

Early Testimony to the Authorship of Matthew

Papias (Early second century)

“Of Matthew he has this to say: ‘Matthew compiled the *Sayings* in the Hebrew dialect [Aramaic?], and everyone translated them as well as he could.’”

(Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.39.14-16)

Irenaeus (180 A.D.)

“Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect”

--*Adv. Haer.* 3.1.1

Tertullian (200 A.D.)

“Of the apostles, therefore, John and Matthew first instill faith into us, while of apostolic men, Luke and Mark renew it afterwards.” --*Against Marcion*, 4.2

Origen (220 A.D.)

“Concerning the four Gospels which alone are uncontroverted in the Church of God under heaven, I have learned by tradition that the Gospel according to Matthew, who was at one time a publican and afterwards an Apostle of Jesus Christ, was written first; and that he composed it in the Hebrew tongue and published it for the converts from Judaism.” (*Commentary on Matthew* , also found in Eusebius, *H.E.*, 6.25.3-6)

Eusebius (345 A.D.)

5 “And the rest of the followers of our Saviour, the twelve apostles, the seventy disciples, and countless others besides, were not ignorant of these things. Nevertheless, of all the disciples of the Lord, only Matthew and John have left us written memorials, and they, tradition says, were led to write only under the pressure of necessity.

6 For Matthew, who had at first preached to the Hebrews, when he was about to go to other peoples, committed his Gospel to writing in his native tongue, and thus compensated those whom he was obliged to leave for the loss of his presence. And when Mark and Luke had already published their Gospels, they say that John, who had employed all his time in proclaiming the Gospel orally, finally proceeded to write for the following reason. The three Gospels already mentioned having come into the hands of all and into his own too, they say that he accepted them and bore witness to their truthfulness; but that there was lacking in them an account of the deeds done by Christ at the beginning of his ministry --*H.E.* 3.24.5-6

Jerome (400 A.D.)

“Matthew, also called Levi, apostle and aforesaid publican, composed a gospel of Christ at first published in Judea in Hebrew for the sake of those of the circumcision who believed, but this was afterwards translated into Greek though by what author is uncertain. The Hebrew itself has been preserved until the present day in the library. at Caesarea which Pamphilus so diligently gathered. I have also had the opportunity of having the volume described to me by the Nazarenes of Beroea a city of Syria, who use it. In this it is to be noted that wherever the Evangelist, whether on his own account or in the person of our Lord the Saviour quotes the testimony of the Old Testament he does not follow the authority of the translators of the Septuagint but the Hebrew. Wherefore these two forms exist "Out of Egypt have I called my son," and "for he shall be called a Nazarene."

--*Lives of Illustrious Men*, 3