

The Latin prologues.

The anti-Marcionite and Monarchian prologues to the canonical gospels.

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The Old Latin prologues are found in various Latin translations of the NEW TESTAMENT. They are important, though debated, witnesses to the [origins of the canonical gospels](#).

Confer the [Marcionite prologues to the Pauline epistles](#), also extant in Latin.

[Anti-Marcionite prologues](#).

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Anti-Marcionite prologues.

Late century II?

These prologues, also called the Old Latin prologues, precede each of the gospels in some copies of the VULGATE. Scholars disagree as to their exact date, but many place them in the late second century. A Matthean prologue is not extant.

I make no attempt here to present a true critical text of these prologues. The variants noted are only those that are in my judgment the most significant for the overall meaning of the texts; I have not listed those variants that are of an incidental or accidental nature. Nor have I listed which or how many Old Latin manuscripts witness to each variant. My **only** purpose is to preserve all significant readings. Suffice it to say that each variant is represented by two or more manuscripts. There are no stand-alones. (The necessary exception to this rule is the Greek version of the Lucan prologue, which as far as I can tell has only two manuscripts as witnesses, so the single variant that I list must necessarily pit one against the other.) For a critical text, refer to Jürgen Regul, [Die antimarcionitischen Evangelienprologe](#), pages 16, 29-35.

A forward slash / separates different variants. A dash — indicates that some manuscripts lack the words of the variant altogether.

The Marcan prologue:

Marcus adseruit, qui et colobodactylus est nominatus, ideo quod ad ceteram corporis proceritatem digitos minores habuisset. hic discipulus et¹ interpres fuit Petri, ^{2a}quem secutus est sicut ipsum audierat referentem. rogatus Romae a fratribus hoc breve evangelium in Italiae partibus scripsit. quod cum Petrus

audisset, probavit ecclesiaeque legendum sua auctoritate firmavit. verum post discessum Petri assumpto hoc evangelio quod ipse confecerat, perrexit Aegyptum et primus Alexandriae episcopus ordinatus, Christum annuntians, constituit illic ecclesiam. tantae doctrinae et vitae continentiae fuit ut omnes sectatores Christi ad suum cogeret imitari exemplum.^{2b}

¹ discipulus et / —.

² quem secutus... imitari exemplum / post excessionem ipsius Petri descripsit idem hoc in Italiae partibus evangelium.

Mark made his assertion, who was also named stubby-fingers, on account that he had in comparison to the length of the rest of his body shorter fingers. He was a disciple and interpreter of Peter, whom he followed just as he heard him report. When he was requested at Rome by the brethren, he briefly wrote this gospel in parts of Italy. When Peter heard this, he approved and affirmed it by his own authority for the reading of the church. Truly, after the departure of Peter, this gospel which he himself put together having been taken up, he went away into Egypt and, ordained as the first bishop of Alexandria, announcing Christ, he constituted a church there. It was of such teaching and continence of life that it compels all followers of Christ to imitate its example.

The Lucan prologue, extant in both Greek and Latin. The first part of the Greek has no Latin translation:

Τουτο εξ ιδιοχειρων του αγιου πατριαρχου Μεθοδιου. αναπαυσις του αγιου αποστολου Λουκα του ευαγγελιστου εικαδι του Σεπτεμβριου μηνος.

This is from the very hand of the holy patriarch Methodius. The repose of the holy apostle Luke the evangelist is the twentieth of the month of September.

