

EXTERNAL TESTIMONY TO THE AUTHORSHIP OF HEBREWS

Virgil Warren, PhD

I. Presentation of Evidence

A. Early Christian writers

1. Eastern tradition

a. Direct statement regarding authorship

(1) Pantaenus

In order of time, Pantaenus is the earliest witness to the Eastern Tradition about the authorship of Hebrews. He flourished about A.D. 180 as president of the catechetical school in Alexandria, Egypt.

Photius says that Pantaenus heard men who had seen the apostles. Eusebius tells us that Julian, bishop of Alexandria, sent Pantaenus eastward as far as India as a missionary because of his piety and scholarship (*Ecclesiastical History* 5:10). Alexander, bishop of Alexandria about A.D. 212, highly commended him. (See Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* 6:14.) Eusebius himself and Jerome also speak of him as a learned, influential Christian leader.

Unfortunately, the original works of Pantaenus are not extant, but Eusebius has preserved thirdhand the Alexandrian tradition that Pantaenus perpetuated. In his *Ecclesiastical History* 6:14, Eusebius gives an extract from *Hypotyposis*, a lost writing of Clement of Alexandria, in which Clement refers to the teaching of the "blessed elder." "Blessed elder" is usually taken to mean Pantaenus, Clement's immediate predecessor as head of the Alexandrian school (cp. *Ecclesiastical History* 5:11; 6:13):

"But now as the blessed Presbyter used to say, 'Since the Lord, who was the Apostle of the Almighty, was sent to the Hebrews, Paul, by reason of his inferiority, as if sent to the Gentiles, did not subscribe himself an apostle to the Hebrews, both out of reverence for the Lord, and because he wrote of his abundance to the Hebrews, as a herald and Apostle to the Gentiles.'"

(2) Clement of Alexandria

Clement succeeded Pantaenus as leader of the Alexandrian school after A.D. 187. In his *Stromateis* Clement says he was educated in Italy, Greece, in the East, as well as in Egypt (see also *Ecclesiastical History* 5:11). Although he stands in an Alexandrian current of tradition, he was aware of the tradition in other areas where he studied. If he knew other traditions at his time, he makes no mention of them. His agreement with Pantaenus was at least a view he took in preference to the others he may have known, and so he gives comparatively greater credence to the Alexandrian belief.

(a) Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* 6:14 records Clement's personal view of Hebrews as expressed in *Hypotyposis*:

"In his work called Hypotyposis, he [Clement] affirms that Paul is the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews; and that, as it was addressed to the Hebrews, it was originally written in their language, and afterward translated by Luke for the Greeks—which is the reason why the coloring of the style is the same in this Epistle and in the Acts of the Apostles. The reason why Paul did not affix his name to the head of it probably is that the Hebrews had conceived a prejudice against him, and were suspicious of him. Very prudently, therefore, did he not place his name at the head of the Epistle, so as to divert them from the perusal of it."

(b) In his other works Clement testifies several times to the same effect about the authorship of this letter.

(c) In *Stromateis* 2:22; 6:8 he cites Hebrews as Paul's.

(3) Origen

Origen, born in Egypt about A.D. 185, became head of the Alexandrian school at the age of eighteen. He visited Rome in A.D. 213 and later went to Greece, Arabia, and Asia Minor. In A.D. 231 he moved to Caesarea.

(a) The broadest statement of Origen on the authorship of Hebrews is recorded by Eusebius in *Ecclesiastical History* 6:25 from Origen's *Homilies on Hebrews*, written after A.D. 245:

