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Pages 111–41 in *The Gospel of Tatian: Exploring the Nature and Text of the* Diatessaron. Edited by Matthew R. Crawford and Nicholas J. Zola. The Reception of Jesus in the First Three Centuries 3. London: T&T Clark, 2019.

Tatian's Diatessaron and the Proliferation of Gospels

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Previous scholarship on the Diatessaron has asked whether Tatian intended to supplement or replace the fourfold gospel. This essay reconsiders the question by sketching a general theory of Gospel proliferation. Greek, Roman, and Jewish comparanda show that the proliferation and collection of similar works were common reading and writing practices. Accordingly, Gospel writers would not likely discard their sources, and Gospel readers would likely collect and compare multiple texts. On the supposition that ancient writers were attuned to their contemporary reading practices, Tatian likely would have expected the Diatessaron to be read alongside—not instead of—the fourfold gospel, as was the outcome over the next few centuries.

In composing the Diatessaron, Tatian meticulously harmonized the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.[1] Many have taken up the question whether Tatian intended to supplement or replace the fourfold gospel. Matthew Crawford refers to the Diatessaron as a "rival to the fourfold gospel,"[2] intended as "a new and … better edition of the life of Jesus."[3] Crawford leaves open the question whether Tatian wanted his Gospel to be read alongside others, and so does Charles Hill in mentioning "whatever purpose Tatian had in producing the *Diatessaron.*"[4] Nicholas Zola suggests that the question cannot be answered based on extant evidence.[5] Others assume a stronger position. William Petersen says that Tatian intended his gospel to be "the one, *definitive* description of Jesus' life."[6] Francis Watson echoes "the definitive Gospel,"[7] and Tjitze Baarda concludes that Tatian wanted not

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[1] Given Victor of Capua's nomenclature Diapente, Tatian might have drawn on more than these four; on this question, see Charles Hill's contribution to this volume.

[2] Matthew R. Crawford, "The Diatessaron, Canonical or Non-canonical? Rereading the Dura Fragment," *NTS* 62 (2016): 253–77, here 253.

[3] Crawford, "Diatessaron, Canonical or Non-canonical?" 275.

[4] Charles E. Hill, *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2004), 302.

[5] Nicholas J. Zola, "Evangelizing Tatian: The *Diatessaron's* Place in the Emergence of the Fourfold Gospel Canon," *PRSt* 43 (2016): 399–414, here 399.

[6] William L. Petersen, *Patristic and Text-Critical Studies: The Collected Essays of William L. Petersen,* edited by Jan Kraus and Joseph Verheyden (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 509.

[7] See Francis Watson's contribution to this volume.

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only to surpass his sources but also to replace them as *"the* Gospel."[8] To the contrary, David Dungan finds "no evidence that Tatian intended that his composition *replace* the original Greek Gospels."[9] Similarly, Nicholas Perrin argues that the Diatessaron does not supplant the earlier Gospels' authority.[10] It seemed to me too that I should ask this question,[11] but I have come to reject "supplement or replace" as a false dichotomy that mischaracterizes the nature of Gospel proliferation.

Drawing on studies of circles of authors, sociology of reading, and manuscript materiality, this essay sketches a general theory of Gospel proliferation, a neutral term for the processes of composition, transmission, reception, and revision culminating in more than a dozen extant or attested Gospels appearing a century or two after Jesus's crucifixion. Writing a subsequent Gospel raises questions of authors' intentions, which are bound to questions of anticipated audience. Rather than assuming that each Gospel reinforces the beliefs and practices of a particular Christian community, Richard Bauckham argues that "the Gospels were written for general circulation," an implied audience of "any and every Christian community in the late-first-century Roman Empire;"[12] as a mediating position, each evangelist could have written within a specific community while anticipating a wider readership.[13] Yet the very notion of "community" can be problematic,[14] and I am persuaded by studies conceptualizing the evangelists within literary networks.[15] Also, Matthew D.C. Larsen helpfully shows

[8] Tjitze Baarda, "ΔΙΑΦΩΝΙΑ—ΣΥΜΦΩΝΙΑ: Factors in the Harmonization of the Gospels, Especially in the Diatessaron of Tatian," in *Gospel Traditions in the Second Century: Origins, Recensions, Text, and Transmission,* ed. William L. Petersen (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 133–54, here 154.

[9] David Laird Dungan, *A History of the Synoptic Problem: The Canon, the Text, the Composition, and the Interpretation of the Gospels,* Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 44.

[10] Nicholas Perrin, "Hermeneutical Factors in the Harmonization of the Gospels and the Question of Textual Authority," in *The Biblical Canons,* ed. J.-M. Auwers and H. J. de Jonge, BETL 163 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 599–605, here 605.

[11] My paper for the Development of Early Christian Theology section's panel on the Diatessaron at the 2016 SBL meeting was entitled, "Did Tatian intend to supplement or to supplant the fourfold gospel?"

[12] Richard Bauckham, "Introduction," in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences,* ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 1.

[13] E.g., Craig L. Blomberg, "The Gospels for Specific Communities *and* All Christians," in *The Audience of the Gospels: The Origin and Function of the Gospels in Early Christianity,* ed. Edward W. Klink III, LNTS 353 (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 111–33; Margaret M. Mitchell, "Patristic Counter-Evidence to the Claim that 'The Gospels Were Written for All Christians,'" *NTS* 51 (2005): 36–79; David C. Sim, "The Gospels for All Christians? A Response to Richard Bauckham," *JSNT* 84 (2001): 3–27; Daniel W. Ulrich, "The Missional Audience of the Gospel of Matthew," *CBQ* 69 (2007): 64–83. Bauckham ("For Whom Were the Gospels Written?" in *The Gospels for All Christians*, 9–48, here 45–6) anticipated and rejected such a compromise, however.

[14] Stanley Stowers, "The Concept of Community and the History of Early Christianity," *MTSR* 23 (2011): 238–56.

[15] E.g., Loveday Alexander, "Ancient Book Production and the Circulation of the Gospels," in *Gospels for All Christians* [see n. 12 above], 71–105, here 91–3; E. Earle Ellis, *The Making of the New Testament Documents,* Biblical Interpretation (Leiden: Brill, 1999); Chris Keith, "The Competitive Textualization of the Jesus Tradition in John 20:30-31 and 21:24-25," *CBQ* 78 (2016): 321–37; Richard Last, "Communities that Write: Christ-Groups, Associations, and Gospel Communities," *NTS* 58 (2012): 173–98; idem, "The Social Relationships of Gospel Writers: New Insights from Inscriptions Commending Greek Historiographers," *JSNT* 37 (2015): 223–52; Robyn

how publication and circulation—even post-publication revision—lay largely beyond an author's control.[16] As books circulated, material artifacts offer ample evidence of readers collecting and studying multiple works on the same topic.[17] By extension, writers were aware of reading practices, so Tatian likely expected the Diatessaron to be read alongside—not instead of—the earlier Gospels.

The essay divides into three main parts. First are Greek, Roman, and Jewish examples showing the proliferation of highly similar works. Second is an overview of Gospel production and reception before and after Tatian. Third is a reexamination of the Diatessaron in light of the preceding analogies. Overall, I find no strong evidence for literary replacement. Source texts did not disappear by being absorbed into subsequent Gospels. Also, although there is occasional evidence for the exclusive use of a single Gospel, exclusivity is the exception rather than the norm, and the Diatessaron never appears to have been used exclusively. Instead, the Diatessaron was read alongside the fourfold gospel for centuries, as would have been Tatian's most reasonable expectation when composing his Gospel.

1. Analogies to the Proliferation of Gospels

This section adduces examples of Greco-Roman literature and Jewish biblical texts. Similar works would proliferate, but subsequent works would not replace their predecessors. The "supplement or replace" question begins to break down as soon as one considers manuscript materiality. First and foremost, ancient books were built to last a very long time. From George Houston's stellar study of Roman libraries, "the evidence of these collections suggests that a roll might well be expected to last for 150 years, and that in some cases book rolls were kept for much longer than that."[18] Five hundred years was an exceptionally high age for a book, whereas fifty years was an exceptionally young age for a discarded book. It would have been unusual, then, for any author to write a book and throw away his sources. While it was physically possible to replace one's sources or rivals by effacement, this process would not ensue right away: there are rare examples of papyrus palimpsests, but the process

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Faith Walsh, "Q and the 'Big Bang' Theory of Christian Origins," in *Redescribing the Gospel of Mark,* edited by Barry S. Crawford and Merrill P. Miller, SBLECL 22 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017), 483–533.

[16] Matthew D.C. Larsen, "Accidental Publication, Unfinished Texts and the Traditional Goals of New Testament Textual Criticism," *JSNT* 39 (2017): 362–87.

[17] E.g., the Oxyrhynchus papyri reveal circles of readers collecting works from particular genres such as lyric poetry or classical drama; for book collection at Oxyrhynchus, see William A. Johnson, *Readers and Reading Culture in the High Roman Empire: A Study of Elite Communities,* Classical Culture and Society (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 180–85; George W. Houston, *Inside Roman Libraries: Book Collections and Their Management in Antiquity,* Studies in the History of Greece and Rome (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 130–79. For sociology of reading, see e.g. Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Larry W. Hurtado, "Manuscripts and the Sociology of Early Christian Reading," in *The Early Text of the New Testament,* ed. Charles E. Hill and Michael J. Kruger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 49–62. For manuscript materiality and the Gospels, see esp. Larry W. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

[18] Houston, *Inside Roman Libraries*, 174–5; there Houston discusses the Oxyrhynchus papyri, but the same figures apply also to the villa at Herculaneum (pp. 120–21).

was probably more trouble than it was worth;[19] parchment palimpsests are far more common, but underlying literary texts typically endured for a century or longer before being overwritten.[20] Besides material production, authors had relatively limited control over the circulation of their own works, let alone rival ones. More often than not, the loss of ancient literature was accidental, not intentional.

1.1. Greco-Roman Texts

The Greek Epic Cycle, encomia for Cato the Younger, and histories of the Jewish Revolt show how similar works would proliferate after a single work had established a market.

1.1.1. The Greek Epic Cycle

The so-called Epic Cycle consists of Homeric imitations that ipso facto supplement the Iliad and the Odyssey via prequels, interquels, and a sequel.[21] Although none rivaled the Iliad or Odyssey in length or prestige, "what Homer left out clearly appealed to a substantial number of Greeks."[22] The cycle began with the Titanomachy, according to which Zeus defeated Cronus and established the Olympian gods as rulers over the world. The Cypria described the Trojan war up to the commencement of the Iliad. Whereas the Iliad's ending anticipates the sack of Troy and the Odyssey's beginning presupposes it, the written Sack of Troy describes it in detail. Afterward, in imitation of the Odyssey, the Returns Home conveys the voyages of other heroes. Finally, the Telegony tells of Odysseus's adventures after the Odyssey. In addition to these five, at least five additional epics completed the cycle.

Each component of the cycle had likely been produced by the end of the sixth century BCE,[23] and the contents of the cycle were probably codified by the fourth century BCE.[24] The Epic Cycle was still being studied when Proclus summarized each work in the second-century CE.[25] Proclus's summary intimates chronological and thematic coherence throughout the cycle, yet the extant fragments

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[19] Thomas Schmidt, "Greek Palimpsest Papyri: Some Open Questions," *Proceedings of the 24th International Congress of Papyrology* 2 (2007): 979–90.

[20] This is particularly the case when both old and new texts are in the same language; via the Leuven Database of Ancient Books (http://www.trismegistos.org/tm/search_reuse.php), e.g., the old and new text of Russian National Library gr. 5 are in Greek, and the original text lasted at least 150 years before the MS became palimpsest.

[21] On the Epic Cycle, see Malcolm Davies, *The Greek Epic Cycle,* 2nd ed. (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2001); M. L. West, *Greek Epic Fragments from the Seventh to the Fifth Centuries BC,* LCL 497 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003); idem, *The Epic Cycle: A Commentary on the Lost Troy Epics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[22] Davies, *Greek Epic Cycle,* 10.

[23] West, *Epic Cycle,* 21.

[24] West, *Epic Cycle,* 23; Aristotle refers to the Cypria and the Little Iliad (*Poet.* 1459ab).

