

JEREMY C. THOMPSON  
CLARE K. ROTHSCHILD

# The Benedictine Prologue

*Studien und Texte zu  
Antike und Christentum*

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**Mohr Siebeck**

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Jeremy C. Thompson/Clare K. Rothschild

# The Benedictine Prologue

A Contribution to the Early History  
of the Latin Prologues to the Pauline Epistles

Mohr Siebeck

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For Clara Helena



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## List of Abbreviations

Ambr.	Ambrosian Library (Biblioteca Ambrosiana), Milan
<i>AmJT</i>	<i>American Journal of Theology</i>
<i>AThR</i>	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
ANTF	Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Textforschung
<i>Aug</i>	<i>Augustinianum</i>
<i>AugStud</i>	<i>Augustinian Studies</i>
B.A.V.	Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
BDAG	Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000)
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BibPat	Bibliotheca Patristica
B. N. F.	Bibliothèque nationale de France
BP	Benedictine Prologue
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina
<i>CH</i>	<i>Church History</i>
<i>CLA</i>	Elias Avery Lowe, <i>Codices Latini Antiquiores</i> , 1–11 and Suppl. (Oxford, 1934–1971); 22 (Oxford, 1972); addenda by B. Bischoff and V. Brown, <i>Mediaeval Studies</i> 47 (1985): 317–366, with 18 plates
<i>CPL</i>	Eligius Dekkers, ed., <i>Clavis Patrum Latinorum</i> , 3rd ed. (Brepols: Editores Pontificii, 1995)
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
<i>DSAM</i>	Marcel Viller, Charles Baumgartner, and André Rayez, eds., <i>Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique</i> (Paris: Beauchesne, 1935–1995)
EA	Euthalian Apparatus
ET	English Translation
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>The Expository Times</i>
fol./fols.	folio(s)
fasc.	quire
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten (drei) Jahrhunderte
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
inf.	<i>inferior</i> (lower shelf)
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>LACL</i>	S. Dopp, et al., eds., <i>Lexikon der antiken christlichen Literatur</i> , 3rd ed. (Freiburg: Herder, 2002)
Lat.	Latin
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
MF	Muratorian Fragment

MGH/AA	Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores antiquissimi
MGH/DD	Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae
MS(S)	manuscript/manuscripts
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NT	New Testament
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTTSD	New Testament Tools, Studies, and Documents
OCT	Oxford Classical Texts
OECS	Oxford Early Christian Studies
PG	Patrologia Graeca = Jacques-Paul Migne, ed., <i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Graeca</i> , 162 vols. (Paris, 1857–1886)
PL	Patrologia Latina = Jacques-Paul Migne, ed., <i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina</i> , 217 vols. (Paris, 1844–1864)
r.	recto
RAC	Theodor Klauser, et al., eds. <i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i> (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1950–)
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RBén	<i>Revue bénédictine</i>
REAug	<i>Revue des études augustiniennes</i>
RHE	<i>Revue de l'histoire ecclésiastique</i>
RPP	Hans Dieter Betz, et al., eds. <i>Religion Past and Present: Encyclopedia of Theology and Religion</i> , 14 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2007–2013)
S	Friedrich Stegmüller, <i>Repertorium biblicum medii aevi</i> , 11 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto “Francisco Suárez,” 1940–1980)
s.	<i>saeculum</i> (“century”)
SC	Sources chrétiennes
STAC	Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum
StPatr	<i>Studia Patristica</i>
StT	Studi e testi, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
sup.	<i>superiore</i> (upper shelf)
TLZ	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
TS	Texts and Studies
TUGAL	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
TZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
Vat.	Vatican
v.	verso
VC	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
VCSup	Supplements to <i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
VL	Vetus Latina: Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel
VL/AGLB	Vetus Latina: Aus der Geschichte der lateinischen Bibel
WGRW	Writings of the Greco-Roman World
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
W-W	J. Wordsworth and H. J. White, et al., eds., <i>Novum Testamentum Domini Nostri Iesu Christi, Pars Secunda – Epistulae Paulinae</i> (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913–1941)
ZKG	<i>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>