"Origen decides thus in his Homilies upon it: The character of the style of the Epistle to the Hebrews has not the unpolished cast of the Apostle's language, who professed himself to be a man unlearned in speech; that is, in phraseology. Besides, this Epistle, in the texture of its style, is more conformed to the Greek idiom, as everyone must confess who is able to distinguish differences in style. Moreover, the ideas in the Epistle are admirable, and not inferior to those that are confessedly apostolic: and that this is true, everyone must concede who has attentively read the writings of the Apostles. A little further on he [Origen] adds, 'If I were to give my opinion, I would say the phraseology and the texture belong to someone relating the Apostle's sentiments, and, as it were, commenting on the words of his master. If any church, therefore, holds this to be an Epistle of Paul, let it receive commendation on account of this; for it is not without reason that the ancients have handed it down as Paul's. Who wrote the Epistle, God only knows with certainty: but the report which has reached us, is that some affirm it to be written by Clement, Bishop of Rome; and some, by Luke, who wrote the Gospel and the Acts.'"

(b) In his *Homilies on Joshua* 7:100:1 he ascribes fourteen epistles to Paul.

(c) The *Letter to Africanus* 9, written in A.D. 240, says,

"But possibly someone pressed with this argument will have recourse to the opinion of those who reject this Epistle as not written by Paul. In answer to

such a one, we intend to write a separate discourse to show that Epistle to be Paul's."

(d) He cites it as Paul's in *De Principiis* 3:1:10; 4:13; *De Oratione* 100:27, 28; *Exhortatio ad Matyrium* 44; *I Joann.* 6, 11 (three times); *Numer.*; *Homiles* 3:3; *Epistle to the Romans* 1, 36

(4) Synodical letter of the Council of Antioch

The council first met in A.D. 264, a gathering of some seventy-five delegates of the most influential churches in Western Asia. In A.D. 269, it issued the letter at the close of its second session, in connection with the trial and condemnation of Paul of Samosata. It ascribes the Epistle of Hebrews to the same apostle that wrote the Corinthian epistles:

"Now the Lord is that Spirit, according to the Apostle [2 Corinthians 3:17]. And according to the same, 'For they drank of the spiritual rock . . . ' [1 Corinthians 10:4]. And of Moses the Apostle writes, 'Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches . . . ' [Hebrews 11:26]."

(5) Alexander of Alexandria, A.D. 212, in writing to Arius (who probably agreed with Alexander) uses the epistle as Paul's.

(6) Dionysius of Alexandria quotes the epistle as Paul's (see Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* 6:41).

(7) Theognotus, head of the catechetical school in Alexandria, quotes Hebrews 6:4 as Paul's.

(8) Peter of Alexandria quotes the epistle as Paul's.

(9) Didymus of Alexandria in *De Trin.* quotes Hebrews as by Paul. See also *Ecclesiastical History* 6:41.

(10) Isidore of Pelusium quotes Hebrews 4:13 as Paul's (*app. Lib.* 1:7; 94).

(11) Jacob of Nisibis gives fourteen letters to Paul.

(12) Eusebius, early church historian and bishop of Caesarea from about A.D. 320, gives repeated evidence that Hebrews is Paul's.

(a) *Ecclesiastical History* 3:3:

"Fourteen epistles are clearly and certainly Paul's: although it is proper to be known that some have rejected that written to the Hebrews, alleging that it is spoken against as not belonging to Paul."

(b) *Ecclesiastical History* 3:38:

"In which [Epistle of Clement of Rome], inserting many sentiments of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and also using some of the very words of it, he [Clement] plainly manifests that that Epistle is no modern writing, and hence it has not without reason been reckoned among the other writings of the Apostle. For Paul having written to the Hebrews in their own language, some think that the evangelist Luke, and others that this very Clement translated it [into Greek]; which last opinion is the more probable of the two, there being a resemblance between the style of the epistle of Clement and of that to the Hebrews, nor are the sentiments of these two writings very different."

(13) Cyril of Jerusalem, bishop of Jerusalem A.D. 350-386, in *Cat.* 4:36

gives fourteen letters to Paul (τὰς Παῦλον δεκατεσσάρων ἐπιστολάς).