[25] West, *Epic Cycle,* 8; West argues against identifying Proclus with the fifth-century CE Neoplatonist. Around the third century CE Athenaeus mentions the Titanomachy (*Deipn*. 7.277) and the Thebais (*Deipn*. 11.465).

evince redundancy and incongruity.[26] As shown by the Cypria,[27] derivative works sometimes contradicted or reinterpreted Homer's original descriptions. And apparently there were rival sequels to the Iliad, for Lesches's Little Iliad probably overlapped considerably with Arctinus's Aethiopis and Sack of Troy.[28] Nonetheless, ancient scholars collected and studied these presumably rival works alongside one another, and they circulated together for centuries.

1.1.2. Encomia for Cato the Younger

Encomia for Cato the Younger proliferated immediately after his noble suicide at Utica in April of 46 BCE.[29] Cicero's letters attest the publication of at least five works within a year and a half. On 13 June 46 BCE, Cicero says that he is pleased with his own book on Cato (*Att.* 12.4). By 9 May 45 BCE, Aulus Hirtius had sent his book of Cato's defects (*vitia*) to Cicero; Cicero ordered it to be copied and published, because Cato's enemies' vituperations counterintuitively serve as praise (*Att.* 12.40, 41, 44, 45, 48). By 12 August 45 BCE, Caesar had read Brutus's book in praise of Cato (*Att.* 13.46). On 20 August 45 BCE, Cicero asked his friend Fadius Gallus to send his book on Cato, which Cicero expressly wanted to read (*Fam.* 7.24). By 24 August 45 BCE, Cicero had read Julius Caesar's books against Cato (*Att.* 13.50). At least two other contemporary works were published: Octavian wrote a response to Brutus's *Cato* (Suetonius *Aug.* 85); Munatius Rufus, a close friend of Cato, would have written his encomium around the same time (Plutarch *Cat. Min.* 25.1). A century later, Munatius's work was a source for Thrasea Paetus (Plutarch *Cat. Min.* 37.1), who wrote his own life of Cato before emulating Cato in death under Nero in 66 CE. Finally, Plutarch published his *Cato the Younger* in the late-first or early-second century CE.

Unfortunately, Plutarch's is the lone survivor of the nine lives of Cato. Accordingly, the extents to which subsequent works recapitulated or supplemented earlier ones cannot be determined. However, it can be determined that subsequent works did not replace their predecessors. Plutarch shows that after nearly 150 years, Cicero's *Cato* and Caesar's *Anti-Cato* were still being read, for each presently "has devotees" (σπουδαστὰς ἔχει; *Caes.* 54.3). Cicero apparently wrote the first life of Cato, yet he collected at least four other such books. Subsequent authors wrote directly in response to predecessors, so the term "competitive textualization" aptly captures the praise and blame oscillating between Cicero and Caesar and between Brutus and Octavian.[30]

[26] Davies, *Greek Epic Cycle,* 7.

[27] Davies, *Greek Epic Cycle,* 40, 47.

[28] Davies, *Greek Epic Cycle,* 60; on the synchronization of subsequent installments to the Epic Cycle, see Marco Fantuzzi, "The Aesthetics of Sequentiality and Its Discontents," in *The Greek Epic Cycle and Its Ancient Reception: A Companion,* ed. Marco Fantuzzi and Christos Tsagalis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 405–29, here 409.

[29] Richard A. Burridge (*What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography,* 2nd edition [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004], 153) discusses encomia for Cato in the context of the Gospel genre.

[30] I owe the term "competitive textualization" to Chris Keith's 2016 *CBQ* article cited above in n. 12.

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1.1.3. Histories of the Jewish Revolt

Josephus begins his account of the Jewish War (*B.J.* 1.1) by contextualizing his history book among previously published second-hand accounts (οἱ μὲν οὐ παρατύχοντες τοῖς πράγμασιν) and first-hand accounts (οἱ παραγενόμενοι δέ). Josephus calls the second-hand accounts contradictory (ἀσύμφωνα), and he considers the first-hand accounts falsified either by flattery toward the Romans or by hatred toward the Jews (*B.J.* 1.1). Josephus published the Jewish War prior to Vespasian's death in 79 CE, so—if the plurals are taken seriously—Josephus's history was one of at least five such works produced within a decade of the temple's destruction. Josephus's might have been the first Jewish perspective on the war, for he praises his own accuracy (ἀκριβεία) in representing both sides of the conflict, even as he admits his sympathy (πάθος) for his countrymen (*B.J.* 1.4).

Justus of Tiberias later published another history of the War from a Jewish perspective. According to Josephus, Justus claimed to have surpassed his predecessors' histories of the war (*Vita* 357, 359), and he discredited Josephus in particular (*Vita* 340).[31] Josephus defended himself and disparaged Justus for waiting so long to publish his work—after Vespasian, Titus, and Agrippa had all died (*Vita* 359–360).[32] Justus's history cannot date before 90 CE, and Josephus's response appeared by either 93/94 or 97/98.[33] As authors, Justus and Josephus realistically expected readers to compare multiple accounts of the same war, and each author considered his own work superior to the other. A confident author could expect informed readers to recognize his book's superiority (as when Cicero himself published Hirtius's rival book); there was no need to suppress competition.

Since the works of Josephus's rivals did not endure, the extents to which subsequent histories overlapped or supplemented cannot be determined. It is clear, though, that rival works circulated alongside one another for decades, if not longer. Moreover, Josephus's works survived because of their usefulness to later Christians. Josephus hardly could have imagined such a wide Christian audience, let alone in an ascendant Christian culture and polity in the fourth century. Thus it would be anachronistic to claim the eventual survival of Josephus's history as evidence of his initial intent.

1.2. Jewish Biblical Texts

Jewish biblical texts evince similar literary processes of proliferation and collection. Presumably rival works were read alongside one another or even canonized together; one did not replace another. Examples include the (eventually) canonical books of Deuteronomy and Chronicles, the (eventually) extracanonical books of 1 Enoch and Jubilees, and Hebrew Scriptures in Greek translation.

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[31] Justus blamed Josephus and his fellow Galileans for instigating the city of Tiberias in the revolt against Rome.
[32] By contrast, Josephus shared his account with Titus and Agrippa, who approved of it (*Vita* 361–367).
[33] Regarding Justus, see Tessa Rajak, "Justus of Tiberias," *ClQ* 23 (1973): 345–68. Elsewhere Rajak (*Josephus: The Historian and His Society,* 2nd ed. [London: Duckworth, 2002], 237–8) dates *Antiquities* and *Vita,* together in a single edition, to 93/94; cf. Seth Schwartz, "The Composition and Publication of Josephus's *Bellum Iudaicum* Book 7," *HTR* 79 [1986]: 373–86, here 385 n. 45), who dates the *Vita* to 97/98.

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1.2.1. Deuteronomy and Chronicles

The books of Deuteronomy and Chronicles exemplify a type of "rewritten Bible" within the Bible itself.[34] Some have claimed that Deuteronomy was intended to replace the earlier Book of the Covenant.[35] Conversely, both supplementary and documentary approaches to Pentateuchal criticism typically view Deuteronomy as intentionally complementary to the earlier legal and narrative collections.[36] Regardless of the writers' original intentions, early Jewish and Samaritan readers decisively included Deuteronomy as the fifth book of Moses prior to the turn of the era.[37] Simply put, the otherwise Tetrateuch turned into the extant Pentateuch.

Similarly, scholars typically argue that the Chronicler intended to supplement Samuel–Kings.[38] Obvious supplementation appears at the beginning and end of the book: 1 Chronicles lists genealogies from the creation of the world down to King Saul (chapters 1–9), and 2 Chronicles narrates the exiles' return from Babylon (36:20–23). Overall, though, Chronicles simply rewrites Samuel–Kings in approximately half as much space,[39] the most notable exceptions being omissions regarding the Northern Kingdom and King Saul. Emphasizing Chronicles' recapitulations and reinterpretations, some scholars argue that the Chronicler intended to replace Samuel–Kings.[40] In either case, Samuel–Kings and Chronicles were eventually canonized.

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[34] Sidnie White Crawford. *Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times,* Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 3.

[35] Frank Crüsemann, *The Torah: Theology and Social History of Old Testament Law,* trans. Allan W. Mahnke (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 202; Bernard M. Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 152–4.

[36] For a supplementary approach, see Reinhard G. Kratz, *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament,* trans. John Bowden (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 114–33; for a documentary approach, see Joel S. Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis,* AYBRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 146–8.

[37] Josephus mentions the five books of Moses in *C. Ap.* 1.8. The Samaritan Pentateuch likely emerged in the second or first century BCE; see Reinhard Plummer, "The Samaritans and Their Pentateuch," in *The Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding Its Promulgation and Acceptance,* ed. Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 237–69, here 257.

[38] E.g., Mark Zvi Brettler, *The Creation of History in Ancient Israel* (New York: Routledge, 1995) 21–3; Ralph W. Klein, *1 Chronicles,* Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006) 37; idem, *2 Chronicles,* Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 5; Gary N. Knoppers, *1 Chronicles,* 2 vols., AB 12A–12A (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 1:129–34; Steven L. McKenzie, *1–2 Chronicles,* AOTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), 33–40.

[39] According to BibleWorks 10, the Hebrew word count of 1 Samuel–2 Kings is 50,522, as compared with 24,566 for 1–2 Chronicles.

[40] Bernard M. Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 154–5. Other possibilities besides supplement/replace have been offered: for Chronicles and Samuel–Kings as rival works emerging simultaneously based on common sources, see Raymond F. Person, Jr., *The Deuteronomistic History and the Book of Chronicles: Scribal Works in an Oral World,* SBLAIL 6 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010); for part of 2 Samuel actually depending on 1 Chronicles, see Kristin De Troyer, "The Final Verses of the Ammonite War Story in 2 Sam 22:26–31, and 1 Chron 20:1–3," in *Found in Translation: Essays*

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While the Chronicler's authorial intentions in the Persian or Hellenistic era are debatable, Jewish reading practices in the Hellenistic and Roman periods are much clearer. Portions of Samuel–Kings and Chronicles were discovered in Qumran Cave 4, and Josephus would have counted both books among his twenty-two authoritative Jewish Scriptures (*C. Ap.* 1.8). Josephus considered Samuel–Kings and Chronicles equally authoritative historical sources;[41] for example, in book 6 of *Antiquities,* he included extensive narratives about King Saul that are found in 1 Samuel (chapters 9–30) but omitted from 1 Chronicles, yet Josephus (*Ant.* 7.335–342) incorporated King David's preparations for building the temple from 1 Chronicles 22, material that has no parallel in Samuel–Kings. Similar to Chronicles' compression of Samuel–Kings, books 1–13 of Josephus's *Antiquities* total a bit more than 200,000 words—nearly two-thirds the length of his sources;[42] in approximately 100,000 additional words, Josephus could then relate the events of Jewish history down to his own day. Josephus's canon consciousness nonetheless implies that his own *Antiquities* were not intended to replace his biblical and historical sources.[43] So even if the Chronicler originally intended to replace Samuel–Kings, the possibility of replacement diminished over time, and replacement would have been practically impossible in Josephus's day.

1.2.2. First Enoch and Jubilees

The book of Jubilees depicts Moses retelling much of the content from Genesis and Exodus,[44] and 1 Enoch fills a gap in the book of Genesis. Enoch, the great-grandfather of Noah, lived 365 years (Gen. 5:23) before disappearing from the earth when God took (לקח) or transposed (μετατίθημι) him (Gen. 5:24); as a Second-Temple spin-off, 1 Enoch describes the eponymous character's apocalyptic tour through the heavens. Jubilees (4.17–25) explicitly refers to the earlier book of Enoch.

The material remains of Qumran cave 4 reveal that, in the Hasmonean and Roman eras, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Jubilees, 1 Enoch, et alia were read alongside one another. The question arises whether this reading practice betrays the intentions of those who composed derivative works in the Second Temple period. According to one formulation, 1 Enoch represents Enochic Judaism, the antithesis of

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on Jewish Biblical Translation in Honor of Leonard J. Greenspoon, ed. James W. Barker, Joel N. Lohr, and Anthony Le Donne, Shofar Supplements in Jewish Studies (Purdue: Purdue University Press, 2018), 95–111.