From this point on the Greek version parallels the Latin:

Εστιν ο αγιος Λουκας Αντιοχεις, Συρος τω γενει, ιατρος την τεχνην, μαθητης αποστολων γενομενος και υστερον Παυλω παρακολουθησας μεχρις του μαρτυριου αυτου, δουλευσας τω κυριω απερισπαστως, αγυναιος, ατεκνος, *ετων ογδοηκοντα τεσσαρων εκοιμηθη εν Θηβαις τη μητροπολει της Βοιωτιας,* πληρης πνευματος αγιου. ουτος προυπαρχοντων ηδη ευαγγελιων, του μεν κατα Ματθαιον εν τη Ιουδαια αναγραφεντος, του δε κατα Μαρκον εν τη Ιταλια, ουτος προτραπεις υπο πνευματος αγιου εν τοις περι την Αχαιαν το παν τουτο συνεγραψατο ευαγγελιον, δηλων δια του προομιου τουτο αυτο, οτι προ αυτου αλλα εστι γεγραμμενα, και οτι αναγκαιον ην τοις εξ εθνων πιστοις την ακριβη της οικονομιας εκθεσθαι διηγησιν υπερ του μη ταις Ιουδαιικαις μυθολογιαις περισπασθαι αυτους μητε ταις αιρετικαις και κεναις φαντασιαις απατωμενους αστοχησαι της αληθειας· ως αναγκαιοτατην ουν ουσαν

ευθυσ εν αρχη παρεληφαμεν την του Ιωαννου γεννησιν, ος εστιν αρχη του ευαγγελιου προδρομος του κυριου γενομενος και κοινωνος εν τε τω καταρτισμω του ευαγγελιου και τη του βαπτισματος διαγωγη και τη του πνευματος κοινωνια. ταυτης της οικονομιας μεμνηται προφητης εν τοις δωδεκα. και δη μετεπειτα εγραψεν ο αυτος Λουκας πραξεις αποστολων. υστερον δε Ιωαννης ο αποστολος εκ των δωδεκα εγραψεν την αποκαλυψιν εν τη νησω Πατρω και μετα ταυτα το ευαγγελιον.

* ετων... της Βοιωτιας / πδ' ετει εκοιμηθη εν τη Βοιωτια.

Est quidem Lucas Antiochensis Syrus, arte medicus. ^{1a}ut eius scripta indicant, Greci sermonis non ignarus fuit. ^{1b}discipulus apostolorum, postea vero Paulum secutus est usque ad confessionem eius, serviens domino sine crimine, nam neque uxorem unquam habuit, neque filios procreavit. LXXXVIII² annorum obiit in Boeotia,³ plenus spiritu sancto. cui igitur cum iam descripta essent evangelia, per Mattheum quidem in Iudaea, per Marcum autem in Italia, sancto instigatus spiritu in Achaiae partibus hoc descripsit evangelium, ^{4a}quod non tantum ab apostolo didicerat, qui cum domino in carne non fuit, sed a ceteris apostolis magis, qui cum domino fuerunt,^{4b} significans etiam ipse per principium ante suum alia esse descripta, ^{5a}sed et sibi maximam necessitatem incumbere Graecis fidelibus cum summa diligentia omnem dispositionem in narratione sua exponere,^{5b} ne Iudaicis fabulis ^{6a}adventi in solo legis desiderio tenerentur, nevel hereticis fabulis^{6b} et stultis sollicitationibus seducti excederent a veritate, elaboraret. itaque perquam necessariam statim in principio sumpsit a Iohannis nativitate, quae est initium evangelii, praemissus domini nostri Iesu Christi, et fuit socius ad perfectionem populi, item inductionem baptismi, atque passionis socius. cuius profecto dispositionis exempli meminit Zacharias⁷ propheta, unus ex duodecim. et tamen postremo scripsit idem Lucas actus apostolorum; postmodum Iohannes evangelista⁸ descripsit primum apocalypsin⁹ in insula Pathmos, deinde evangelium in Asia.

¹ ut... non ignarus fuit / —.

² LXXXVIII / LXXVIII.

³ Boeotia / Bithynia.

⁴ quod non tantum... cum domino fuerunt / —.