- (14) Ephrem Syrus (A.D. 378 at Edessa) gives fourteen letters to Paul.
 - (15) Basil the Great, of Cappadocia, in A.D. 379 quotes Hebrews as by Paul (*Adv. Eunom.* 1:14; 4:2).
 - (16) Gregory of Nyssa (A.D. 379) in *Christi Resurr.* 2 quotes Hebrews as by Paul.
 - (17) Gregory of Nazianzus, A.D. 389, gives fourteen letters to Paul (δέκα δὲ Παῦλον τέσσαρες τ' ἐπιστολαί).
 - (18) Epiphanius of Palestine, bishop of Salamis, Crete, A.D. 367-402, numbers the epistles of Paul at fourteen (ἐν τεσσαρεσκαίδεκα ἐπιστολαῖς τοῦ ἁγίου ἀποστόλου Παύλου: *Heresies* 67; cp. *Heresies* 42).
 - (19) Theodore of Mopsuestia ascribes the epistle to Paul.
 - (20) Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople, A.D. 398-407, gives Hebrews to Paul.
 - (21) Athanasius of Alexandria, bishop of Alexandria, A.D. 326-373
 - (a) In *Ep. ad Serap.* 4:9ff., he quotes the epistle as Paul's.
 - (b) The *Festal Epistle* of A.D. 367 says of books "held canonical and divine" in both testaments that Paul wrote fourteen.
 - (22) Cyril, bishop of Alexandria, A.D. 444, quotes the epistle as Paul's (*De Adoration in Spiritu et Verita*).
 - (23) Some of the later Arians denied the Pauline authorship, although they still used the letter (see Epiphanius' *Heresies* 69:14 and Theodoret's *Praef. ad Epist.*).
- b. Use without specification of authorship
- (1) Pinytus, bishop of Gnosus in Crete (See Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* 4:26 for a quotation from Hebrews 5:12-14.)
 - (2) Theophilus of Antioch quotes Hebrews 5:12; 12:9 in *Ad. Antol.* 2:25.
 - (3) Methodius
 - (a) *Conv.* 4:1 reflects Hebrews 1:1; 11:10
 - (b) *De Resurr.* 5 quotes Hebrews 12:5.
 - (c) Westcott doubts the reference to Hebrews 11 in *Conv.* 5:7 in which Methodius says κατὰ τὸν ἀπόστολον.
 - (4) *Ep. to Virg.* 1:6 quotes Hebrews as scripture.
 - (5) *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* quotes Hebrews 7:22ff. in *Testament of Levi*.

2. Western tradition

a. Direct statement regarding authorship

- (1) Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, Gaul, about A.D. 180

(a) His belief that Paul did not write Hebrews is preserved by Photius, bishop of Constantinople. Photius' testimony rests on that of Stephen Gobar, a sixth-century writer (*Cod.* 232): "*Hyppolytus and Irenaeus say that the epistle of Paul to the Hebrews is not his.*"

(b) Eusebius says simply that Irenaeus quoted "*phrases from the epistle to the Hebrews and the so-called Wisdom of Solomon*" in his "*Various Discussions*" (βιβλίον διαλέξεως διαφόρων).

(c) Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 2:30, 9 (from Hebrews 1:3)?

(d) In *Adversus Haereses* he uses all Paul's epistles except Philemon and never quotes Hebrews even though it would have furnished him much appropriate material for his argumentation against the Valentinians and other Gnostics.

(2) Hyppolytus, a disciple of Irenaeus

(a) See quotation above from Stephen Gobar.

(b) Photius confirms this on his own in *Doc.* 121: λέγει δὲ ἄλλα τέ τινα τῆς ἀκριβείας λειπόμενα καὶ ὅτι ἡ πρὸς ἑβραίους ἐπιστολὴ οὐκ ἔστι τοῦ ἀποστόλου Παύλου.

(3) Tertullian, presbyter of the church at Carthage in about A.D. 190 or 200, in defense of the rigid disciplinary views of the Montanists, refers to Hebrews as a secondary witness to his position, which he feels he has sufficiently sustained by references to the epistles of Paul and 1 John.

