lost sheep of Israel and Jesus' emphatic silence after the woman addresses Him as Lord (not necessarily to be construed as a religious title, rather a mark of respect; *cf.*, comments above).

Matthew also rewrites the Markan original (Mark 7.24*ff*) to include the instant opprobrium of the disciples and the lack of dominical censure of the insensitive dismissal of a person in obvious distress.

By comparison, in Mark's narrative, Jesus' ultimate response to the woman (a Syro-Phoenician in Mark's Gospel, a Canaanite, a local resident in Matthew's), is a reward for her 'word'. And the account follows the woman home to find her child safe. Matthew's account praises the woman's faith and the reader moves on knowing that the exorcism will have been effected by the time the woman gets home. Thus the Matthean version exhibits both ends of the spectrum of Jesus' and Matthew's reaction and responses to women.

The idea of women coming to the forefront is uncomfortable to both acculturated Palestinian men, but both were experiencing in their obedience to the Will of God. Matthew and his Master experience the certainty that what today would be pejoratively be described as 'sexism' but as recently as the early part of last Century would be described as 'normal' (and Biblically sanctioned) is superseded.

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This new position of women in the nascent Christian society is according to the divine will. And Paul's letters evidence female leadership in various communities, upon which Paul, perfectly capable of frowning, does not.

Paul's attitudes and Christological insights would place him as a particularly appropriate candidate for 'late dating' – were it not for the firm grounds upon which his ministry can be placed in time. Indeed the acceptance of Paul's early provenance given the developments he makes in soteriology *et al*, should create a more level playing field upon which to examine and critique the Gospel writers' theological and ecclesiological innovations.

For scholars who espouse the assertion of an emphatic either inclusion or exclusion of the Gentiles to be evident in the 1st Gospel, the potential temptation is to ignore pieces of Matthean text that create that aforementioned ambiguity. Such partiality will obscure the fact that Matthew is authentically conflicted regarding those he has been taught from childhood to consider 'unclean', as it may be also asserted Jesus Himself evidences.

This represents an important understanding which supports the Lord's posited claim to be remembered as having been a 'real person' who can call other real people to emulate Him, a Christological verity which discourages an incipient Docetism.



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EVIDENCE FOR A PRE-70s PRODUCTION OF THE 1st GOSPEL ASSESSED:SIX: MATTHEW'S ACCOMMODATIONTO JESUS' ELEVATION OF THE «ΕΘΝΗ»

A further matter relating not only to the date of production of the 1st Gospel but also to the compatibility of Matthew's teaching with his Master's which early dating would tend to suggest - and a point of contention between New Testament scholars, is an authentic assessment of Matthew's and indeed Jesus' – attitude to Gentiles, «τα ἔθνη».

Matthew's here-asserted ambiguity towards Gentiles – and Samaritans – moves across a spectrum from Matthew 10.5-6; a dominical instruction to the twelve missionaries to avoid Gentile and Samaritan towns, to inclusivity in the kingdom (*ref.*, 24.14 and 28.19 *ff*).

The question has also been a largely tacit quandary for the Church, but one overshadowed, paradoxically, by the Gospel stance regarding the Jews:(*cf.*, *e.g.*, 27.21-25). Attention to the relevant material in the 1st Gospel is here asserted to evidence ambiguity – minimally for Matthew but arguably for Jesus too – regarding the Gentile world that had surrounded both men of God throughout their lives.



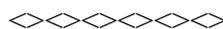
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EVIDENCE FOR A PRE-70s PRODUCTION OF THE 1st GOSPEL ASSESSED:SEVEN: MATTHEW'S 'TEMPLE TALK'

It is noted that Jesus' description, albeit brief, of the complete dismantling of the Temple (24.2) would be a further pointless *faux* prediction because, as D. Friesen wrote in his Blog, 'Walking Israel – the Holy Land' (04.03.11); "The Romans dismantled as much as they reasonably could...what is left today is the Temple Mount, a huge rectangle on the East side of the city"; (*cf.*, The Dome of the Rock).

It may also be observed that the Danielic reference to « το βδελυγμα της ερημωσης... 'εστος εν τοπω 'αγιω» conjures up a picture of an intact Temple, or at least the 'Holy of Holies' ('*Bet kodesh ha-kodesh*') defiled as before by Antiochus IV.

After the Jewish War (66-74 AD) which began and ended at Masada, and described by Flavius Josephus (a Pharisee) - there was no place that could be described as 'Holy' to be desecrated –and indeed no known representative of the original disciples to witness it.



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EVIDENCE FOR A PRE-70s PRODUCTION OF THE 1st GOSPEL ASSESSED:

EIGHT: MATTHEW'S CONSISTENTLY CONTEXTUALISED TEACHING

Vincent Wimbush, 1995, p.13 asserts, “The 27 documents collectively known as the New Testament, are the products of ancient Christian communities. It was not the case that the documents created the ancient communities”

This is an important observation, confirming that, for example, the 1st Gospel and the ‘*Didache*’ are not manifestos founded on visionary notions, but a form of journal, a diary of the communities in which and for which they were written.

So Matthew, - like his Master - is instructing and teaching in the most authentic mode, the mode of immediate relevance to his disciples; dealing with present dilemmas and challenges rather than envisioning an impossibly perfect world to be created by the adoption of unreachable personal and societal standards – like those aspired to by the Knights whom legend places on the quest of the Holy Grail.

St Paul and St Matthew are great gifts to the Church, in the authenticity of their self-expression. Both authors write into their own situation and thus in their own ways provide an invaluable ‘snapshot’ of the emergent Church. And, as noted, unlike the idealization of a Christian community which the ‘*Didache*’ exemplifies, they both present their photographs unretouched, *sans* ‘Photoshopping’.