[41] For Josephus's use of parallel stories in Samuel–Kings and Chronicles, see Michael Avioz, *Josephus' Interpretation of the Books of Samuel,* LSTS 86 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 175–83.

[42] Josephus's main sources for books 1–13 of *Antiquities* were Genesis–2 Kings, 1–2 Chronicles, Jonah, Esther, and 1 Maccabees, which total approximately 315,000 Greek words according to BibleWorks 10.

[43] Here I concur with Perrin, "Gospel Harmonization and Textual Authority," 601.

[44] Jubilees also alludes to laws from Leviticus and perhaps Numbers; see Jacques T.A.G.M. van Ruiten, *Abraham in the Book of* Jubilees: *the Rewriting of Genesis 11:26–25:10 in the Book of* Jubilees *11:14–23:8,* Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 161 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 282–93; Perrin ("Gospel Harmonization and Textual Authority," 601–2) also adduced the complementarity of Jubilees as analogous to the Diatessaron.

Mosaic Judaism; the book of Jubilees self-consciously synthesizes Enochic and Mosaic Judaisms.[45] Others deny that Enochic Judaism was opposed to the Mosaic Torah and Zadokite Temple or that such a thing as Enochic Judaism even existed.[46] Overall, Jubilees is less than three-quarters the length of Genesis and Exodus,[47] but Jubilees could hardly replace the written Torah. Vis-à-vis the earlier Law, Eva Mroczek perceptively describes Jubilees as "neither subservient nor hostile;"[48] she continues:

> To ask the question about whether a new text intends to *replace* or merely *interpret* the Torah of Moses is already to assume a particular way of imagining the shape of sacred literature: the idea that it must be arranged around a single center. In this model, a nonbiblical text can either claim to take over the central, preeminent place or it can place itself in a derivative position in the service of the central text, as interpretation. But the prebiblical imagination was not structured this way. Scriptures took their place alongside other scriptures; proliferation was a value.[49]

I wholeheartedly concur with Mroczek on this point, not just for Jubilees in particular but—as her entire project incisively shows—for ancient Jewish "literary imagination" in general. But even if a writer intended one work as a replacement for a similar one, readers continued to collect similar works. Centuries after the destruction of Qumran, the Ethiopic Orthodox Church would canonize Jubilees and 1 Enoch as complementary to one another and to the Pentateuch.[50] I modestly propose that writers were well attuned to contemporary reading practices. In other words, writers knew that readers were collecting similar works, so the likelihood of replacing a predecessor's text diminished as time passed and as similar works proliferated.

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[45] Gabriele Boccaccini (*Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 55) cautions not to confuse ownership with authorship; similarly, Andreas Bedenbender ("The Place of Torah in the Early Enoch Literature," in *The Early Enoch Literature,* ed. Gabrielle Boccaccini and John J. Collins, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 121 [Leiden: Brill, 2007], 66–79) argues for a diachronic, increasing appreciation of Moses within the compositional stages of 1 Enoch.

[46] Paul Heger, "1 Enoch—Complementary or Alternative to Mosaic Torah?" *JSJ* 41 (2010): 29–62; Helge S. Kvanvig, "Enochic Judaism—a Judaism without the Torah and the Temple?" in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees,* edited by Gabriele Boccaccini and Giovanni Ibba (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 163–77; George W. E. Nickelsburg, "Enochic Wisdom and Its Relationship to the Mosaic Torah," in *Early Enoch Literature* [see n. 45 above], 82–94.

[47] According to Todd R. Hanneken (*The Subversion of the Apocalypses in the Book of Jubilees,* EJL 34 [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012], 1 n. 1), James C. VanderKam's (*The Book of Jubilees,* CSCO 510–511 [Leuven: Peeters, 1989]) English translation of Jubilees is 48,337 words; according to BibleWorks 10, the RSV of Genesis and Exodus total 67,548 words.

[48] Eva Mroczek, *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 142.

[49] Mroczek, *Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity,* 142.

[50] Leslie Baynes, "*Enoch* and *Jubilees* in the Canon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church," in *A Teacher for All Generations: Essays in Honor of James C. VanderKam,* ed. Eric F. Mason et al., Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 153 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 2:799–818; R. W. Cowley, "The Biblical Canon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Today," *Ostkirchliche Studien* 23 (1974): 318–23.

Pages 111–41 in *The Gospel of Tatian: Exploring the Nature and Text of the* Diatessaron. Edited by Matthew R. Crawford and Nicholas J. Zola. The Reception of Jesus in the First Three Centuries 3. London: T&T Clark, 2019.

1.2.3. Greek Translations of Hebrew Scriptures

The Letter of Aristeas dates the seventy-two elders' Greek translation of the Torah to the reign of Ptolemy II (285–247 BCE). The rest of the books of the Tanakh were translated in the ensuing centuries before the Common Era. Although the term originally applied only to the translation of the Pentateuch, Septuagint (LXX) later became a catchall for the Greek Jewish Scriptures. As with any translation, the Septuagint diverged from its Hebrew sources, and full-scale revisions emerged very early.[51]

The earliest extant recension of the LXX is the Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Naḥal Ḥever (8ḤevXIIgr), the physical copy of which dates just before the turn of the era.[52] The translation is very wooden and was designated *kaige* because of its tendency to translate וגם (also) as καίγε (even; at least).[53] *Kaige* clearly realigns the LXX toward the proto-Masoretic text. As I have explained elsewhere,[54] at times *kaige* corrects the LXX by matching the wording and even the word count of the proto-MT (e.g., spelling out יהוה τῶν δυνάμεων three times in Zech. 1:3); yet *kaige* retains certain inexplicable translations from the LXX (e.g., σκοπ[ούς]/watchmen for בכורים/first fruits in Nah. 3:12). Despite making numerous improvements to its predecessor, the Minor Prophets *kaige* circulated alongside the LXX for centuries, as evidenced by Justin Martyr's conflations of the two versions for his quotations of the Dodekapropheton in the Dialogue with Trypho ca. 165 CE.[55]

Furthermore, the Minor Prophets scroll is but one text within a wider (non-homogenous) *kaige*-tradition crossing numerous books, most notably Job and Daniel. Standing squarely within the *kaige*-tradition, Theodotion's thoroughgoing recension is now dated near the turn of the era.[56] Aquila's recension is dated ca. 125 CE, and his translations are even more wooden than Theodotion's. Symmachus would reverse the trend, for his recension—dated ca. 200 CE—renders the Greek more idiomatically. Origen's Hexapla (ca. 250 CE) presented in parallel columns the Hebrew text, the Greek

[51] For up-to-date overviews of the Greek Jewish Scriptures, see Emanuel Tov, "Septuagint," and Peter J. Gentry, "Pre-Hexaplaric Translations, Hexapla, Post-Hexaplaric Translations," in *Textual History of the Bible, vol. 1A,* ed. Armin Lange (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 191–210, 211–34.

[52] Emanuel Tov, with the collaboration of R. A. Kraft and a contribution by P. J. Parsons, *The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Naḥal Ḥever* (*8ḤevXIIgr*), DJD 8/The Seiyâl Collection 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 26.

[53] Dominique Barthélemy, "Redécouverte d'un chaînon manquant de l'histoire de la Septante," *RB* 60 (1953): 18–29; idem, *Les Devanciers d'Aquila: première publication intégrale du texte des fragments du Dodécaprophéton,* VTSup 10 (Leiden: Brill, 1963).

[54] James W. Barker, "Ancient Compositional Practices and the Gospels: A Reassessment." *JBL* 135 (2016): 109–21, here 115.

[55] Barthélemy "Redécouverte d'un chaînon manquant;" James W. Barker, "The Reconstruction of *Kaige/Quinta* Zechariah 9,9," *ZAW* 126 (2014): 584–8; idem, "The Equivalence of *Kaige* and *Quinta* in the Dodekapropheton," in *Found in Translation* [see n. 40 above], 127–52.

[56] Following Gentry ("Pre-Hexaplaric Translations"), the traditional dating of Theodotion ca. 180 CE as well as the terms *kaige*-Theodotion and proto-Theodotion should now be given up.

transliteration of the Hebrew, and the Septuagint alongside the recensions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion; besides the LXX and 'the Three' main recensions, Origen occasionally preserved a fifth (*Quinta*) and a sixth (*Sexta*) version.

Within 500 years, then, at least four Greek translations of the entire Tanakh were published; within the same span, at least three other partial translations were also produced. In the century after Origen, the Christians Hesychius (ca. 300) and Lucian (ca. 312) made additional recensions, which Jerome attests. The interrelations among the three most prominent revisions ipso facto constitute one-upmanship: Theodotion intended to improve the LXX; Aquila intended to improve Theodotion; and Symmachus intended to improve both Aquila and Theodotion.[57] Yet improvement need not imply replacement.

Theodotion undoubtedly knew the widespread circulation of the LXX, so even if he intended to replace the LXX, replacement would have been difficult and would have taken considerable time—longer than a lifetime. Also, replacement would become an increasingly audacious goal as time passed and as similar works proliferated. Accordingly, it would have been more difficult for Aquila to replace the LXX *and* Theodotion, and it would have been more difficult still for Symmachus to replace all three of his predecessors. Symmachus's revision instead reveals an established market for Greek Jewish Scriptures; collectors of these texts would be Symmachus's likeliest audience, and they would not likely discard other versions. Origen's scholarship reveals an additive tendency to collect and compare all of these parallel versions of sacred Scripture. Justin had fewer versions from which to choose, but he too collected and compared what he could find; Tatian likely learned these habits directly from Justin.

1.3. In Lieu of Replacement: Loss, Revision, Absorption, and Destruction

Biblical scholars have questioned whether a subsequent text was intended to supplement or replace its predecessor(s). I do not consider such a dichotomy helpful, and I do not find many—if any—examples where replacement was clearly intended. There are, however, numerous examples of loss, revision and expansion, absorption, and destruction.

1.3.1. Eventual Loss

In addition to exemplifying literary proliferation, the previously adduced case studies demonstrate how relatively little ancient literature survived. Except for the Iliad and Odyssey, the entirety of the Greek Epic Cycle was lost; yet the cycle had taken a century or two to compile, and then it had circulated for another 500 years or more. Although Plutarch's life of Cato survived, eight other attested works perished; at the same time, multiple works survived for more than a century. Josephus's Jewish War endured unlike his predecessors' histories and that of his successor Justus; it

[57] For Symmachus's use of both Theodotion and Aquila, see e.g. Michaël N. van der Meer, "Symmachus's Version of Joshua," in *Found in Translation* [see n. 40 above], 53–93.

cannot be determined how long Josephus's rivals maintained currency. The Septuagint persisted as its recensions disappeared, yet none of the recensions disappeared within a century, and some had clearly survived for multiple centuries.

None of these eventually surviving texts replaced its predecessor(s) within the author's lifetime. Furthermore, the survival of the LXX and Josephus's history depended on Christians' preferences, even though Christians could not have been the intended audience of either work. Publication and circulation lay largely beyond an author's control, and so the eventual survival or loss of a text is an accident of history that does not easily equate to authorial intent. Although there is insufficient data for Josephus's rivals, literary citations reveal that every other one of these texts circulated for at least a century. Such durations accord with archaeological evidence that both papyrus and parchment manuscripts of literary texts remained in use for 150 years on average.

1.3.2. Revision and Expansion

The previous examples of loss involved sets of texts that were similar to one another but were identified with different authors. By contrast, numerous works were revised and expanded, such that a text could circulate in different forms and still be identified by the same name. The proto-Masoretic Tanakh offers clear examples of textual expansion and revision. Whether supplementarian or documentarian in theory, the final form of the Pentateuch emerged after centuries of revision and expansion. The same goes for the Prophets: so-called Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah (chs 40–55 and 56–66 respectively) were tacked on to the earlier book of Isaiah (chs 1–39); similarly, so-called Deutero- and Trito-Zechariah (chs 9–11 and 12–14 respectively) were added to the earlier book of Zechariah (chs 1–8). The Writings reveal the same scribal processes, given the composite nature of books such as Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and Daniel; extracanonical texts such as 1 Enoch are likewise composite works.