⁵ sed et sibi... sua exponere / cui extra ea, quae ordo evangelicae dispositionis exposcit, ea maxime necessitas laboris fuit, ut primum Graecis fidelibus omni prophetatione venturi in carne dei Christi manifesta humanitas / et a quibus audierit apostolis, ipse declarat dicens: Sicut tradiderunt nobis qui a principio ipsi viderunt et ministri fuerunt sermonis. de quo et apostolus ait: Misimus cum illo fratrem, cuius laus est in evangelio per omnes ecclesias, et ad Colosenses: Salutatis vos Lucas medicus carissimus meus. igitur hoc evangelium sicut audierat ipse

composuit, significans per principium eius maximam necessitatem incumbere Graecis fidelibus cum summa diligentia omnem veritatem gestorum dominicorum dispositionemque suae narrationis exponere.

⁶ adtenti in solo... hereticis fabulis / — (*homoioleuton*).

⁷ Zacharias / Malachiel.

⁸ evangelista / apostolus.

⁹ apocalypsin / revelationem.

The holy Luke is an Antiochene, Syrian by race, physician by trade. As his writings indicate, of the Greek speech he was not ignorant. He was a disciple of the apostles, and afterward followed Paul until his confession, serving the Lord undistractedly, for he neither had any wife nor procreated sons. [A man] of eighty-four years, he slept in Thebes, the metropolis of Boeotia, full of the holy spirit. He, when the gospels were already written down, that according to Matthew in Judea, but that according to Mark in Italy, instigated by the holy spirit, in parts of Achaea wrote down this gospel, he who was taught not only by the apostle, who was not with the Lord in the flesh, but also by the other apostles, who were with the Lord, even making clear this very thing himself in the preface, that the others were written down before his, and that it was necessary that he accurately expound for the gentile faithful the entire economy in his narrative, lest they, detained by Jewish fables, be held by a sole desire for the law, or lest, seduced by heretical fables and stupid instigations, they slip away from the truth. It being necessary, then, immediately in the beginning we receive report of the nativity of John, who is the beginning of the gospel, who was the forerunner of our Lord Jesus Christ, and a partaker in the perfecting of the people, and also in the induction of baptism, and a partaker of his passion and of the fellowship of the spirit. Zechariah the prophet, one of the twelve, made mention of this economy. And indeed afterward this same Luke wrote the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES. And later John the apostle from the twelve first wrote down the apocalypse on the isle of Pathmos, then the gospel in Asia.*

* From the Greek; the Latin has either 89 or 74.

The Johannine prologue:

^{1a}Iohannes apostolus, quem dominus Iesus amavit plurimum, novissimus omnium scripsit hoc evangelium postulantibus Asiae episcopis adversus Cerinthum aliosque hereticos et maxime tunc Ebionitarum dogma consurgens, qui asserunt stultitiae suae pravitate, sic enim Ebionitae appellantur, Christum antequam de Maria nasceretur non fuisse nec natum ante saecula de deo patre. unde etiam compulsus est divinam eius a patre nativitatem dicere. sed et aliam causam conscripti huius evangelii ferunt, quia, cum legisset Matthei, Marci, et Lucae de evangelio volumina, probaverit quidem textum historiae et vera eos dixisse firmaverit, sed unius tantum anni in quo et passus est post carcerem Iohannis historiam texuisse. praetermisso itaque anno cuius acta a tribus exposita fuerant, superioris temporis, antequam Iohannes clauderetur in carcere, gesta narravit, sicut manifestum esse poterit his qui quattuor

evangeliorum volumina legerint diligenter.^{1b} ^{2a}hoc igitur evangelium post apocalypsin scriptum manifestum et datum^{2b} est ecclesiis in Asia³ a Iohanne adhuc in corpore constituto, sicut Papias nomine Hierapolitanus episcopus, discipulus Iohannis et carus, in exotericis suis, id est in extremis quinque libris retulit; ^{4a}qui hoc evangelium Iohanne sibi dictante conscripsit.^{4b} verum Marcion hereticus, cum ab eo fuisset improbatus eo quod contraria sentiebat, abiectus⁵ est a Iohanne. hic vero scripta vel epistulas ad eum pertulerat a fratribus missas, qui in Ponto erant ^{6a}fideles in Christo Iesu domino nostro.^{6b}

¹ Iohannes apostolus... diligenter / —.