De Pudicitia 20 quotes 6:4-8 as being in *Barnabas titulius ad Hebraeos*:

"Nevertheless, I am willing, over and above, to allege the testimony of a companion of the Apostles; a fit person to show, at the next remove, what was the sentiment of the masters. For there is an Epistle of Barnabas, inscribed TO THE HEBREWS, written by a man of such authority that Paul has placed him with himself in the same course of abstinence: Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working (1 Corinthians ix. 6)? And certainly the Epistle of Barnabas [by which he means the Epistle to the Hebrews] is more generally received by the churches than the apocryphal Pastor of adulterers [the Shepherd of Hermas]. Admonishing then his disciples, he exhorts them to leave all first principles, and rather to go on to perfection, and not to lay again the foundation of repentance from the works of the dead. For it is impossible, he says, for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted of the sweet word of God, if they shall fall away now at the end of the world, to recall them again to repentance, since they crucify again the Son of God to themselves, and put him to an open shame. He who learned this from the Apostles, and taught with the Apostles, never knew that a second repentance had been promised by the Apostles to an adulterer and a fornicator. For he excellently interprets the Law, and shows its figures in the truth."

(4) Caius, presbyter of Rome during the episcopate of Zephyrinus, wrote about A.D. 210. Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* 6:20 says of him:

“There is, besides, a discussion that has come down to us, of Caius, a most eloquent man, held at Rome in the time of Zephyrinus, against Proclus, who contended exceedingly for the Phrygian heresy [Montanism]; in which, while he censures the rashness and daring of his opponents in composing new scriptures, he makes mention of thirteen Epistles of the holy Apostle, not reckoning that to the Hebrews with the rest. And indeed, to this very time, by some of the Romans, this Epistle is not thought to be the Apostle’s.”

(Note: Salmon, p. 45, seems to think that Caius is actually the author of the “Muratorian Canon,” a conjecture that Muratori himself advanced when he published the fragment.)

(5) Cyprian, bishop of Carthage about A.D. 258, never quotes it, but repeats the statement peculiar to Western writers that Paul wrote to “seven churches” (*De Exhort. Mart.* 11); see also *Adversus Jud.* 1:20.

(6) Victorinus, bishop of Pettau in Pannonia, repeats the tradition that Paul recognizes seven churches.

(7) Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, is the first Western writer to speak directly for Pauline authorship. *De Trin.* 4:11 uses the letter as Paul’s. In his commentaries he deals with only thirteen epistles of Paul.

(8) Lucifer of Calaris, bishop of Milan, A.D. 371, quotes 3:5-4:13 in *De non Convers. c. Haeret.*

(9) Victorinus Afer uses it as Paul’s in *C. Ar.* 2:3.

(10) Pacianus uses it as Paul’s in *Ep.* 3:13.

(11) Faustinus uses it as Paul’s in *De Trinitate* 2:13.

(12) Ambrose, bishop of Milan, uses it as Paul’s in *De Spiritu* 3:8:51.

(13) Gaudentius quotes it as Pauline.

(14) Pelagius uses it as Paul’s (*Commentary on Romans* 1:17) but deals with only thirteen epistles of Paul in his commentaries.

(15) Rufinus in *Comm. in Symb. Apost.* 36 says that there are fourteen epistles of the Apostle Paul.

(16) Philastrius in *Heresies* 89 denounces those as heretics who denied that the epistle was Paul’s and attributed it to Barnabas, or Luke, or Clement. He omits it from books to read (*Heresies* 88) in the churches because there were supposedly interpolations in it, and some parts were regarded as favoring the Arians and Novatians.

(17) Jerome, A.D. 392

(a) Letter to Dardanus:

“This much must be said by ours, that this Epistle which is inscribed TO THE HEBREWS, is received as the Apostle Paul’s, not only by the churches of the East, but by all the ecclesiastical writers of former times; though most [of the Latins?] ascribe it to Barnabas or Clement; and that it makes no difference whose it is, since it belongs to an ecclesiastical man, and is daily read in the churches. But if the Latins do not commonly receive it among the canonical Scriptures, the Greek churches do the same with the Apocalypse of John. We, however, receive both; not following the usage of the present time, but the authority of the ancient writers, who for the most part quote both; not as they were wont to quote sometimes apocryphal books, but as canonical.”