Processes of textual revision continued in the Greek Jewish Scriptures. Whereas the Masoretic text of Daniel already combined Aramaic (2:4b–7:28) and Hebrew (1:1–2:4a; 8:1–12:13) sections, the Greek version appended the detective stories of Bel and the Dragon as well as Susanna in addition to the pious Prayer of Azariah and Song of the Three Jews. The Greek version of Esther more intricately adds bookends concerning Mordecai's apocalyptic dream while interspersing the Persian emperor's decrees as well as prayers by Mordecai and Esther. The Greek versions of Daniel and Esther thus revised and extended—but did not replace or lose—the earlier Hebrew/Aramaic versions. The shorter and longer versions of both books circulated for centuries under the same title—down to the present. In these cases, 'revision' is a more precise term than the 'supplement or replace' dichotomy: earlier versions were supplemented by additional material at a later date; the earlier version was then 'replaced,' in a sense, but not 'lost;' in some cases, the same scribal circles could have produced the earlier editions and the later revisions.

Pages 111–41 in *The Gospel of Tatian: Exploring the Nature and Text of the* Diatessaron. Edited by Matthew R. Crawford and Nicholas J. Zola. The Reception of Jesus in the First Three Centuries 3. London: T&T Clark, 2019.

1.3.3. Absorption

Whereas subsequent 'revisions' circulated under the same name as the source text, a subsequent work could subsume a source text and be known by a different name; I call this absorption. Absorption also overlaps with textual loss, but the loss was not total in cases of absorption. The books of 1–2 Kings repeatedly cite as separate sources the annals of the kings of Judah (e.g., 1 Kgs 14:29; 15:7, 23) and the annals of the kings of Israel (e.g., 1 Kgs 15:31; 16:5, 14, 20, 27). In the same narrative loci, 1–2 Chronicles repeat most of the citations for the Judahite kings. Conversely, the Chronicler usually unifies the name of the source as "the book of the kings of Israel and Judah" (e.g., 2 Chron. 27:7); also, for particularly favorable kings, the Chronicler ascribes prophetic authorship to the source (e.g., 2 Chron. 12:15).[58] There is little doubt that the Deuteronomistic Historian used actual sources that were then current. Yet these sources do not appear to have survived the respective conquests of Israel and Judah by the Assyrians and Babylonians; most likely, then, 1–2 Chronicles is simply citing 1–2 Kings in these instances. In terms of literary proliferation, portions of the earlier annals were absorbed into Samuel–Kings (and, by extension, Chronicles), but this process of absorption was only partial and did not imply intentional replacement. Without exception, the citations expressly refer to the "rest" (τὰ λοιπά/οἱ λοιποί; יתר) of a king's deeds being recorded in the source. Therefore, the Deuteronomistic Historian probably combined and condensed the sources with the expectation of being read alongside them.

Later Christian texts also evince the phenomenon of absorption. Eusebius of Caesarea lists the Teachings (Διδαχαί) of the Apostles among the spurious books that he rejects but other ecclesiastical churches accept (*Hist. eccl.* 3.25.4). Similarly, in his 39th Festal Letter, Athanasius refers to the Teaching (Διδαχή) of the Apostles among the non-canonical texts read by the church fathers. Eusebius's and Athanasius's canon lists approve of the *content* in the Didache, yet both church fathers deny apostolic *authorship* of the book. Attestation to the Didache diminished thereafter, but soon after Philotheos Bryennios re-discovered it in 1873, he detected that the fourth-century Apostolic Constitutions (7.1–32) had absorbed the Didache;[59] the author/compiler "silently copied out the entire text" and "continually commented on the text of the source, while also paraphrasing and altering it."[60]

I readily acknowledge that the Apostolic Constitutions' absorption of the Didache in the fourth century may indicate an attempt to remove the Didache from independent circulation, but two qualifications are necessary. One is that a much higher degree of canonical consciousness was operative in fourth-century Christianity; Dungan has argued compellingly that that the Emperor Constantine's interest in Christianity creates the conditions for the possibility of a New Testament

[58] Klein, *2 Chronicles,* 39–42; Knoppers, *1 Chronicle,* 1:123–6; McKenzie, *1–2 Chronicles,* 40–41.
[59] Ironically, the Didache itself (chs. 1–6) might have absorbed an originally independent "Two Ways" tractate; see Kurt Niederwimmer, *The Didache: A Commentary,* Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 30–41.
[60] Niederwimmer, *Didache,* 17.

canon, in the sense of an authoritative list of authoritative books.[61] The second qualification is that the Apostolic Constitutions' absorption of the Didache only occurred after the Didache had already circulated for two centuries; that is, absorption did not commence right away, and even thereafter the Didache never completely stopped circulating, since the extant Greek manuscript was copied in the eleventh century.[62] Nevertheless, absorption represents a possible means of replacing an earlier text.

1.3.4. Destruction

There is evidence of Romans and Christians confiscating and burning magic books,[63] just as Christian Scriptures were destroyed during the Diocletian persecution (Eusebius *Hist. eccl.* 8.2.1). I do not presume that censorship of this kind pertained to Gospels in the first or second century. I merely point out that destruction would be an extreme form of censorship.

2. The Proliferation of Gospels before and after the Diatessaron

Before and after the work of Tatian, the proliferation of (eventually) canonical and extracanonical Gospels evinces imitation on the part of writers as well as collection on the part of readers. This section discusses the Synoptics; infancy Gospels; the Gospel of John, the Gospel of Thomas and other Gnostic Gospels; as well as Marcion's Gospel and the Ebionites' Gospel harmony. Key findings are that the Gospel of Mark continued circulating despite its potential loss via absorption; also, on rare occasions readers did use one Gospel exclusively, but exclusivity was the exception rather than the norm.

2.1. The Synoptics

Accepting Markan priority,[64] I question Matthew's and Luke's intentions in writing subsequent Gospels. I argue that Matthew and Luke did not necessarily intend to replace Mark's Gospel. Also, it is inaccurate to speak of Mark as though it barely survived the second century.

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[61] David L. Dungan, *Constantine's Bible: Politics and the Making of the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007). Dungan does not mean that Constantine personally selected the individual books; while Dungan may overstate Eusebius's decisiveness and influence regarding the twenty-seven books, Dungan masterfully explains how the questions of how many books and which ones took on much greater importance and urgency after Constantine's "conversion."

[62] The Didache was also translated into Coptic and Ethiopic; see Niederwimmer, *Didache,* 19–27.

[63] Theodore De Bruyn, *Making Christian Amulets: Artefacts, Scribes, and Contexts,* OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 68.

[64] On the initial textualization of Mark's Gospel, see Chris Keith, "Early Christian Book Culture and the Emergence of the First Written Gospel," in *Mark, Manuscripts, and Monotheism: Essays in Honor of Larry W. Hurtado,* ed. Chris Keith and Dieter T. Roth, LNTS 528 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 22–39; for a succinct defense of Markan priority, see Mark Goodacre, *The Case against Q: Studies in Markan Priority and the Synoptic Problem* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2002), 19–45.

2.1.1. Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew reveals that "supplement and replace" are not mutually exclusive. Matthew undeniably supplements Mark by adding Jesus's genealogy and nativity at the beginning, more of his teachings throughout the middle, and his resurrection appearance at the end. The question is whether Matthew intentionally attempted to replace Mark. Highlighting Matthew's enduring respect for Mark, J. Andrew Doole argues that "Matthew's gospel replaces Mark in a spirit of respectful succession."[65] David Sim argues more strongly:

> The evidence of Matthew's treatment of Mark demonstrates that the former did not write to supplement his primary source and did not intend that his text would be read in conjunction with it. On the contrary, the conclusion is inescapable that Matthew specifically composed his Gospel to render Mark redundant. There was simply no place for Mark amongst the evangelist's readers once his own narrative saw the light of day.[66]

According to the taxonomy I have sketched, Matthew could be imagined as a revision of Mark,[67] but I do not think revision pertains since the two works circulated under different names. It would be more precise to say that Matthew had the potential to absorb Mark. Matthew absorbs approximately ninety percent of Mark, and one of the closest analogies is the Chronicler's use of Samuel–Kings. Given Matthew's opening genealogy, he might have self-consciously emulated the Chronicler's rewriting of a source text. I would not push the analogy too far, but it stands to reason that Matthew could have expected Mark to continue circulating, just as the Deuteronomistic History had endured alongside Chronicles. Among the Synoptics, the strongest case for literary replacement would indeed be Matthew's potential absorption of Mark. Even so, Matthew's intended replacement of Mark is hardly conclusive.

2.1.2. Luke

Sim acknowledges that Luke's prologue "appears to place his own work very much within the tradition of his sources."[68] Sim argues nonetheless that Luke rendered Mark superfluous and thus intended to replace his predecessor(s).[69] In the third-person, Luke's verb that many have undertaken/attempted (ἐπιχειρέω; 1:1) can be interpreted as criticism of earlier works; yet Luke places

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[65] J. Andrew Doole, *What was Mark for Matthew? An Examination of Matthew's Relationship and Attitude to his Primary Source,* WUNT 2/344 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013).

[66] David C. Sim, "Matthew's Use of Mark: Did Matthew Intend to Supplement or To Replace His Primary Source?" *NTS* 57 (2011): 176–92, here 183.

[67] I agree with Larsen ("Accidental Publication," 378) that the Gospel of Matthew can be considered "a continuation of the same mushrooming textual tradition of the gospel," but I disagree that "it would be anachronistic to categorize Matthew as creating a separate piece of literature from Mark."

[68] Sim, "Matthew's Use of Mark," 188.

[69] Sim, "Matthew's Use of Mark," 189–90.

himself alongside his forebears with the ensuing phrase, "it seemed to me too" (ἔδοξε κἀμοί; 1:3).[70] Loveday Alexander concludes, "Essentially these 'predecessors' are only there to reassure the reader that the subject is worth spending time on."[71] To someone who has never read a Jesus book before, Luke's preface presents his book as an excellent choice. To someone who has already read some Jesus books, Luke's preface makes a case for reading this book as well. I interpret Luke's "me too" as simply claiming equality with his predecessors.[72] He has added another book on the important subject of Jesus. Luke's preface need not entail his sense of superiority,[73] let alone his goal of replacement.[74]

According to the Two-Source Hypothesis, Luke had the potential to absorb Mark and Q, but Luke's intentions look different according to the Farrer Hypothesis, which I endorse.[75] Luke (like Matthew) had the potential to absorb Mark, and Luke (like Matthew) omitted the same blind man, deaf man, and naked man from Mark. Even if Matthew had intended to replace Mark, Luke's indebtedness—and oftentimes preference—for Mark intimates its enduring authority.

It is even less likely that Luke would have intended to replace Matthew. At the beginning, Luke narrates the nativity from Mary's perspective, thereby supplementing Joseph's experience as narrated by Matthew.[76] At the end, Matthew had supplemented Mark's original ending by providing a resurrection appearance rather than a mere report that Jesus had risen. In so doing, Matthew made Jesus promise the disciples that he would be with them "all the days until the culmination of the aeon" (Mt. 28:20)—the end. Matthew's ending raises the simple question of Jesus's whereabouts. Luke's ascension (24:50–51) clarifies that Jesus is no longer physically present—*deus in machina,* as it were; after Pentecost, though, Jesus would be with the disciples in Spirit (Acts 2:32–33).

2.1.3. The Myth of Mark's Survival

Sim asserts that the Gospel of "Mark slipped almost into oblivion" in the second century; accordingly, Mark's "demise" was not merely accidental but may actually reveal "the very intention of the later

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[70] Loveday Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1-4 and Acts 1.1,* SNTSMS 78 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 115.

[71] Alexander, *Preface to Luke's Gospel,* 116.

[72] By way of analogy, Luke calls Paul an apostle (Acts 14:14), even though Peter only counted as apostles those who had seen the risen Jesus *and* been present with him from the days of John the Baptist (Acts 1:21–22). The original apostle Peter had the right to deny Paul's apostleship; the sidling apostle Paul could never deny Peter's apostleship (e.g., 1 Cor 15:5, 9), although Paul could claim to be Peter's equal (e.g., 1 Cor 9:1).