² hoc igitur... et datum / evangelium Iohannis manifestatum.

³ in Asia / —.

⁴ qui hoc... conscripsit / descripsit vero evangelium dictante Iohanne recte.

⁵ abiectus / proiectus.

⁶ fideles... domino nostro / —.

John the apostle, whom the Lord Jesus loved very much, last of all wrote this gospel, the bishops of Asia having entreated him, against Cerinthus and other heretics, and especially standing against the dogma of the Ebionites there who asserted by the depravity of their stupidity, for thus they have the appellation Ebionites, that Christ, before he was born from Mary, neither existed nor was born before the ages from God the father. Whence also he was compelled to tell of his divine nativity from the father. But they also bear another cause for his writing the gospel, because, when he had collected the volumes from the gospel of Matthew, of Mark, and of Luke, he indeed approved the text of the history and affirmed that they had said true things, but that they had woven the history of only one year, in which he also suffered after the imprisonment of John. The year, then, having been omitted in which the acts of the tribes were expounded, he narrated the events of the time prior, before John was shut up in prison, just as it can be made manifest to those who diligently read the four volumes of the gospels. This gospel, then, after the apocalypse was written was made manifest and given to the churches in Asia by John, as yet constituted in the body, as the Hieropolitan, Papias by name, disciple of John and dear [to him], transmitted in his EXOTERIC, that is, the outside five books. He wrote down this gospel while John dictated. Truly Marcion the heretic, when he had been disapproved by him because he supposed contrary things, was thrown out by John. He in truth carried writings or epistles sent to him from the brothers who were in Pontus, faithful in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Note the mention of [Papias of Hierapolis](#).

Monarchian prologues.

Century IV or V.

These Latin prologues are thought to be of Monarchian origin. The Monarchians believed that God was of only one essence, and that therefore the father and the son were in fact one and the same. The prologues precede the gospels in some manuscripts of the Latin BIBLE. I present them

here in the order on which their very contents insist, the canonical order typical of the Latin tradition before Jerome: Matthew, John, Luke, Mark.

I make no attempt here to present a true critical text of these prologues. The variants noted are only those that are in my judgment the most significant for the overall meaning of the texts; I have not listed those variants that are of an incidental or accidental nature. Nor have I listed which or how many Old Latin manuscripts witness to each variant. My **only** purpose is to preserve all significant readings. Suffice it to say that each variant is represented by two or more manuscripts. There are no stand-alones. For a critical text, refer to Jürgen Regul, Die antimarcionitischen Evangelienprologe, pages 40-50, or to Peter Corsen, Monarchianische Prologe, pages 5-11, upon which my text is based.

A forward slash / separates different variants. A dash — indicates that some manuscripts lack the words of the variant altogether. These same considerations also apply to the [anti-Marcionite prologues](#) earlier on this same page.

The English translations are my own, but with the following qualifications. On pages 208-209 of The Order of the Synoptics Bernard Orchard briefly summarizes the contents of each of these prologues and comments:

Nevertheless the theological parts of these Prologues are written in such an involved and labored style that it is almost impossible fully to understand what they are trying to convey!

I heartily agree! Most of my own translations on this site I check against standard English translations made by professionals before publishing on the internet, but for some time no translations of these prologues were available to me. I thus translated the Matthean and Johannine prologues without the benefit of professional help, except that I consulted S. C. Carlson, credited below, for the last sentence of the former. Then I finally got hold of Evidence of Tradition by Daniel J. Theron, who on pages 56-65 mercifully translates these beastly compositions for the rest of us poor mortals. So I have cheerfully checked my Matthean and Johannine translations against his, having to adjust surprisingly little, and used his Lucan and Marcan translations as an aid for mine. Needless to say, any infelicities in the translations are entirely my own.

To the best of my knowledge, mine are the first translations of the Monarchian prologues on the internet.