(b) *Ep. ad Paul* 53 (103):8 says, “*St. Paul wrote to seven churches.*”

(c) *De Viris Illustribus* 5 says that “*very many rejected the Epistle to the Hebrews,*” and discusses the common objections to Hebrews. (On this last point see also *Commentary on Galatians* 1:1.)

(d) He notices that in the West writers questioned its authority and denied its Pauline authorship in *Ep. ad Evang.* 73 (126):4; *Letter to Dardanus* 129:3; *Commentary on Matthew* 26:8-9; *Commentary on Isaiah* 6:2, 9; 8:16-17.

(e) He uses the epistle as Paul’s in his *Commentary on Isaiah* 5:24; 7:14.

(f) *Commentary on Amos* 8:7-8: “*the writer of the epistle, whoever he was.*”

(g) *Commentary on Jeremiah* 31:31-32, “*the Apostle Paul or whosoever wrote the Epistle.*”

(18) Augustine

(a) In *Inchoat. Expos. Ep. ad Rom.* 11 he leaves even the question of canonicity uncertain.

(b) In *De Peccatorum Meritiis et Remissione* 1:27, 50 he seems to accept the tradition of “the Eastern churches.”

(c) In his *Sermons*, 55:5, and so on, he quotes it in the same way as the other epistles of Paul, though less frequently.

(19) Councils of Carthage

(a) First Council of Carthage enumerates thirteen epistles of Paul and this one to the Hebrews.

(b) Second Council of Carthage enumerates simply fourteen epistles of Paul.

(20) Leo the Great quotes the epistle as Paul’s [*Sermons* 44:2; cp. 3(2):1; 24(23):6; 68(66):3; 69(67):2] although his quotations of Hebrews are relatively few.

b. Used without specification of authorship

(1) Clement of Rome

Wrote a letter in A.D. 96 on behalf of the Roman church to the church in Corinth. His is the earliest citation in the scanty remains of Christian literature that have come down from the earlier period of post-apostolic times.

(a) He frequently quotes lengthy citations from Hebrews. Note the following: *Epistle to the Corinthians* 36 = Hebrews 1:3, 5, 7, 13; 43 + 18 = 3:2, 5; 21 = 4:12; 27 = 6:18; 9 = 11:5; 9 = 11:7; 12 = 11:31; 5 = 11:36-37; 17 = 11:37; 19 = 12:1-2; 56 = 12:6, 9, 10, 11.

(b) The whole form of Clement's letter is patterned after Hebrews, so he seems to have had Hebrews before him as he wrote.

(c) Clement is using Hebrews because he is more a combiner of existing truths than a fresh thinker. Westcott shows that

[1] Clement is copying from Hebrews, and not *vice versa*, by comparing *Ad Corinthians* 9 & 12 with Hebrews 1:3-4.

[2] They are not copying from a common source by the statements in *Ad Cor.* 36.

(2) *Shepherd of Hermas* (c. 100-125; so Salmon, *Intro.*, p. 416) has parallels between *Vis.* 2:3, 2 and Hebrews 3:12; *Sim.* 1:1-2 and Hebrews 11:13ff; 13:4.

(3) Polycarp (?)

(a) *The Epistle of Polycarp* 12, uses the term *high priest* (*pontifex*), a title that in canonical scripture is used only in Hebrews 3:1. It may be, however, that he did not get the term directly from Hebrews.

(b) In his last prayer at his martyrdom, he also gives the Lord this title (Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* 4:15).

(4) Justin Martyr (?)

(a) *Apology* 1:12, 63 uses the term *Apostle* with reference to Christ (cf. Hebrews 3:1).