[73] *Pace* Keith, "Competitive Textualization," 328.

[74] *Pace* Sim, "Matthew's Use of Mark," 189–90.

[75] That the Two-Source hypothesis demands such a short-lived Q may be more problematic than is usually supposed. E.g., Benedict Viviano (*What Are They Saying about Q?* [New York: Paulist, 2013], 86) says that Q "existed for a brief time (ca 40–50 years)." John S. Kloppenborg Verbin (*Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000], 367) admits: "In fact we do not know why Q disappeared;" he rightly notes that if Q disappeared via absorption, then it is odd that Mark did not likewise disappear.

[76] See esp. Goodacre, *Case against Q,* 54–59.

evangelists."[77] Like Sim, Michael Kok observes the numerical fact that Mark's was the least cited of the eventual fourfold gospel.[78] Yet it is fallacious for Kok to leap from "limited use" to "poor reception."[79] In the early second century, Ignatius attests Matthew, Luke, and John, but not Mark.[80] For the next century and a half, however, Mark is clearly attested by Justin Martyr, Tatian, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen.[81] In other words, the very church fathers whose fewer citations reveal Mark's "limited use" cannot, without contradiction, concomitantly show Mark's "poor reception." Kok finds it "astounding that (Mark) survived at all,"[82] but the language of survival connotes a threat of extinction, and extant evidence shows no such threat in the case of Mark's Gospel.

2.2. Infancy Gospels

Infancy Gospels provide insight into the intentions behind subsequent Gospels.[83] The Protevangelium of James narrates Mary's birth and childhood, offers proofs of her virginal conception and post-partum virginity, and clarifies that she did not give birth to Jesus's supposed siblings. In these regards, the Protevangelium of James intentionally supplements the canonical nativity stories. The Protevanglium also harmonizes Matthew and Luke to explain how the baby John the Baptist escaped Herod's slaughter of infants.[84] Only Luke makes Jesus and John blood relatives born within six months of each other, and only Matthew has Herod slaughter the Bethlehem children two years and younger

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[77] Sim, "Matthew's Use of Mark," 190.

[78] Michael J. Kok, *The Gospel on the Margins: The Reception of Mark in the Second Century* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), 8–9.

[79] *Pace* Kok, *Gospel on the Margins,* 8–9 et passim.

[80] E.g., ca. 110 CE Ignatius refers to Jesus as "having been baptized by John in order that he would fulfill all righteousness by him" (*Smyr*. 1.1), which constitutes Matthean redaction (Mt. 3:15b). A juxtaposition of Pontius Pilate and Herod the Tetrarch only occurs in Luke 3:1, and Luke alone involves Herod Antipas in Jesus's condemnation; Ignatius says that Jesus was nailed by both of them (*Smyr*. 1.2). Among other Johannine material, Ignatius says that the Lord did nothing without the Father (*Magn*. 7.1), which echoes Jesus' statement that "the Son can't do nothing by himself" (Jn 5:19b); regarding the Spirit, Ignatius says that God "knows from where it comes and where it goes" (*Phld*. 7.1), which agrees nearly verbatim with Jesus's saying in the dialogue with Nicodemus (Jn 3:8); and Ignatius's letters and the Gospel of John are the earliest Christian texts to call Jesus God, not just the Son of God (e.g., Jn 20:28; Ign. *Smyr*. 1.1; *Eph*. inscription).

[81] E.g., Justin Martyr quotes Mk 3:17 in *Dial*. 106.3; Tatian includes Mk 7:31–37 in the Diatessaron (Arabic harmony 21.1–7; Liège harmony §114; Codex Fuldensis §87); Irenaeus includes Mark in the fourfold gospel (*Haer*. 3.11.8); Tertullian includes Mark in the fourfold gospel in *Marc.* 4.5.3; Clement of Alexandria quotes Mk 10:17–31 in *Quis div.* 4.4–10; and Origen's commentaries on Matthew and John are replete with comparisons to Mark (and Luke). Papias could be added to the list of second-century witnesses if he is the source behind Eusebius's testimony about the origins of the fourfold gospel (*Hist. eccl.* 3.24.5–8a); see esp. T. Scott Manor, "Papias, Origen, and Eusebius: The Criticisms and Defense of the Gospel of John," *VC* 67 (2013): 1–21.

[82] Kok, *Gospel on the Margins,* 11.

[83] This paragraph and the next are adapted from James W. Barker, *John's Use of Matthew,* Emerging Scholars (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), 31–33.

[84] Ronald F. Hock, *The Infancy Gospels of James and Thomas,* The Scholars Bible 2 (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge, 1995), 9.

shortly after Jesus's birth. When read alongside one another, the question arises as to how John the Baptist survived Herod's slaughter. The Protevangelium of James self-consciously resolves the seeming contradiction by constructing the angelic mountain rescue of the baby John the Baptist and his mother Elizabeth (ch. 22).

The intentions of the Infancy Gospel of Thomas are similar. The conclusion to its longer recensions overlap with Luke's narrative of the twelve-year-old Jesus in Jerusalem for Passover (2:41-52); the shortest recension does not include the Passover story, but—like the other recensions—this version does narrate events when Jesus was five, six, and eight years old.[85] In all cases, then, the Infancy Gospel of Thomas fills in the gaps of Luke's Gospel, which skips from Jesus's circumcision when he was eight days old (2:21) to his return to the temple when he was twelve years old (2:42). Vernon Robbins describes this infancy gospel as "grounding" its narrative with Luke's, combining the familiar Lukan story with the new or unfamiliar infancy material.[86] At the same time, the Infancy Gospel of Thomas could not replace Luke's entire Gospel. The infancy Gospels stand on their own, but they do not stand alone. The written form of these (eventually) extracanonical Gospels reveals that the earlier Gospels were being read alongside one another and that others could be fit in as well.

2.3. John, Thomas, and Gnostic Gospels

Hans Windisch's work on the Gospel of John brought the supplement or replace question to the fore. Windisch assumed—albeit without evidence—that early orthodox churches originally used a single Gospel, a practice that "only over the course of the second century gradually gave way to the two-, three-, or four-gospel system."[87] Windisch argued that the Gospel of John is dependent upon all three Synoptics but that John intended his Gospel as their replacement. Nearly one-fourth of John's Gospel has close parallels in the Synoptic Gospels,[88] even though John reinterprets his predecessors' stories.[89] Such Johannine rewriting exemplifies *oppositio in imitando,* while the majority of John's Gospel contains new stories and teachings. On balance, then, John supplements the Synoptics. John also "interlocks" with the Synoptics, and so it is unlikely that John intended to supplant the earlier

[85] For a very helpful synopsis, see Tony Burke, *De infantia Jesu: evangelium Thomae Graece,* CCSA 17 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 466–539.

[86] Vernon K. Robbins, *Who Do People Say I Am? Rewriting Gospel in Emerging Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 185–86.

[87] Hans Windisch, *Johannes und die Synoptiker: wollte der vierte Evangelist die Älteren Evangelien ergänzen oder ersetzen?* UNT 12 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1926), 44.

[88] Synoptic parallels in the Gospel of John include, e.g., John the Baptist's testimony about Jesus (ch. 1), Jesus's disruption of the temple (ch. 2), healing the royal official's son (ch. 4), feeding the 5000 and walking on water (ch. 6), being anointed at Bethany and entering Jerusalem (ch. 12), as well as Jesus's arrest, trial, crucifixion, burial, and resurrection (chs. 18–20).

[89] E.g., in the Gospel of John, Jesus is never said to have been baptized, and Jesus carries his own cross to Golgotha.

Gospels.[90] If he did hope that his Gospel would be the only one, then John would be deleting approximately seventy-five percent of the Synoptic accounts. As I have argued elsewhere,[91] John likely intended his Gospel to be read alongside, not instead of, the Synoptics—as was the outcome in the early church.[92]

More than half of the Gospel of Thomas has close, verbal agreements in the Synoptic Gospels, and I am convinced by Mark Goodacre's demonstration of Thomas's dependence on all three Synoptics.[93] Thomas's unparalleled sayings supplement the teachings of Jesus found in the (eventually) canonical Gospels, and Thomas is attested along with Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John among the Oxyrhynchus Papyri. Apart from the Gospel of Thomas, the Nag Hammadi Codices reveal proliferation of Gnostic Gospels—for example, the Gospel of Truth and the Gospel of Philip. The material evidence incontrovertibly proves that readers considered multiple Gospels complementary, for Thomas and Philip stand back-to-back in Codex II. This is not just a later decision on the part of readers, since writers necessarily imitated their sources. Most notably, the Synoptics depict Simon Peter as the one disciple who knew Jesus's identity as the Messiah (Mt. 16:16//Mk 8:29b//Lk. 9:20cd), Simon Peter is outdone by Thomas in his eponymous Gospel (13); likewise, outside the Nag Hammadi Codices, Mary Magdalene and Judas report their respective visions of Jesus in their eponymous Gospels.

The Gnostic Gospels contain only sayings and discourses, which did not replace narrative Gospels. Indeed, patristic testimonies attest the (eventually) canonical and extracanonical Gospels being read alongside one another. According to Hippolytus, the Gnostic Naassenes (cf. Hebrew נחש; a.k.a. Ophites, Greek ὄφις) use the Gospel of Thomas (*Haer.* 5.7.20, 21), but they also use the Gospels of Matthew and John.[94] Similarly, according to Irenaeus, Valentinians wrote the Gospel of Truth (*Haer.* 3.11.9), but they also read the Gospels of Luke (*Haer.* 3.14.4) and John (*Haer.* 3.11.7).

[90] On John's interlocking with the Synoptics, see D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John,* Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 51–5; Leon Morris, *Studies in the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 40–63.

[91] Barker, *John's Use of Matthew*.

[92] For a refutation of "the myth of orthodox Johannophobia," see Charles E. Hill, *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[93] Mark Goodacre, Thomas *and the Gospels: The Case for* Thomas's *Familiarity with the Synoptics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012); cf. Thomas's use of Matthew and Luke according to Simon Gathercole, *The Composition of the Gospel of Thomas: Original Language and Influences,* SNTSMS 151 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[94] E.g., Hippolytus quotes the Parable of the Sower according to Matthew's hundredfold, sixtyfold, thirtyfold order (*Haer*. 5.8.29), and Hippolytus discusses the Naassenes' interpretation of Mary's virginal conception (5.8.45); Hippolytus also records Naassene quotations of John 1:3–4 (*Haer.* 5.8.5), John 2:11 (*Haer.* 5.8.7), John 3:3 (*Haer.* 5.7.40) John 4:10 (*Haer.* 5.9.18), John 6:53 (*Haer.* 5.8.11), John 8:21b (cf. 13:33; *Haer.* 5.8.11), and John 9:1 (*Haer.* 5.9.20).

Pages 111–41 in *The Gospel of Tatian: Exploring the Nature and Text of the* Diatessaron. Edited by Matthew R. Crawford and Nicholas J. Zola. The Reception of Jesus in the First Three Centuries 3. London: T&T Clark, 2019.

2.4. Marcion's Gospel and the Ebionites' Harmony: Exclusive Use of a Single Gospel

According to the terminology I have been employing, Marcion's Gospel could be considered a revision of the Gospel of Luke,[95] although Marcion's Gospel was not attributed to Luke.[96] To be sure, Marcion's Gospel comes the closest to revealing authorial intention of replacing one or more preceding Gospels.[97] Rather than 'replacement,' I prefer the terminology of 'exclusive use' of a particular Gospel. Marcion could control what was read in his churches, and his Gospel was the only one. Marcion's exclusivity potentially limited his Gospel's readership, and yet his Gospel circulated for at least two centuries despite ardent opposition.