The Matthean prologue:

Matthaus ex Iudaea sicut in ordine primus ponitur, ita evangelium in Iudaea primus scripsit. cuius vocatio ad deum ex publicanis actibus fuit. duorum in generatione Christi principia praesumens, unius cuius prima circumcisio in carne, alterius cuius secundum cor electio fuit, et ex utrisque in patribus Christus. sicque quaterno denario numero triformiter posito, principium a

credendi fide in electionis tempus porrigens, et ex electione in transmigrationis *diem dirigens, atque a transmigatione* usque ad Christum definiens, decursam adventus domini ostendit generationem, ut, et numero satisfaciens et tempori, et se quod esset ostendens, et dei in se opus monstrans, etiam in his quorum genus posuit, Christi operantis a principio testimonium non negaret quarum omnium rerum tempus, ordo, numerus, dispositio, vel ratio, quod fidei necessarium est. deus Christus est, qui factus est ex muliere, factus sub lege, natus ex virgine, passus in carne, omnia in cruce fixit ut, triumphans ea in semet ipso, resurgens in corpore, et patris nomen in patribus filio et filii nomen patri restituerat in filiis, sine principio, sine fine, ostendens unum se cum patre esse, quia unus est. in quo evangelio utile est desiderantibus deum sic prima vel media vel perfecta cognoscere, ut et vocationem apostoli et opus evangelii et dilectionem dei in carne nascentis per universa legentes intellegant atque id in eo, in quo adprehensi sunt et adprehendere expetunt, recognoscant. nobis enim hoc in studio argumenti fuit et fidem factae rei tradere et operantis dei intellegendam diligenter esse dispositionem quaerentibus non tacere.

* diem... transmigatione / — (*homoioteleuton*).

*Matthew, from Judea, just as he is placed first in order, so wrote the gospel first in Judea. His calling to God was from publican activities. He presumed in the genealogy of Christ the beginnings of two things, the first of which was circumcision in the flesh, the other of which was election according to the heart, and by both of which Christ was in the fathers. And, the number having thus been put down as three fourteens, he shows by extending the beginning from the faith of the believer unto the time of election, and directing it from the election to the day of the deportation, and defining it from the deportation up to Christ that the generation of the advent of the Lord had been reached, so that, in making satisfaction both in number and in time, and in showing itself for what it was, and in demonstrating that the work of God in itself was still in these whose race he established, the time, order, number, economy, or reason of all of these matters might not deny the testimony, which is necessary for faith, of Christ, who was working from the beginning. God is Christ, who was made from a woman, who was made under the law, who was born from a virgin, who suffered in the flesh, who fixed all things on the cross so that, triumphing over them for eternity, rising in the body, he might restore both the name of the father to the son in the fathers and the name of the son to the father in the sons, without beginning, without end, showing that he is one with the father, because he is one. In this gospel it is useful for those desiring God to know the first things, the medial things, and the perfect things, so that, reading of the calling of the apostle and the work of the gospel and the choosing of God, born into the universe in the flesh, they might understand and recognize it in him, in whom they have been apprehended and seek to apprehend. It was certainly possible in this study of the subject matter for us to both convey the fidelity of what was done and not be silent that the economy of God at work must be diligently understood by those seeking to do so.**

* Thanks to Stephen C. Carlson for [his help](#) with this last sentence.

The Johannine prologue:

