The ”Anti-Marcionite” prologues to the Gospels

Anonymous early writings (various dates)

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[Translated by Roger Pearse] Mark ... Mark recorded, who was called Colobodactylus , because he had fingers that were too small for the height of the rest of his body. He himself was the interpreter of Peter. After the death of Peter himself, the same man wrote this gospel in the parts of Italy. Luke Indeed Luke was an Antiochene Syrian, a doctor by profession, a disciple of the apostles: later however he followed Paul until his martyrdom, serving the Lord blamelessly. He never had a wife, he never fathered children, and died at the age of eighty-four, full of the Holy Spirit, in Boetia. Therefore --- although gospels had already been written ---- indeed by Matthew in Judaea but by Mark in Italy ---- moved by the Holy Spirit he wrote down this gospel in the parts of Achaia, signifying in the preface that the others were written before his, but also that it was of the greatest importance for him to expound with the greatest diligence the whole series of events in his narration for the Greek believers, so that they would not be led astray by the lure of Jewish fables, or, seduced by the fables of the heretics and stupid solicitations, fall away from the truth. And so at once at the start he took up the extremely necessary [story] from the birth of John, who is the beginning of the gospel, the forerunner of our Lord Jesus Christ, and was a companion in the perfecting of the people, likewise in the introducing of baptism and a companion in martyrdom. Of this disposition the prophet Malachi, one of the twelve, certainly makes mention. And indeed afterwards the same Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles. Later the apostle John wrote the Apocalypse on the island of Patmos, and then the Gospel in Asia.

John The Gospel of John was revealed and given to the churches by John while still in the body, just as Papias of Hieropolis, the close disciple of John, related in the exoterics, that is, in the last five books. Indeed he wrote down the gospel, while John was dictating carefully. But the heretic Marcion, after being condemned by him because he was teaching the opposite to him [John], was expelled by John. But he [Marcion] had brought writings or letters to him [John] from the brothers which were in Pontus. The translation was made from the text published by De Bruyne in Revue Bénédictine 40 (1928), p.193ff. 1. The nickname means ”stumpy finger.” 2. Lit. sentiebat: he was thinking.

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