Tertullian's imagery implies that the fourfold gospel was firmly implanted in the church, yet "Marcion is seen to have uprooted [the Gospel of] Luke, which he chopped to pieces in the process" (*Marc.* 4.2.4).[98] Epiphanius says similarly that Marcion "has only the Gospel according to Luke, which he has chopped off from the beginning through the Savior's conception and his incarnate Parousia" (*Pan.* 42.9.1).[99] Epiphanius also mentions numerous excisions from the middle and end (*Pan.* 42.9.2), and he lists differences between his version of Luke and Marcion's (*Pan.* 42.11.6, 17).[100]

Although Epiphanius did not have a copy before him when writing the *Panarion,* he does claim direct access to Marcion's Gospel a number of years ago (ἀπὸ ἐτῶν ἱκανῶν; *Pan.* 42.10.2), and he refers to "Marcion's still preserved Scripture" (τῷ Μαρκίωνι ἔτι σῳζομένης γραφῆς; *Pan.* 13.1).[101] Since the *Panarion* dates ca. 375, Epiphanius could find Marcion's Gospel approximately two centuries after it was produced. Epiphanius debated Marcionites academically without destroying copies of their Gospel or replacing it with the fourfold gospel. In the strongest possible terms, though, Epiphanius disapproved of the Marcionites' Gospel, and he would not have allowed it to be read in orthodox worship. The point is that literary 'replacement' entails control, and it is important to qualify how

[95] Marcion's Gospel includes the sine qua non of "minor agreements," namely that soldiers asked Jesus, "Who is the one who hit you?" (τίς ἐστιν ὁ παίσας σε;). Accordingly, I find untenable arguments for the priority of Marcion's Gospel (e.g., Matthias Klinghardt, "The Marcionite Gospel and the Synoptic Problem: A New Solution," *NovT* 50 (2008): 1–27; Markus Vinzent, *Marcion and the Dating of the Synoptic Gospels,* Studia Patristica Supplement 2 (Leuven: Peeters, 2014); Clare K. Rothschild (Review of Markus Vincent [sic: Vinzent], *Marcion and the Dating of the Synoptic Gospels, Review of Biblical Literature*, March 2016, 1–4, here 4) likens Vinzent's argument to "historical fiction."

[96] Tertullian remarks that Marcion ascribes no author to his Gospel (*Marc.* 4.2.3).

[97] For a recent overview of Marcion's Gospel, see Judith M. Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic: God and Scripture in the Second Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 183–233.

[98] Ernest Evans, *Tertullian: Adversus Marcionem,* 2 vols., Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 2:262: *Lucam videtur Marcion elegisse quem caederet*.

[99] Karl Holl and Jürgen Dummer, *Epiphanius II: Panarion haer. 34–64,* 2nd ed., GCS 31 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1980), 104: ἔχει εὐαγγέλιον μόνον τὸ κατὰ Λουκᾶν, περικεκομμένον ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς διὰ τὴν τοῦ σωτῆρος σύλληψιν καὶ τὴν ἔνσαρκον αὐτοῦ παρουσίαν (Epiphanius *Pan.* 42.9.1).

[100] For discussion of Epiphanius's two, similar lists of variants, see Dieter T. Roth, *The Text of Marcion's Gospel,* NTTSD 49 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 272–83.

[101] Epiphanius lists then-current, widespread sects of Marcionites at the beginning of his discussion (*Pan.* 42.1.2).

limited or widespread one's influence extended: the orthodox could not control what Marcionites read and vice versa.

The Ebionite Gospel harmony provides another example of exclusivity. Epiphanius says that the Ebionites accept the Gospel according to Matthew, which they use exclusively (μόνῳ; *Pan.* 30.3.7). Epiphanius (*Pan.* 30.13.2) later refers to the Ebionites' "so-called Gospel according to Matthew" as incomplete (οὐχ ὅλῳ) and mutilated (ἠκρωτηριασμένῳ). Specifically, Epiphanius means: "For chopping off the genealogies by Matthew, they begin to make the beginning—as I said before—saying, 'It happened—it says—in the days of Herod king of Judea, in the high priesthood of Caiaphas, someone named John came baptizing a baptism of repentance in the Jordan River' and so forth" (*Pan.* 30.14.3). Epiphanius's quotations reveal that the Ebionites' Gospel was actually a harmony of the Synoptics.[102] The problem was not simply that the Ebionite harmony did not include the nativity, which Mark's Gospel also lacked. According to Epiphanius, the Ebionites believed Christ to be the biological son, the male seed (σπέρματος ἀνδρός), of Joseph (*Pan.* 30.2.2). In other words, the orthodox were more bothered by the Ebionites' interpretation than the text itself, and the orthodox were bothered by the Ebionites' exclusive use of one Gospel.

3. The Diatessaron amid the Proliferation of Gospels

As harmonies, the formal similarity between the Ebionite Gospel and the Diatessaron is undeniable. In terms of circulation, though, the Ebionite harmony is more similar to Marcion's Gospel, for each of these Gospels was used exclusively in churches deemed heretical. Early heresiologists did not talk about the Diatessaron in the same way—even after Tatian himself had been labeled a heretic. I find no evidence that the Diatessaron was read exclusively or intended to be. Considerations include the relationship between the Old Syriac Gospels and the Diatessaron; Tatian's purported proselytizing and apologetic intentions; the Diatessaron's reception in Syria through the fifth century; the Diatessaron vis-à-vis the fourfold gospel; and Tatian's use of Mark. Assuming Tatian's awareness of ecclesiastic reading practices, he could have reasonably expected his Gospel to be read alongside—not instead of—his sources.

3.1. The Diatessaron and the Old Syriac Gospels

Scholars have long claimed that the Diatessaron predated the Old Syriac Gospels.[103] Key evidence comes from harmonizations in the Sinaitic and Curetonian manuscripts,[104] but it must be qualified

[102] For example, the narrative of Jesus's baptism intricately harmonizes Matthew, Mark, and Luke; the Ebionite narrative includes no Johannine material and is incompatible with Jesus's conversation with John the Baptist in the Gospel of John (*Pan.* 30.13.7–8).

[103] Adolf von Harnack, "Tatian's Diatessaron und Marcion's Commentar zum Evangelium bei Ephraem Syrus," *ZKG* 4 (1881): 471–505; Peter J. Williams, "The Syriac Versions of the New Testament," in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the* Status Quaestionis, 2nd ed., ed. Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes, NTTSD 42 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 143–66, here 144.

that harmonizing and harmonistic variants could have arisen independent of Tatian.[105] A longstanding, and in my view more probable, dissent is that the Diatessaron actually depends on the Old Syriac Gospels, particularly the Sinaitic.[106] Regardless of which came first, posteriority merely indicates proliferation. On a related point, the Syriac terminology for the 'Combined' (*Meḥallete*) Diatessaron Gospel and the 'Separated' (*Mepharreshe*) Old Syriac Gospels does not indicate priority one way or another. That is, 'separate' and 'combined' are symbiotic terms; each one presupposes the existence of the other,[107] so Tatian's priority is by no means certain. And even if the Diatessaron were the first Syriac version of the Gospels, Ignatius shows that the Greek Gospels were hardly unknown in second-century Syrian churches. The Old Syriac Gospels do not clearly illuminate Tatian's authorial intent.

3.2. The Diatessaron, Evangelism, and Apologetics

Some have argued that the Diatessaron "was intended … for missionary purposes and came into official Church use only because at first it had no rival Gospels."[108] Since the separate Gospels circulated in Syria—in Greek and perhaps Syriac—prior to Tatian, I am unpersuaded that the Diatessaron was intended for evangelism. Given the spread of Christianity by his time, Tatian had a ready-made audience for Gospel reading; he did not need to make converts to find readers.

Apologetics is another of Tatian's purported intentions.[109] The plurality of the Gospels engendered criticism of their veracity, and Celsus was quick to point out discrepancies in the Gospels. For example, Origen (*Cels.* 2.69) responds by extolling the "harmony" (συμφωνία) of the evangelists' statements that Jesus was buried in a "new tomb" (Mt. 27:60//Jn 19:41), "in which no one had lain/been put" (Lk. 23:53//Jn 19:41). Similarly, regarding the resurrection, Celsus did not understand why some say there were two angels but others say one; Origen responds that there were in fact two angels (Lk. 24:4//Jn 20:12) at the tomb but that only one (Mt. 28:5//Mk 16:5) moved the stone, so the multiple

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[104] F. Crawford Burkitt, *Evangelion Da-Mepharreshe: The Curetonian Version of the Four Gospels with the Readings of the Sinai Palimpsest and the Early Syriac Patristic Evidence,* 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1904), 2:220–23.

[105] George Howard, "Harmonistic Readings in the Old Syriac Gospels," *HTR* 73 (1980): 473–91; Peter J. Williams, *Early Syriac Translation Technique and the Textual Criticism of the Greek Gospels,* Texts and Studies 3/2 (Piscataway: Gorgias, 2004), 147; Theodor Zahn, *Tatian's Diatessaron* (Erlangen: Andreas Deichert, 1881), 232–4.

[106] E.g., Jeffrey Paul Lyon, *Syriac Gospel Translations: A Comparison of the Language and Translation Method Used in the Old Syriac, the Diatessaron, and the Peshitto,* CSCO 548 (Leuven: Peeters, 1994), 68, 196 n. 18, 197 n. 20, 203–6; H. S. Pelser, "The Origin of the Ancient Syriac New Testament Texts: A Historical Study," in *De Fructu Oris Sui: Essays in Honour of Adrianus Van Selms,* ed. I. H. Eybers et al., Pretoria Oriental Series 9 (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 152–63, here 162.

[107] Matthew R. Crawford ("Diatessaron, A Misnomer? The Evidence from Ephrem's Commentary," *Early Christianity* 4 [2013]: 362–85, here 375) similarly describes 'separate' and 'combined' as "correlative terms."

[108] Daniel Plooij, *A Primitive Text of the Diatessaron: The Liège Manuscript of a Mediæval Dutch Translation* (Leiden: A. W. Sijthoff, 1923), 73; similarly, David Laird Dungan, *A History of the Synoptic Problem: The Canon, the Text, the Composition, and the Interpretation of the Gospels,* ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 39.

[109] Baarda, "ΔΙΑΦΩΝΙΑ—ΣΥΜΦΩΝΙΑ."

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accounts are "not contrary" (οὐκ ἦν ἐναντία; *Cels*. 5.56). Baarda assumes that "Tatian tries to disarm such historical criticisms as those found in Celsus' refutation of Christianity."[110]

Tatian undoubtedly smoothed out discrepancies among the Gospels, but no Gospel harmony could overcome Celsus's main objections to Christianity. Celsus denied Jesus's virgin birth (*Cels.* 1.28) and accused Jesus of sorcery (*Cels.* 2.49). Celsus did not presume to know about the beginning and end of the world, but he thought it unreasonable for Christians to believe that God would create the world only to destroy it (*Cels.* 6.52–53). Celsus did not understand why Christians refused to participate in Roman festivals (*Cels.* 8.24), and above all Celsus ridiculed the resurrection of the flesh (*Cels*. 5.18). Tatian could pick a certain number of women and angels at the tomb, and Celsus would simply have yet another rendition of Jesus's resurrection. Tatian's revised Easter story would never change Celsus's opinion that a reanimated corpse was both impossible and undesirable. The apologetic intention of the Diatessaron is thus overstated. In my view, Tatian's second-century Gospel was more likely written for other Christians, a ready-made audience amenable to its contents.

3.3. Ecclesiastical Use of the Diatessaron in Fourth- and Fifth-Century Syria

The most important witnesses to the Diatessaron in fourth- and fifth-century Syria are Aphrahat, Ephrem, Theodoret, and Rabbula. In the fourth century, Aphrahat primarily cited the Diatessaron, but he might have known the separate Gospels as well.[111] A striking example comes from Aphrahat's two different quotations of Mt. 18:10.[112] In *Hom.* 2.20 Aphrahat quotes Jesus as saying not to "trample on those whose angels at all times see the Father who is in heaven."[113] In *Hom*. 6.15 Aphrahat quotes, "do not trample on one of these little ones who have faith in me, whose angels in heaven at all times see the face of my father."[114] Both of Aphrahat's quotations are abbreviated, so it is impossible to know the exact reading(s) of his source text(s). It is telling nonetheless that his two quotations of Mt. 18:10 differ from one another, and yet each difference in wording matches a known variant in either the Old Syriac Gospels or other harmonies related to the Diatessaron.[115] To be sure, Aphrahat relied

[110] Baarda, "ΔΙΑΦΩΝΙΑ—ΣΥΜΦΩΝΙΑ," 153.