(b) *Dialogue with Trypho* 96, 113 applies Psalm 110 to Christ (cf. Hebrews 1:13); Matthew also applies the citation to Christ in 22:44. Other coincidences of language may be evident in 34 (Hebrews 8:7-8); 13 (Hebrews 9:13-14); 67 (Hebrews 12:18-19).

(5) Lactantius does not quote Hebrews, but he seems to be familiar with it: *Inst.* 4:20 (Hebrews 8:7ff; 4:14; 3:3ff; 5:5-6; 7:21).

c. Not used

(1) Novatian

(2) Arnobius (2:65 might be compared with Hebrews 9:6)

B. Canonical lists

1. Muratorian Canon

a. Does not list it among Paul's epistles nor the other canonical books.

b. It does reject a letter feigned to be Paul's and favoring the heresy of Marcion, which was sent to the Alexandrians, and some have attempted to identify it with Hebrews, but

(1) There is no evidence that Hebrews was ever known by such a name.

(2) It is not under Paul's name.

- (3) It does not favor Marcion.
- (4) Marcion did not include it in his canon.

2. Marcion did not mention it in his canon, which is understandable in light of its high regard for the Old Testament.

3. Origen's list (A.D. 220) includes it.

4. Eusebius' list (A.D. 315) includes it among the *ὁμολογούμενα* in *Ecclesiastical History* 3:25. The intended inclusion of it among "the epistles of Paul" is clear from 3:3, and from his failure to classify it among either the *ἀντιλεγόμενα* or the *νόθα*.

5. Athanasius' list (A.D. 326) includes it.

6. Cyril of Jerusalem included it (A.D. 348).

7. The list published by the Council of Laodecia includes it (A.D. 363).

C. Manuscripts of the New Testament

1. Position

- a. Included (See below "Chart A" for the various positions in which the representative manuscripts place Hebrews.)

(1) After the Pauline letters to churches and before letters to individuals

- (a) The oldest Greek manuscripts
- (b) Most manuscripts of Memphetic Version
- (c) Many later Greek manuscripts
- (d) Many Greek Fathers also; see

[1] *Commentary of St. Ephrem*

[2] *Athanasius' Festal Letter* 4:9ff.

(2) Between Galatians and Ephesians

The marginal section numbers in B show that its archetype placed it in the position (although B itself put Hebrews after 2 Thessalonians):

Galatians 5:16	59 (section number)
Hebrews 1:1	60
3:1	61
4:14	62
and so on	
Ephesians 1:1	70

(3) Between 2 Corinthians and Galatians

- (a) Thebaic Version
- (b) Bashmuric Version
- (c) Sahidic Version

- (4) (Between Colossians and 1 Thessalonians—Cassiodorus)
- (5) After Philemon

- (a) Most later Greek manuscripts
- (b) Syriac versions
- (c) (Epiphanius' *Heresies*)
- (d) Latin manuscripts

(6) Between Philippians and Philemon (Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Hebrews, Philemon, Titus). In the Latin manuscript of St. Paul's Epistles in the Chapter Library at Westminster, the order is marked by colophons (see Westcott's *Commentary on Hebrews*, p. xxxi).

- (7) Between Romans and 1 Corinthians: p⁴⁶
- (8) Appended to Pauline epistle: Codex Claromontanus (or D); see Below.

b. Not included

(1) Original version from which the Gothic version was made. The Epistle of Philemon is followed immediately by the Kalendar in the Ambrosian manuscript A of the epistles.

(2) (A Latin stichometry printed by Mommsen from a manuscript of Sir T. Phillipps; cp. Westcott's *Commentary on Hebrews*, p. xxxii).

(3) In the archetype of Codex Claromontanus (D², or DP), sixth century, it is separated from the Epistle to Philemon by the stichometry.

(4) The archetype of Codex Augiensis (FP, or F²), ninth century, an "inter-columnar, Graeco-Latin" manuscript does not contain the epistle in Greek but supplies it in Latin in both columns.