Hic est Iohannes evangelista, unus ex duodecim¹ discipulis dei qui virgo electus a deo est, quem de nuptiis volentem nubere vocavit deus. cui virginittatis in hoc duplex testimonium in evangelio datur, quod et prae ceteris dilectus a deo dicitur et huic matrem suam iens ad crucem commendavit deus, ut virginem virgo servaret. denique manifestans in evangelio, quod erat ipse incorruptibilis verbi opus inchoans, solus verbum caro factum esse nec lumen a tenebris comprehensum fuisse testatur, primum signum ponens quod in nuptiis fecit deus, ut ostendens quod erat ipse legentibus demonstraret, quod ubi dominus invitatur deficere nuptiarum vinum debeat ac veteribus inmutatis nova omnia, quae a Christo instituuntur, appareant; de quo singula quaeque in mysterio acta vel dicta evangelii ratio quaerentibus monstrat. hoc autem evangelium scripsit in Asia, posteaquam in Pathmos insula apocalypsin scripserat, ut, cui in principio canonis incorruptibile principium in genesi, et incorruptibilis finis per virginem in apocalypsi redderetur, decente Christo: Ego sum A et Ω. et hic est Iohannes qui, sciens supervenisse diem recessus sui, ^{2a}convocatis discipulis suis^{2b} in Epheso, per multa signorum experimenta promens Christum, descendens in defossum sepulturae suae locum, facta oratione, positus est ad patres suos, tam extraneus a dolore mortis quam a corruptione carnis invenitur alienus. ^{3a}qui etsi post omnes evangelium scripsisse dicitur, tamen dispositione canonis ordinati post Mattheum ponitur, quoniam in domino quae novissima sunt non velut extrema et abiecta numero, sed plenitudinis opere perfecta sunt;^{3b} et hoc virgini debebatur. quorum tamen vel scripturarum tempore dispositio vel librorum ordinatio ideo per singula a nobis non exponitur, ut sciendi desiderio conlocato et quaerentibus fructus laboris et deo magisterii doctrina servetur.

¹ duodecim / —.

² convocatis discipulis suis / —.

³ qui etsi... perfecta sunt / tamen post omnes evangelium scripsit.

This is John the evangelist, one from the twelve disciples of God, who was elected by God to be a virgin, whom God called away from marriage though he was wishing to marry, for whom double testimony of his virginity is given in the gospel both in that he was said to be beloved by God above others and in that God, going to the cross, commended his own mother to him, so that a virgin might serve a virgin. Furthermore, manifesting in the gospel that he himself was starting up the work of the incorruptible word, he alone testifies that the word was made flesh and that light was not comprehended by darkness, placing the first sign which God did in a wedding so as to demonstrate to those reading, by showing what he himself was, that where the Lord is invited the wine of weddings ought to*

cease and also that all things which have been set up by Christ, now that the old things have been changed, might appear new. Concerning this the reason for [composing] the gospel to those seeking shows the separate things which were done or said in a mystery. Moreover, he wrote this gospel in Asia, after he had written the apocalypse on the island of Patmos, so that, to whom the incorruptible beginning was attributed in the beginning of the canon, in GENESIS, to him also the incorruptible end through a virgin in the APOCALYPSE might be attributed, since Christ says: I am the alpha and the omega. And this is the John who, knowing that the day of his departure had come upon him, his disciples having been called together in Ephesus, producing Christ through the many signs that were accomplished, descending into the place dug out for his sepulture, after a prayer was made, was laid with his fathers, as much a stranger to the pain of death as he was found alien to the corruption of the flesh. And, if he is said to have written the gospel after all [the others], he is however placed after Matthew in the disposition of the canon as it is ordered, since in the Lord those things that are newest are not as if last and rejected for their number, but rather have been perfected by the work of fulness; and this was due to a virgin. Neither the disposition of the writings by time nor the order of the books, however, are expositied by us in the details, so that, when the desire to know has been settled, both the fruit of labor and the doctrine of teaching for God might be reserved for those who seek.

* Theron takes *in corruptibilis* on its own, modifying John, which yields the translation, *...that he himself was incorruptible [and] beginning the work of the word.* But in my own translation before reading Theron I took *in corruptibilis* with *verbi*, and Theron notes that Corssen and Chapman do too, so I have left my translation as it stands. However, Theron makes a very good point in that John himself will further down be said to be *found alien to the corruption of the flesh* (a *corruptione carnis invenitur alienus*).