[111] Tjitze Baarda (*The Gospel Quotations of Aphrahat, the Persian Sage: Aphrahat's Text of the Fourth Gospel* [Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit, 1975] does not rule out the possibility that Aphrahat knew the separate Gospels. Burkitt (*Evangelion Da-Mepharreshe,* 2:184–5) surmises that Aphrahat could keep the Synoptics separate, for in *Hom*. 14 he first alludes to a long string of Matthean material, then alludes to Mark's distinctive doorkeeper (13:34–35), and finally alludes to the wise king who makes peace from afar, a piece of Lukan *Sondergut* (14:31–32); here Aphrahat does not follow the sequence of the Diatessaron.

[112] Lyon, *Syriac Gospel Translations,* 56–8.

[113] William Wright, *The Homilies of Aphraates, the Persian Sage, vol. 1* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1869), 43: ܠܐ ܬܕܘܫܘܢ ܐܢܘܢ ܕܡܠܐܟܝܗܘܢ ܒܟܠܙܒܢ ܚܙܝܢ ܠܐܒܐ ܕܒܫܡܝܐ (*Hom.* 2.20); this quotation occurs in a string of Gospel material that closely follows the sequence of the Diatessaron.

[114] Wright, *Homilies of Aphraates,* 127: ܠܐ ܬܒܣܘܢ ܚܕ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܙܥܘܪܐ ܕܡܗܝܡܢܝܢ ܒܝ ܕܡܠܐܟܝܗܘܢ ܒܫܡܝܐ ܒܟܠܙܒܢ ܚܙܝܢ ܦܪܨܘܦܗ ܕܐܒܝ (*Hom*. 6.15).

[115] Aphrahat (*Hom*. 6.15) and the Arabic harmony (24.28) qualify "little ones" with "who believe in me;" this qualification also appears in Mt. 18:10 according to the Curetonian MS and the Greek text of Codex Bezae.

predominantly on the Diatessaron for his Gospel quotations, yet there are indications that he also knew the separate Gospels.

Aphrahat's contemporary Ephrem definitely used the separate Gospels in addition to writing a commentary on the Diatessaron.[116] Crawford has painstakingly shown that Ephrem knew the genealogies from Matthew and Luke as well as the prologue from the separate Gospel of John;[117] Ephrem even knew the Protevangelium of James.[118] The fourth-century writings of Aphrahat and Ephrem provide the clearest attestation to the text and significance of the Diatessaron, but neither Syrian father seems to have read the Diatessaron exclusively.

In 423 Theodoret became bishop of Cyrrhus in north-central Syria. He reports, "But I even found more than two hundred such books [i.e. the Diatessaron] having been revered in our churches, and having collected them all I put them away and introduced instead the Gospels of the four evangelists" (*haer. fab. comp.* 1.20).[119] Assuming Theodoret means one Gospel book per church, "over twenty-five per cent of the parishes in his diocese not only used the Diatessaron, but also lacked the separate gospels as late as the early fifth century."[120] Conversely, nearly three-quarters of the churches were using the fourfold gospel, and Theodoret seems to have had no difficulty procuring hundreds of additional copies. Some churches indeed used the Diatessaron as their standard Gospel text, but it is misleading to cite Theodoret as evidence that the Diatessaron was "the standard gospel in Syria as late as the fifth century."[121]

Around the same time and place as Theodoret, Bishop Rabbula of Edessa stipulated "that in every church the separate (*Mepharreshe*) Gospels be present and read."[122] Rabbula's promulgation has been taken as evidence that "when Rabbula became bishop of Edessa the form in which the Gospel was

Conversely, Codex Fuldensis (§97), the Liège harmony (§133), and the Sinaitic MS do not include "who believe in me." Aphrahat's apparent *lectio brevior* "their angels" in *Hom.* 2.20 aligns with the Arabic harmony (24.28) and Mt. 18:10 in the Sinaitic MS. Aphrahat's fuller "their angels in heaven" in *Hom.* 6.15 aligns with Ephrem (*Comm. Diat.* 14.24: ܕܡܠܐܟܝܗܘܢ ܒܫܡܝܐ ܚܙܝܢ ܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܗ ܕܐܒܝ), Codex Fuldensis (§97), the Liège harmony (§133), and the Curetonian MS. Aphrahat's quotation in *Hom.* 2.20 and Ephrem's quotation (*Comm. Diat.* 14.24) simply end with "Father," rather than "Father who is in heaven," as in the Arabic harmony (27.29), Codex Fuldensis (§97), the Liège harmony (§133), and the Sinaitic and Curetonian MSS.

[116] Burkitt, *Evangelion Da-Mepharreshe,* 2:186–89; Lyon, *Syriac Gospel Translations,* 172.

[117] Matthew R. Crawford, "The Fourfold Gospel in the Writings of Ephrem the Syrian," *Hugoye* 18 (2015): 9–51.

[118] Crawford, "Fourfold Gospel in the Writings of Ephrem the Syrian," 45; *pace* Francis Watson ("Towards a Redaction-Critical Reading of the Diatessaron Gospel," *Early Christianity* 7 (2016): 95–112, here 106, 109–10), the Protevangelium material in Ephrem's commentary does not derive from the Diatessaron.

[119] Migne *PG* 83:372: εὗρον δὲ κἀγὼ πλείους ἢ διακοσίας βίβλους τοιαύτας ἐν ταῖς παρ' ἡμῖν ἐκκλησίαις τετιμημένας, καὶ πάσας συναγαγὼν ἀπεθέμην, καὶ τὰ τῶν τεττάρων εὐαγγελιστῶν ἀντεισήγαγον εὐαγγέλια (Theodoret *haer. fab. comp.* 1.20).

[120] William L. Petersen, *Tatian's Diatessaron: Its Creation, Dissemination, Significance, and History in Scholarship,* Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 25 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 42.

[121] E.g., Petersen, *Tatian's Diatessaron,* 1 n. 5.

[122] Petersen, *Tatian's Diatessaron,* 42: ܕܒܟܠܗܘܢ ܒܥܕ̈ܬܐ ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܕܡܦܪ̈ܫܐ ܐܝܬ ܘܡܬܩܪܝܐ.

practically known to Syriac-speaking Christians was Tatian's Harmony;"[123] yet this is unsubstantiated. Granted, Rabbula would hardly have issued the canon if the Diatessaron were not being read in some places, but (unlike Theodoret) Rabbula does not tabulate how many churches were doing so. Moreover, (like Theodoret) Rabbula's canon presumes that churches could easily procure copies of the fourfold gospel. The writings of Aphrahat, Ephrem, Theodoret, and Rabbula indicate the coexistence of the Diatessaron and the fourfold gospel in fourth- and fifth-century Syrian orthodox churches. Theodoret does mark the turning of the tide, yet his "putting away" (ἀποτίθημι) the Diatessaron need not connote destruction.[124]

3.4. Orthodox Use of the Fourfold Gospel: Diatessaron as Loophole

Irenaeus associates Tatian with those who renounce marriage, and Irenaeus says that Tatian was the first to deny Adam's salvation (*Haer.* 1.28.1; 3.23.8). Eusebius quotes Irenaeus on these points and adds that Tatian constructed a combination of the four Gospels and called it the Diatessaron, "which even by some is still until now transmitted" (ὃ καὶ παρά τισιν εἰς ἔτι νῦν φέρεται; *Eccl. hist.* 4.29.6). By "some," Eusebius means orthodox churchmen rather than heretics;[125] the Diatessaron is thus analogous to the Didache, which Eusebius approves for private study but not for public worship, and elsewhere Eusebius extols Tatian's refutation of Greek philosophy (*Eccl. hist.* 4.29.7).

Irenaeus nowhere mentions the Diatessaron, and he might not have known about it. It is thus debatable whether Irenaeus would have disallowed Tatian's harmony. To be sure, Irenaeus gives the earliest vigorous defense of the fourfold gospel, namely the Gospels of Matthew, John, Luke, and Mark—no more, no less, and no others (*Haer.* 3.11.8). Hence, the problem with Marcion is that he takes away parts of Luke and all of Matthew, Mark, and John (*Haer.* 3.11.7), and the problem with Valentinus is that he adds the Gospel of Truth (*Haer.* 3.11.9). By contrast, Tatian *does* use all four of Irenaeus's Gospels. With respect to Irenaeus's insistence on the fourfold gospel, the Diatessaron is a loophole, since it incorporates virtually every word of Irenaeus's Gospels.

None of the orthodox opposed the Diatessaron until the fifth century, and then the opposition may be a case of mistaken identity. Theodoret calls Tatian an Encratite who "constructed the Gospel called Diatessaron, cutting off the genealogies and whatever other things indicate the Lord having been begotten according to the flesh from the seed of David" (*haer. fab. comp.* 1.20). Tatian probably did omit the genealogies,[126] but his motivation might simply have been their inherent contradictions, and it is unclear whether either genealogy was being read liturgically at this time.[127] Tatian undoubtedly

[123] Burkitt, *Evangelion Da-Mepharreshe,* 2:164, cited approvingly by Petersen, *Tatian's Diatessaron,* 43.
[124] *Pace* Michael F. Bird, *The Gospel of the Lord: How the Early Church Wrote the Story of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 306.
[125] Dungan, *Constantine's Bible,* 62.
[126] E.g., a recension of the Arabic harmony adds the genealogies as an appendix (Petersen, *Tatian's Diatessaron*, 136).
[127] Matthew's genealogy was read on the Sunday before Christmas according to the ninth- to eleventh-century Byzantine lectionary (Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the*

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harmonized Matthew's and Luke's nativity stories, so Theodoret's claim that Tatian denied the incarnation is perplexing—especially since the Diatessaron began with John's prologue. I consider it likely that Theodoret confused Tatian's harmony with the Ebionite harmony, for Epiphanius not only says that the Ebionites call their Gospel "according to the Hebrews" (*Pan.* 30.3.7) but also that some people call the Diatessaron the Gospel "according to the Hebrews" (*Pan.* 46.1.9). In any case, Theodoret does provide the earliest attested suspicion of the Diatessaron. Until then, it had been read in Syria alongside the fourfold gospel for centuries.[128]

3.5. Tatian's Use of Mark

I have cast doubt on Matthew's and Luke's intentions to replace Mark. Yet if these subsequent evangelists had held such aspirations, then they had proven profoundly unsuccessful as of the mid-second century. Tatian's onetime teacher Justin Martyr occasionally harmonized the Gospels,[129] and Justin clearly attests the Gospel of Mark; for example, Justin (*Dial.* 106.3) says that Jesus changed the names of the two Sons of Zebedee to "Boanerges, which is 'sons of thunder'" (Mark 3:17), and Justin says that King Herod put John the Baptist in prison (*Dial.* 49.4); Mark (6:14) says "King Herod," whereas the Matthean parallel (14:1) correctly labels Herod a "tetrarch." Compared with Justin, Tatian shows even more careful attention to include Markan material.

According to Mark 1:15, when Jesus began preaching, he declared that "the time is fulfilled," a declaration Tatian included (Ephrem *Comm. Diat.* 5.13; Arabic harmony 5.43; Codex Fuldensis §18; Liège harmony §28).[130] Mark 4:26–29 relates a parable about seed growing secretly, which is repeated in the Arabic harmony (16.49–52) and Codex Fuldensis (§77).[131]

In Mark 7:31–37, Jesus encounters a deaf man with a speech impediment in the Decapolis. To heal the man, Jesus puts his fingers in the man's ears and puts his spit on the man's tongue (v. 33). Mark also transliterates and translates Jesus's Aramaic command, "Ephphatha, that is, be opened" (v. 34). Both

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Christian Church, vol. 3: The Medieval Church [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 69), whereas Luke's genealogy was read on the Sunday of Epiphany according to the Gallican lectionary (p. 89).

[128] I acknowledge that in later centuries Codex Fuldensis became a single New Testament MS that replaced the fourfold gospel with the Vulgatized Diatessaron, yet Victor of Capua necessarily had the separate Gospels according to the Vulgate; also, Matthew Crawford helpfully pointed out to me via personal correspondence that Victor's preface and inclusion of the Eusebian Canon Tables explicitly presupposes that readers would compare the harmonized text with the fourfold gospel.