## Chapter One

### Introduction

Among the prologues to the Pauline epistles, the Benedictine Prologue (abbreviated BP) has a notably limited circulation. Since its publication in the 1890s, the witnesses to the text were thought to have been restricted to four manuscripts dating to the eleventh and twelfth centuries, all originating from the Benedictine abbey of Montecassino. At once, the principal interest in this prologue was the textual corroboration it supplies for twenty-four lines of the Muratorian Fragment (abbreviated MF), a signal document in the evolution of the New Testament canon. The *status quaestionis*, in connection to this main tradition of scholarship, has recently been reviewed in a monographic treatment by one of the authors of the present volume, Clare K. Rothschild.<sup>1</sup> While recently examining MS Vatican, B.A.V., Vat. lat. 36 (the Manfred Bible), Paul Needham identified a prologue to 1 Corinthians on folios 442r–v as a further witness to this text and alerted Rothschild to the find (figures 3–4).<sup>2</sup> Additional study by the present authors turned up parallels between the prologue to Romans on folios 435v–436r of the same codex and the manuscript tradition of the Benedictine Prologue (figures 7–8). This volume evaluates the new witness and thus brings fresh evidence to questions prompted by Rothschild’s study of the Muratorian Fragment. To be sure, the wider circulation of the Benedictine Prologue should encourage us to think of the text not simply as a corroborating witness of the Muratorian Fragment but rather as an autonomous text bearing the marks of a complex historical stratification.

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<sup>1</sup> C. K. Rothschild, *The Muratorian Fragment: Text, Translation, Commentary*, STAC 132 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022). This study (*ibid.*, 192–236) depends mainly on secondary literature in its examination of the Benedictine Prologue; the present study builds on and complements it through a study of manuscript sources. The plural usage Benedictine Prologues (BPs) in the earlier study reflects an evolution of thinking, as the emphasis in the present study shifts from an isolated group of independent external witnesses to the Muratorian Fragment, whose history had not been carefully reconstructed or regarded as coherent, to the position that the Benedictine Prologue is a self-standing Pauline prologue, independent from the Fragment and characterized by a coherent textual history.

<sup>2</sup> Personal email communication with Rothschild on 19 April 2022. Digital version of Vat. lat. 36: [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Vat.lat.36](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.36).

Curiously, the centerpiece of this study has not been registered in any of the standard repertoires of biblical paratexts.<sup>3</sup> Yet it is surely a prologue, a designation that follows the prior work of Geoffrey Hahneman.<sup>4</sup> The use of the term “prologue” is justified by the frequent employment in codices of the Latin term *prologus* in relation to this text and to others here treated. Other terms, such as *praefatio*, *argumentum*, *epitome*, and *prooemium*, also appear in manuscripts. While neglect of this text in reference works may result from its derivative composition, many prologues that have been indexed are merely excerpts from Jerome’s writings. Its neglect may also stem from the overriding treatment of the work as a witness to the Muratorian Fragment. The significance of the Prologue for the Fragment’s textual history will be considered here (Chapter 5), but it should not hinder research into the genesis of this work.

This study comprises two parts: (I) a presentation of the manuscripts and text, and (II) a study of the Prologue’s sources and original context. The first part entails manuscript descriptions for the five known exemplars (Chapters 2–3) and concludes with a fresh collation of the text (Chapter 4) and analysis of variants vis-à-vis the Muratorian Fragment (Chapter 5). The five successive chapters (6–10) forming the second part examine its thematic and literary sources or analogues. This study will argue that the time of the Benedictine Prologue’s composition is much closer to its late antique sources than to its extant eleventh-century manuscripts. Indeed, far from being an eleventh-century confection, the Benedictine Prologue is deeply implicated in the development of Latin prologue literature in the decades around 400.