The Lucan prologue:

Lucas, Syrus natione, Antiochensis, arte medicus, discipulus apostolorum, postea Paulum secutus usque ad confessionem eius, serviens deo sine crimine. nam neque uxorem umquam habens neque filios, LXXIII¹ annorum obiit in Bithynia,² plenus spiritu sancto. qui cum iam descripta essent evangelia per Mattheum quidem in Iudaea, per Marcum autem in Italia, sancto instigante spiritu in Achaiae partibus hoc scripsit evangelium, significans etiam ipse in principio ante alia esse descripta. cui extra ea quae ordo evangelicae dispositionis exposcit, ea maxime necessitas laboris fuit, ut primum Graecis fidelibus omni perfectione venturi in carnem dei manifestata, ne Iudaicis fabulis intenti in solo legis desiderio tenerentur neve hereticus fabulis et stultis sollicitationibus seducti excederent a veritate, elaboraret, dehinc ut in principio evangelii Iohannis nativitate praesumpta cui evangelium scriberet et in quo electus scriberet indicaret, contestans in se completa esse quae essent ab aliis inchoata. cui ideo post baptismum filii dei a perfectione generationis in Christo impletae et repetendae a principio nativitatis humanae potestas permissa est, ut requirentibus demonstraret, in quo adprehendens erat, per

Nathan filium introitu recurrentis in deum generationis admissio, indispartibilis deus praedicans in hominibus Christum suum perfecti opus hominis redire in se per filium faceret, qui per David patrem venientibus iter praebebat in Christo. cui Lucae non inmerito etiam scribendorum apostolicorum actuum potestas in ministerio datur, ut deo in deum pleno ac filio proditoris extincto, oratione ab apostolis facta, sorte domini electionis numerus compleretur, sicque Paulus consummationem apostolicis actibus daret, quem diu contra stimulos recalcitrantem dominus elegisset. quod legentibus ac requirentibus deum etsi per singula expediri a nobis utile fuerat, scientes tamen quod operantem agricolam oporteat de fructibus suis edere, vitavimus publicam curiositatem, ne non tam demonstrare³ volentibus deum videremur quam fastidientibus prodidisse.

¹ LXXIII / LXXXIII.

² Bithynia / Bethania / Bethinia.

³ demonstrare / —.

Luke, Syrian by nationality, an Antiochene, physician by art, disciple of the apostles, later followed Paul up until his confession, serving God without fault. For, never having either a wife or sons, he died in Bithynia at seventy-four years of age, full of the holy spirit. When the gospels through Matthew in Judea, through Mark, however, in Italy, had already been written, he wrote this gospel at the instigation of the holy spirit in the regions of Achaea, he himself also signifying in the beginning that others had been written beforehand. For whom, beyond those things which the order of the gospel disposition implores, there was that necessity of labor especially, that he should labor first for the Greek faithful lest, after all the perfection of God come in the flesh was made manifest, they either be intent on Jewish fables and held by a sole desire for the law or slip away from the truth, seduced by heretical fables and stupid instigations; furthermore, that in the beginning of the gospel, after the nativity of John had been taken up, he might indicate to whom it was that he wrote his gospel and by what [purpose] he elected to write it, contending that those things that had been started by others were completed by him. To him, therefore, was permitted the power [to record events] after the baptism of the son of God, from the perfection of the generation fulfilled and to be repeated in Christ, from the beginning of his human nativity, so that he might demonstrate to those who thoroughly seek, insofar as he had apprehended it, that, by the admitted introduction of a generation which runs back through a son of Nathan to God, the indivisible God who preaches his Christ among men made the work of the perfect man return into himself through the son, he who through David the father was preparing a way in Christ for those who were coming. To this not immeritorious Luke was given the power in his ministry of writing also the acts of the apostles so that, when God had been filled up in God and the son of treachery extinguished, and prayers made by the apostles, the number of election might be completed by the lot of the Lord, and that thus Paul, whom the Lord elected despite long kicking against the pricks, might give a consummation to the acts of the apostles. Though it were also useful for those reading and thoroughly seeking God that this be explained by us in the details, nevertheless, knowing that it is fit for the working farmer to eat from his own fruits, we have avoided public

curiosity, lest we should be seen as, not so much demonstrating God to those who are willing, but rather having given it to those who loathe him.