[129] *Pace* Nicholas Perrin's essay in this volume as well as William L. Petersen, "Textual Evidence of Tatian's Dependence upon Justin's 'ΑΠΟΜΝΗΜΟΝΕΥΜΑΤΑ,'" *NTS* 36 (1990): 512–34, I find no evidence that Justin constructed a complete harmony of the Synoptics or the fourfold gospel.

[130] Ephrem's quotation awkwardly has a singular subject and a plural verb, "The time, they are themselves fulfilled" (ܫܠܡܘ ܠܗܘܢ ܙܒܢܐ; *Comm. Diat.* 5.13), most likely reflecting the plural "the times are fulfilled" (οἱ καιροί πεπλήρωνται) as attested in Codex Bezae.

[131] This Markan parable is omitted from Liège harmony §§89–90, but editing is readily apparent in this section: a note about Luke's version of the parable of the sower was inserted in the bottom margin of f. 28r.

eastern and western witnesses to the Diatessaron sandwich this episode between the Canaanite woman and the Samaritan woman (Arabic harmony 21.1–7; Liège harmony §114; Codex Fuldensis §87). On the supposition of Markan priority, Matthew and Luke intentionally omitted this healing, yet Tatian reinserted it into his Gospel narrative.

It is more difficult to determine whether Tatian included the other relatively long piece of Markan *Sondergut*. In Mark 8:22–26, Jesus encounters a blind man in Bethsaida. Once again Jesus uses his spit to heal (v. 23a). At first the blind man sees unclearly, since people look like walking trees (v. 24), but he sees clearly after Jesus touches his eyes again (v. 25). This story appears in the Arabic harmony (23.26–30) between the Feeding of the 4000 and Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi, and Ephrem comments on the blind man at the same location (*Comm. Diat.* 13.13), but the episode does not appear in Codex Fuldensis (§§90–91) or the Liège harmony (§§122–123).

Diatessaron witnesses unanimously include Mark's unintentional streaker (14:51–52). When Jesus was arrested, one of his young followers was grabbed by the cloth he was wearing, and the man ran away naked. Tatian did not omit this brief episode (Arabic harmony 48.45–47; Codex Fuldensis §93; Liège harmony §225). Similarly, Salome is named only in Mark's Gospel, where she is present at the crucifixion on Friday (15:40) and at the tomb on Sunday (16:1). Tatian definitely included her somewhere in the Diatessaron, although extant witnesses are somewhat inconsistent: the Dura Europos fragment (l. 1) places her at the crucifixion; so does the Arabic harmony (52.23), although she does not come to the tomb on Sunday; according to Codex Fuldensis (§§171, 174) and the Liège harmony (§§231, 233), Salome appears at the cross on Friday and at the tomb on Sunday. Finally, Tatian incorporated the Longer Ending of Mark into the Diatessaron: for example, according to Mark 16:17–18, believers will have the power to heal the sick, exorcise demons, and speak in tongues, as well as withstand serpents and poison; these promises are recorded in the Arabic harmony (55.9–10), Codex Fuldensis (§182), and the Liège harmony (§245).

These examples suffice to show that Tatian knew precisely how little of Mark's Gospel was unparalleled in Matthew and Luke. Although Matthew and Luke had the potential to absorb Mark, they had not done so after 50–100 years. Time and again, Tatian grafted Markan material into the Diatessaron. Tatian's use of Mark not only debunks the myth of Mark's second-century demise but also offers a glimpse of Tatian's intentions and expectations. Tatian intended to write a new Gospel, but doing so was not presumptuous in the second century. It would have been presumptuous, though, to think that his harmony could supplant his four primary source texts. Tatian's Diatessaron ipso facto reveals that the four separate Gospels were being read alongside one another. On the supposition that ancient authors were aware of their contemporary reading practices, Tatian could have considered it a reasonable success if his Gospel were read alongside the earlier ones. Tatian would achieve success in exactly this way.

Pages 111–41 in *The Gospel of Tatian: Exploring the Nature and Text of the* Diatessaron. Edited by Matthew R. Crawford and Nicholas J. Zola. The Reception of Jesus in the First Three Centuries 3. London: T&T Clark, 2019.

4. Conclusion

Recent studies have effectively critiqued Romantic notions of authorship prevalent in Gospels research;[132] although the evangelists are often assumed to express the views of their relatively insular, individual Christian communities, a more plausible model situates Gospel writers among "fellow elite cultural producers."[133] Reciprocally, I apply the same insights to readers, thereby reformulating the collection of the Gospels. Regarding the intentions of subsequent evangelists, Windisch's "supplement or replace" assumed that each Christian community originally used a single Gospel;[134] by extension, the collection of multiple Gospels is assumed to be a gradual process.[135] I have shown, though, that exclusive use of a single Gospel was the exception rather than the norm, and the notion of such gradual Gospel collection is unfounded; for example, there is simply no basis for assuming that a decade elapsed before a subsequent Gospel appeared.[136]

I would date each of the canonical Gospels after the destruction of the temple but before the epistles of Ignatius, thus between 70 and 110 CE;[137] I do not think Justin Martyr knew Tatian's harmony, and so I would date the Diatessaron sometime after 165. Like encomia for Cato, the four canonical Gospels could have been written within a year and a half, and then Tatian could have resumed Gospel writing after nearly a century. Conversely, like histories of the Jewish War, multiple Gospels could have been written within one decade, with others emerging in the next decade or later. Either scenario is equally

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[132] E.g., Last, "Social Relationships of Gospel Writers;" Stowers, "Concept of Community;" Walsh, "Q and the 'Big Bang.'"

[133] Walsh, "Q and the 'Big Bang,'" 498.

[134] Windisch, *Johannes und die Synoptiker,* 44; there Windisch supposes that the big churches in big cities like Ephesus or Antioch might have had more than one Gospel.

[135] E.g., Baarda ("ΔΙΑΦΩΝΙΑ—ΣΥΜΦΩΝΙΑ") likewise assumes a gradual process of collecting Gospels. By way of analogy, the Brothers Grimm—living at the peak of Romanticism—are nowadays imagined traveling the German countryside to collect folk tales from peasants, but the Grimms actually "collected their tales and variants primarily from educated friends and colleagues or from books" (Jack Zipes, "Introduction: Rediscovering the Original Tales of the Brothers Grimm'," in Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *The Original Folk and Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm: The Complete First Edition,* trans. Jack Zipes, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 1:xix–xliv, here xxi).

[136] E.g., Bart D. Ehrman (*The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, 6th ed. [New York: Oxford University Press, 2016]) dates Mark ca. 70 (p. 118), Matthew and Luke ca. 80–85 (pp. 147, 167), and John ca. 90–95 (p. 190). Although Paul N. Anderson (*The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus: Modern Foundations Reconsidered,* T&T Clark Biblical Studies [New York: T&T Clark, 2006] does well to envision interconnected writing communities, he still dates Mark to 70, Luke to 85, Matthew to 90, and John to 100. Cf. E. Earle Ellis's (*The Making of the New Testament Documents,* Biblical Interpretation [Leiden: Brill, 1999], 403) sense that Matthew could write between one and five years of Mark (albeit before the destruction of the temple) as well as Donald A. Hagner's (*Matthew,* 2 vols., WBC 33 [Dallas: Word, 1993–1995], lxxiv) reference to the "false assumption" of a decade-long gap between Gospels.

[137] My former student Nicholas J. McGrory and I made this argument in "When were the Gospels written?" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Region of the SBL, 7 February 2016).

likely. I consider 70–110 CE a narrow range, not a broad one, and any further precision is mostly limited to relative dating based on one's source-critical commitments.

Gospel collection was constitutive to Gospel composition, and source-critically I posit a simple, snowballing trajectory whereby each subsequent author copied, reworked, and retained each predecessor: Matthew used Mark; Luke used Matthew and Mark; John used Matthew, Mark, and Luke; and Tatian used Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.[138] Based on papyrological evidence, it would have been highly unusual for any evangelist to discard any of his sources, especially if the manuscript were less than fifty years old; moreover, it would not have been unusual for an evangelist to have multiple copies of his source text(s).[139] Ignatius already has multiple Gospels in the early second century, and the fourfold gospel is attested by Justin, Tatian, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen. By collecting and comparing the Gospels, these church fathers mirror their contemporary connoisseurs' study of history, philosophy, astronomy, drama, or poetry.

Given that so few people could compose texts in the first place,[140] the most reasonable assumption is that writers were well attuned to their contemporary reading practices. Chris Keith's term "competitive textualization" is insightful, but one-upmanship need not entail hubris or anxiety. The Little Iliad was accompanied by Aethiopis and the Sack of Troy within the Epic Cycle. Cicero considered his praise of Cato superior to Aulus Hirtius's book of blame, yet Cicero himself arranged the publication of Hirtius's book. Josephus considered his history of the Jewish war superior to his predecessors and his successor Justus, yet Josephus wrote with the expectation that his book would be compared to these others. The LXX recensionists evince the same pattern, and to repeat Mroczek, "proliferation was a value."[141] Although many of these texts were eventually lost, they had circulated for centuries, during which similar works were read alongside one another; thus a text's eventual loss cannot be retrojected as a rival author's intent.

For the past century, biblical scholars have assumed evangelists' intentions to replace earlier Gospels, but literary replacement has remained an imprecise notion. One type of replacement could be absorption, whereby a subsequent text renders a predecessor superfluous. Mark's would have been the most likely Gospel to fall out of circulation via absorption, and Tatian knew better than anyone just how little unparalleled material Mark contained; yet Tatian extracted Markan *Sondergut* with surgical precision. Out of the fourfold gospel, Tatian left virtually nothing unparalleled in the Diatessaron, but it would have been unrealistic for Tatian to expect any one—let alone all four—of his sources to pass out of circulation any time soon. In other words, if Tatian intended to replace the fourfold gospel, then he was either ignorant of contemporary reading practices or defiant of them.

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[138] My current book project fully develops this argument.

[139] E.g., the villa at Herculaneum contained multiple copies of Epicurus's *On Nature* as well as multiple copies (perhaps successive drafts) of several works by the Epicurean Philodemus of Gadara (Houston, *Inside Roman Libraries,* 91, 95–96).

[140] A typical estimate of early Christian literacy is no more than ten percent; e.g., Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church,* 5.

[141] Mroczek, *Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity*, 142.

Another type of replacement could be exclusive use of a single Gospel, which vexed the orthodox. Irenaeus (*Haer.* 3.11.7), Tertullian (*Marc.* 4.2.4), and Epiphanius (*Pan.* 42.9.1) upbraid Marcion's excisions to, and exclusive use of, the Gospel of Luke. Likewise, Epiphanius (*Pan.* 30.3.7) and Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 3.27) chastise the Ebionites' exclusive use of the so-called Gospel of Matthew, a.k.a. the Gospel according to the Hebrews, which was a harmony of the Synoptics. The essential component of 'exclusive use' is control: authors generally had little control over the transmission and reception of their works, but "heretics" could stipulate the reading of one Gospel, thereby suppressing others; of course, the "heretics" could not control which Gospels the orthodox read, and vice versa.

Among orthodox critiques of Tatian, exclusive use of the Diatessaron is attested nowhere. Regarding the maxim "absence of evidence is not evidence of absence," I consider lack of evidence to be a *measurable* absence in this case. Irenaeus and Tertullian are silent regarding the Diatessaron, and Epiphanius (*Pan.* 46.1.9) confuses it with the Gospel according to the Hebrews/Ebionite harmony—a confusion that probably led to Theodoret's and Rabbula's suppression of the Diatessaron. Eusebius does not list the Diatessaron in his canonical list (*Hist. eccl.* 3.25), but he does intimate that some of his contemporary, orthodox churchmen read the Diatessaron (*Hist. eccl.* 4.29.6). In fourth-century Syria, Aphrahat likely read the fourfold gospel in addition to the Diatessaron, and Ephrem definitely did so. I do not find this eventual outcome surprising, for I propose that Tatian adhered to the literary conventions of his day: the Diatessaron entered an established market for Gospels, and Tatian's Gospel mostly appealed to audiences well accustomed to collecting, reading, and studying the Gospels. For approximately four centuries, then, the attested reception of the Diatessaron was the realization of Tatian's realistic intentions.

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