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<sup>3</sup> For registers of the Latin prologues to Paul’s letters, see F. Stegmüller, *Repertorium biblicum medii aevi*, 11 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto “Francisco Suárez,” 1940–1980) [hereafter: S], 1:288–302 (available online at <http://www.repbib.uni-trier.de>); S. Berger, “Les préfaces jointes aux livres de la Bible dans les manuscrits de la Vulgate,” in *Mémoires présentés par divers savants à l’Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres de l’Institut de France*, 11/2 (1904): 1–78, here: 8–13; H. J. Frede, “Exkurs 1: Paulus-Prologe,” in *Epistulae ad Thessalonicenses, Timotheum, Titum, Philemonem, Hebraeos*, ed. idem, VL 25 (Freiburg: Herder, 1975–1991), 98–119. For critical editions, see J. Wordsworth and H. J. White, et al., *Novum Testamentum Domini Nostri Iesu Christi, Pars Secunda – Epistulae Paulinae* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913–1941) [hereafter: W-W], 1–61; D. de Bruyne, *Prefaces to the Latin Bible*, *Studia Traditionis Theologiae* 19 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015). H. F. von Soden offers the most complete collection of Greek prologues in *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments in ihrer ältesten erreichbaren Textgestalt*, 2nd ed., 4 vols. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1911–1913). Curated by Hugh Houghton, the following website helpfully collects the relevant materials for the Latin tradition: <https://itseeweb.cal.bham.ac.uk/vetuslatina/paratext/>.

<sup>4</sup> G. M. Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 29.

## 1.1 Introducing the *Corpus Paulinum*: A Historical Sketch of the Earliest Latin Prologues

It was probably in the second century that copies of Paul's letters to churches divided into seven parts (Rom, Cor, Gal, Eph, Phil, Col, Thess) began to acquire introductory or isagogic material. In imitation of secular texts, these prologues were brief notices about the recipients of Paul's letters, the recipients' locations, Paul's own whereabouts, and the occasion and purpose for writing.<sup>5</sup> The contingent nature of the epistles, their occasionally acerbic tone, and an array of different theological concerns provoked questions demanding ancillary explanations in the form of prologues, which in turn came to possess an intermediate status between sacred text and commentary.<sup>6</sup> Gradually, the other Pauline epistles were outfitted with prologues as the letters came to constitute collections of thirteen or fourteen in total. To varying extents, Origen in the Greek tradition, and Marius Victorinus and Ambrosiaster in the Latin tradition, drew on this genre.<sup>7</sup> By the fourth century, various Latin Bibles contained general prologues to the whole *corpus Paulinum* as well as special prologues for each individual epistle. With Jerome, prefatory material became common across the Bible and included textual summaries featuring his own apologetic views.<sup>8</sup> Anonymous prologues even came to be endowed with the prestige of illustrious pseudonymity and were ascribed, above all, to the authority of Jerome. Romans attracted more preface material than other Pauline letters, perhaps because it appears first in most non-Marcionite

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<sup>5</sup> H. J. Frede, *Allateinische Paulus-Handschriften*, VL/AGLB 4 (Freiburg: Herder, 1964), 173. S. Lunn-Rockliffe addresses the content of classical isagogical prologues in "Prologue Topics and Translation Problems in Latin Commentaries on Paul," in *Interpreting the Bible and Aristotle in Late Antiquity: The Alexandrian Commentary Tradition between Rome and Baghdad*, ed. J. Lössl and J. W. Watt (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 33–47, here: 37–40. See also E. W. Scherbenske, *Canonizing Paul: Ancient Editorial Practice and the Corpus Paulinum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 62–65, 130.

<sup>6</sup> Lunn-Rockliffe, "Prologue Topics and Translation Problems," 40. On the treatment of Paul's anger and rhetoric by the earliest Latin commentators, see T. S. Berzon, "'O, Foolish Galatians': Imagining Pauline Community in Late Antiquity," *CH* 85/3 (2016): 435–467.

<sup>7</sup> Concerning the relationship between Greek and Latin prologues, including Origen's influence, see A. Fürst, "Origen: Exegesis and Philosophy in Early Christian Alexandria," in Lössl and Watt, *Interpreting the Bible and Aristotle in Late Antiquity*, 13–32. For Marius Victorinus, see W. Erdt, *Marius Victorinus Afer, der erste lateinische Pauluskommentator* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1980), 198–208.