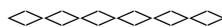
Paul presents a gallery of pictures of a number of communities as well as his own travel shots. His contribution sacrifices depth for breadth.

As an invaluable adjunct to Paul’s early-days ‘travelogue’, Matthew stays home and produces an in-depth, interconnected album of pictures of the trials and challenges of an almost equally young community.

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And that ‘almost’ is more than balanced by its providing the otherwise ‘missing link’ between the community Jesus was engaged in fashioning and its first development which is not, it is here averred, morphologically affected by the near ‘extinction event’ of the fall of the Temple and the new Diaspora;(ref., Conte 2007).

Rather the 1st Gospel presents a unique continuity between the purely Judaic primary iteration of Christianity and the beginnings of the eon of the Last Times, still now in train, where the Grace of God, first offered as Abram sojourned in Haran and was to become a dispossessed foreigner, this Grace now floods the world of «τα εθνη» in a way that requires no rainbow, as it is an enduring sign of God’s ‘יהוה’ and «χαρις»; His unwavering and supportive love.



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EVIDENCE FOR A PRE-70s PRODUCTION OF THE 1st GOSPEL ASSESSED:
NINE: THE Gnostic DOCUMENT; ‘THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS’.

‘Thomas’ is a Gnostic document, claiming to be the work of Didymus Judas Thomas, from the scrolls found near Nag Hamadi in 1946. It is constructed from material including Matthean and (proportionally less) Lukan «λογια». It contains claims that Jesus knew the nature of each of His twelve disciples of whom only four are mentioned, presumably as archetypal representatives of four personality configurations who share the characteristic qualities that are acceptable to God: (*ref.*, Thomas, Saying 112).

These four are Thomas himself (*ref.*, Preface, Sayings 12-13); James (11); Peter (12,112) and Matthew (Saying 12).

It is noted that some of Thomas’ material is redolent of the Third Gospel, but many of his Sayings, proportionally much more than the ‘borrowings’ from the Lukan account, parallel Matthew’s Gospel account.

However Grant (1960, p.102) notes, “Even within the ‘Sermon on the Mount’, he (‘Thomas’) omits everything that has do with moral conduct and the performance of good works. He is not concerned with what Christians do but with what they know”.



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CONCLUSION:

OBSERVATIONS ON THE DIVINE GIFT TO THE CHURCH
OF MATTHEW'S WITNESS TO CHRIST - AND AN ILLUSTRATION
OF THE CONTINUED RELEVANCE OF MATTHEW'S CHALLENGE

Robert Grant's apposite assertion above (1960) highlights the value of the Church having, in the writing of Matthew, the work of an eyewitness to Jesus' earthly ministry and one without an evident, and thus distorting, bias concerning what Jesus had come to say. And it is intriguing that 'Thomas' has made the transmutation so easily and unconsciously performed by the Church whereby the active, involved, risk-taking Jesus and His mission-oriented followers become respectively the purveyor and passive recipients of secret wisdom and salvific truths for the Church catholic, always inhabited by ordinary people who cannot believe that they might personally be of importance to the work of Christ amongst us.

Nothing could be further from the message of the 1st Evangelist, which evidences by its consistent espousal of the Apostles' own dynamic response to the «κερυγμα». And this was their authentic reflecting of the *modus operandi* of Christ Himself – where the certainly-essential personal wrestling with the rejuvenated apperception of God's Will and desires for His *Imago Dei* - and now *Imago Christi* - challenged and potentially Spirit-equipped and enabled – must be an interior focus, - but, as for Jesus Himself, one attended-to on the mission road by all whom His Spirit has touched and called.

In the long- established Churches of the West, "Church-going" is an accurate description for the religious life of many, where the «εκκλησια» is celebratory (at best) and rarely, amongst the 'traditional' Churches, a Spiritual 'War Council'.

REDISCOVERING MATTHEW

The true dynamism of St. Matthew's Gospel is subverted by over-familiarity; his unique perception of the 'Worship to Mission' pulse of the dominical model of discipleship, the 'sending out' into prepared-for challenge and expected rejection, even danger, -then the gathering back together with the Lord for rest, rejuvenation and more instruction – this purest iteration of the discipleship Jesus called lost humanity to, produced by the Spirit of God through a unique individual – this Gospel of action has never been more needed if the long-established Churches are to survive.

Indeed, they serve no more purpose than the pious and self-satisfied gatherings of the Pharisees who so disappointed Matthew and his Lord, if they cannot hear what Matthew has been divinely elected to say. Matthew has been divinely elected to say "Go!" and to pass on his knowledge of the reality of Jesus' presence with those who respond. And the man, the writer himself is not the charismatic 'pied piper' or loudly motivating 'Coach' – Matthew leads by quiet but unwavering example and seeks to walk alongside those he nurtures, as Jesus has walked alongside him, and continues to do so.

It is here averred that only when the reader of the 1st Gospel comes to hear the distinct and quite gentle voice of the 'real' Matthew can the voice of the Spirit be truly heard and responded to with joy and dedication to Mission.

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The present writer well remembers his first Worship Service at a small ‘Outback’ town for which he was newly responsible after ordination in 1982.

At the conclusion of the Service, - before even, this Preacher had time to lead the dignified little procession to and out of the Century-old wooden door to observe the traditional recessional rite of handshakes and shyly mumbled thanks (at least for the choice of Hymns) - two very elderly ladies (almost) raced down the aisle with evident wonder on their weathered faces.

They asked, quite breathlessly hopeful, “Reverend, did you *really* say that Jesus wants us to do things for Him, *with* Him? *Does* He - *really?!?*”.

And the Sunday Morning routine became what Matthew and His Lord had always wanted it to be - the beginning of, - and the never-too-late empowerment of God’s Christ-led people for, - the ‘working week’.

Deo Gloria.

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