(5) In Codex Boernerianus after Philemon (GP, or G³) stands the superscription for the *Epistle to the Laodaeans*, but the text does not follow.

2. Title

- a. Most of the early manuscripts say simply πρὸς Ἑβραίους with no mention of authorship (N, A, B, C, Coptic versions).
- b. Codex Porphyrianus, ninth century (Papr, or P²) says, Παύλου ἐπιστολὴ πρὸς Ἑβραίους.
- c. Codex Angelicus, ninth century (L^{ap}, or L²), says, τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ πανευφήμου ἀποστόλου Παύλου ἐπιστολὴ πρὸς Ἑβραίους.
- d. Codex Campianus, ninth century (M²), comments, ἔγραφα ἀπὸ Ἰταλίας διὰ Τιμοθέου ἢ πρὸς Ἑβραίους ἐπιστολὴ ἐκτεθεῖσα ὡς ἐν πίνακι.

e. Cambridge manuscript of the Harclean Syriac

- (1) “The Epistle to the Hebrews of Paul the Apostle” is the title.
- (2) “The Epistle to the Hebrews” is the subscription.

D. Stichometry of Codex Claromontanus

The stichometry gives 850 for “The Epistle of Barnabas.”

1. There are only two possible references: the Epistle to the Hebrews and *Epistle of Barnabas* (an apocryphal work).
2. The apocryphal work is one-third longer than Hebrews.
3. Hebrews is roughly equivalent to Ephesians, Galatians, and Titus. Codex Sinaiticus has these three in 41 columns and Hebrews in 40½ columns.

4. Evidence

- a. Claromontanus gives 850 for “The Epistle of Barnabas” and 865 (350 + 375 + 140) for Ephesians; hence, *Barnabas* is *Hebrews*.
- b. Stichometry of Nicephorus gives the apocryphal *Epistle of Barnabas* 1360 and *Revelation* 1400, a little less than *Revelation*. Codex Claromontanus gives *Revelation* as 1200. *Barnabas* would then be 1150 since *Barnabas* is in proportion to *Revelation* 1360 to 1400, but it gives 850. *Hebrews* is proportioned to *Barnabas* 3 to 4, proportionally correct if *The Epistle of Barnabas* is *Hebrews* (850 to 1150 is approximately 3 to 4). This identification was first made by Martianay.

II. Observations on the Evidence

A. The evidence on authorship is, generally speaking, divided between the East and the West, with the East maintaining Pauline authorship and the West not maintaining it. However, Tertullian, a Montanist in North Africa, may have derived his beliefs on the authorship of Hebrews (that it was by Barnabas) as a part of the Montanist beliefs, and Montanism arose in Phrygia. Furthermore, Irenaeus, a bishop in Gaul, came originally from Asia and had studied under Polycarp, and probably did accept Pauline authorship.

B. Over a hundred years pass before any information is preserved on the authorship in either the East or West, Pantaenus being the earliest in the East (*cir.* 180) and Irenaeus in the West (*cir.* 180), each taking opposite views.

C. The earliest citation of Hebrews in the West, by Clement of Rome in A.D. 96, does not mention authorship, but it is not fair to assume he did not know who the author was since Clement never specifies authorship for his quotations except in quoting the Corinthian epistles evidently because he was writing to Corinth. Similarly, the earliest traces of Hebrews in the East do not mention it, that is, in Justin Martyr and Polycarp.

D. The reasons Pantaenus gives for the omission of Paul’s name and the tradition that Paul wrote the letter are not necessarily of equal validity. The authorship of Hebrews is a historical matter that could have been passed down faithfully from the original readers, but

the writer's motives for omitting his name would be known only to the writer. So, to reject Pantaenus' explanation is not to reject the tradition of Pauline authorship, which Pantaenus passed on.