The Marcan prologue:

Marcus evangelista dei et beati¹ Petri apostoli² in baptisate filius atque in divino sermone discipulus, sacerdotium in Israhel agens, secundum carnem Levita, conversus ad fidem Christi, evangelium in Italia scripsit, ostendens in eo quid et generi suo deberet et Christo. nam initium principii in voce prophetae exclamationis instituens ordinem Leviticae electionis ostendit ut, praedicans praedestinatum Iohannem filium Zachariae in voce angeli adnuntiantis, ^{3a}emissum non solum^{3b} verbum caro factum sed corpus domini in omnia per verbum divinae vocis animatum initio evangelicae praedicationis ostenderet, ut qui haec legens sciret cui initium carnis in domino et dei advenientis habitaculum caro deberet agnoscere, atque in se verbum vocis quod in consonantibus perdidit inveniret. denique et perfecti evangelii opus intrans et a baptismo domini praedicare deum inchoans non laboravit nativitate carnis, quam in prioribus vicerat, dicere, sed totus in primis explosionem deserti, ieiunium numeri, temptationem diaboli, congregationem bestiarum et ministerium protulit angelorum, ut instituens nos ad intellegendum singula in brevi conpingens nec auctoritatem factae rei demeret et perficiendo operi plenitudinem non negaret. denique amputasse sibi post fidem pollicem dicitur ut sacerdotio reprobis haberetur; sed tantum consentiens fidei praedestinata potuit electio, ut nec sic in opere verbi perderet quod prius meruerat in genere, nam Alexandriae episcopus fuit, cuius per singula opus scire et evangelii in se dicta disponere et disciplinam in se legis agnoscere et divinam domini in carne intellegere naturam; quae et nos primum requiri dehinc inquisita volumus agnoscere, habentes mercedem exhortationis, quoniam qui plantat et qui rigat unum sunt, qui autem incrementum praestat deus est.

¹ beati / —.

² apostoli / —.

³ emissum non solum / non emissum solum (conjectural emendation, Corsen).

Mark, the evangelist of God and in baptism the son of the blessed apostle Peter and also his disciple in the divine word, performing the priesthood in Israel, a Levite according to the flesh, but converted to the faith of Christ, wrote the gospel in Italy, showing in it what he owed to his own race and what to Christ. For, setting up the start of the beginning with the voice of the prophetic exclamation, he showed the order of his Levitical election so that he, preaching by the voice of the announcing messenger that John the son of Zechariah was the predestinated one, might show at the start of the preaching of the gospel not only that the word made flesh had been sent out but also that the body of the Lord had been

animated in all things through the word of the divine voice, so that he who reads these things might realize not to be ignorant to whom he owes the start of the flesh in the Lord and the tabernacle of the coming God, and also that he might find in himself the word of the voice which had been lost in the consonants. Furthermore, both going on with the work of the perfect gospel and starting that God preached from the baptism of the Lord, he did not labor to tell of the nativity of the flesh, which he had conquered in prior portions, but rather right at first he offered the expulsion into the desert, the fasting for the number, the temptation by the devil, the gathering of the beasts, and the ministry by angels, so that, in setting us up to understand by sketching out the details in brief, he might not diminish the authority of what was already done, nor deny the work to be perfected in fulness. Furthermore, he is said to have amputated his thumb after faith so that he might be held to be unfit for the priesthood. But the predestinated election held such power, consenting to his faith, that he did not in his work of the word lose what he had previously merited by his race, for he was the bishop of Alexandria, whose work it was to know in detail and to apply the things said in the gospel on his own, and not to be ignorant of the discipline of the law for himself, and to understand the divine nature of the Lord in the flesh. These things we also wish to be sought first, and, when they have been sought, not to be ignored having the reward of the exhortation, since he who plants and he who waters are one; he who yields the increase, however, is God.*

* Theron apparently amends *vicerat* to *viderat*, since his translation has *which he had noticed*.

Confer the [Marcionite prologues to the Pauline epistles](#), also extant in Latin.

TextExcavation 2016.
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File last modified 08/23/2007 12:18:56.