E. In the above tradition of East or West before Jerome and Augustine, the Pauline authorship was maintained primarily from Alexandria; ten of the twenty-one witnesses for Paul are from that city. But it is not legitimate to say, as does Zahn, that this was an Alexandrian tradition, because the Council of Antioch in A.D. 269 were Christian leaders from all the Eastern areas.

F. The Eastern writers maintained their belief in Pauline authorship despite their knowledge of other beliefs, but frequently in the West the writers seem ignorant of what was believed elsewhere (for example, Tertullian), were unaware of *Hebrews*' canonicity at all, or were changing when they knew of Pauline authorship (Jerome and Augustine). Irenaeus and Hippolytus may be exceptions.

G. The Eastern tradition is solid for Pauline authorship all the way to the time when some of the Arians were denying it for doctrinal reasons. In the West the tradition is diversified or less sure.

H. The West eventually yielded to Eastern tradition.

I. Augustine and Jerome quote Hebrews as Paul's, but in their direct statements they are not so decisively about the fact.

J. The questioning of Hebrews in the West may be due in part to the problem of second repentance, one of the issues involved in the Montanist and Novatian heresies.

K. Irenaeus' not using Hebrews in *Against Heresies* may be because Marcion had rejected the book.

L. The Western expression that Paul wrote to seven churches may have been perpetuated by a superstitious reverence for that number. The first person who made that observation may not have meant to exclude Hebrews, whose destination may not have been a church.

M. The headings of the epistle that include Paul's name are not earlier than the ninth century, but the classification of Hebrews among Paul's letters is from the first. We may say that in the manuscripts, if it was not included in connection with Paul's letters, it was not included at all. Most earlier manuscripts are of the Alexandrian text type.

N. The testimony of Origen has frequently been used to make it one-sided. Zahn, for example, repeats Origen's expression that "*God above knows*" who wrote the epistle, whereas Origen said, "*God above knows certainly.*" It is not necessarily that Origen lacks confidence in the Pauline tradition and says in effect that no one knows. Rather, he is personally confident in the Alexandrian tradition, but his emphasis is on "certainly."

O. Problems come up in trying to harmonize Origen's testimony to Africanus and that recorded about him in Eusebius. How is it that Origen is ready to contend that it is Paul's and yet say that God alone knows certainly?

1. Perhaps he changed his mind between A.D. 240 and the time of his *Homilies*, which Eusebius quotes (after A.D. 245).

2. Perhaps he is saying God knows certainly, but he believed Paul wrote it and was ready to give reasons.

3. Some have suggested that he meant amanuensis when writing to Africanus, but this is not certain since he used *writing* in the immediate context with respect to primary

authorship (Luke's writing of his gospel). This objection cannot be pushed too far, however, since there is no other word for amanuensis than γράφω in the verb (note Romans **16:22**). Furthermore, in the context Origen is also speaking of Paul as being the source of the ideas, and someone else wrote them down with freedom of personal style.

III. Conclusions from the Evidence

- A. The tradition of the West is inferior to that of the East.
- B. The Epistle to the Hebrews was recognized as canonical in connection with the belief in Pauline authorship.
- C. Tradition gives the presumption to Pauline authorship in the ultimate sense, though someone else may have been the amanuensis.

CHART A

THE POSITION OF *HEBREWS* IN MANUSCRIPTS AND LISTS

	Romans	
		p ⁴⁶ (cir. A.D. 325)
	1 Corinthians	
	2 Corinthians	
Bashmuri, Thebaic, Sahidic (cir. A.D. 300)		
	Galatians	
		Archetype of B
	Ephesians	
	Philippians	
	Colossians	
Cassiodorus		
	1 Thessalonians	
	2 Thessalonians	
		Ⲱ, A, B, C (350-450) Boharic; <i>Com. of St. Eph.</i> ; Memphetic; H 2, and other later mss.; Athanasius (A.D. 367).
	1 Timothy	

2 Timothy

Titus

Philemon

Syriac versions (400-550),
later Gr. mss.; Epiphanius,
Latin mss.

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