<sup>8</sup> A. Cain, "Apology and Polemic in Jerome's Prefaces to His Biblical Scholarship," in *Hieronymus als Exeget und Theologe: Interdisziplinäre Zugänge zum Koheletkommentar des Hieronymus*, ed. E. Birnbaum and L. Schwienhorst-Schönberger, BETL 268 (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 107–128.

collections.<sup>9</sup> Just as Jerome's prologue to Matthew came in later centuries to serve as a general prologue to the four Gospels, so a prologue to Romans might serve as a general prologue to the *corpus Paulinum*. Of the most widely used repertoires of Latin prologues, Stegmüller identifies thirty-nine discrete prologues to Romans alone; Samuel Berger, twenty-nine.<sup>10</sup>

By the end of the fourth century, two prologue series featuring short introductions to individual letters had entered circulation.<sup>11</sup> The oldest, as generally held, is the so-called Marcionite prologue series, originally intended, as it seems, to introduce a seven-part corpus organized by recipient (Gal, Cor, Rom, Thess, Laod, Col, Phil).<sup>12</sup> Supplements expanded it to a fourteen-letter series, lacking Hebrews: Gal, 1 Cor, Rom, 1 Thess, Laod, Col, Phil, 2 Cor, Eph, 2 Thess, Phlm, 1 Tim, 2 Tim, and Titus. These prologues were adapted by Marius Victorinus (d. aft. 363 CE) and Ambrosiaster (fl. 366–384 CE) in their commentaries on Paul's letters.<sup>13</sup> A second series of prologues, not exploited by Ambrosiaster, was composed before the Vulgate and was consulted by Pelagius.<sup>14</sup> It was perhaps composed in northern Italy. Earlier assertions of Pelagian authorship have generally been discarded.

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<sup>9</sup> Romans stands third (Gal Cor Rom) in Marcion's 'chronological' ordering. On the stability of Romans as first in the canon, see H. J. Frede, "Die Ordnung der Paulusbriefe und der Platz des Kolosserbriefs im Corpus Paulinum," in *Epistulae ad Philippenses et ad Colossenses*, VL 24/2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1966), 290–303, here: 292–293. Frede speculates that the chronological principle behind the list of texts in the Muratorian Fragment may be a reaction to the Marcionite ordering: "Das mag den Verfasser des Fragments mitveranlaßt haben, seinerseits aus der ihm überkommenen Reihenfolge nach der Länge eine Folge nach der Abfassungszeit zu konzipieren" (297).

<sup>10</sup> S 1:288–292; Berger, "Les préfaces jointes," 61–65.

<sup>11</sup> B. Fischer, "Das Neue Testament in lateinischer Sprache," in *Die alten Übersetzungen des Neuen Testaments, die Kirchenväterzitate und Lektionare*, ed. K. Aland, ANTF 5 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1972), 1–92, here: 24–26. See also the helpful summary by T. S. de Bruyn of prologues known in Rome when Pelagius wrote his commentary on Romans in *Pelagius' Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, OECS (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 9.

<sup>12</sup> Throughout this study, we retain the conventional designation "Marcionite" without prejudice to the authorship or origin.

<sup>13</sup> For the series, see Frede, "Exkurs 1: Paulus-Prologe," 108–109 (no. 15). It begins with S 677 *Romani sunt in partibus Italiae. Hi praeventi sunt*. In the absence of a global standard, we designate the prologues with Stegmüller's enumeration along with a standard edition, typically the Oxford Vulgate (abbreviated W-W after the two principal editors) unless another edition is preferable, e.g., S 670 (W-W 2:1–5). Where single paragraphs within these prologues reflect independent traditions, we refer to them by the Stegmüller number and an additional paragraph number, e.g., S 651 § 3. The incipit is given with the first mention at least. The main prologues that we treat are listed in Appendix A with a concordance of editions and basic literature. Texts and translations are given in Appendix B.

<sup>14</sup> For the series, see Frede, "Exkurs 1: Paulus-Prologe," 109–111 (no. 16). It begins with S 676 *Romani sunt in partes Italiae. Hi fidem habentes*.

These two prologue series, the Marcionite prologues and the north Italian prologues, came to occupy a special place in copies of the Latin Bible. Although the Marcionite prologues are believed to have originally constituted a unitary text, the prologue to each letter being contiguous with one another in one and the same text, the transmission record shows them separated, so that each prologue stands as a short introduction to its proper epistle. In this context, each prologue could be preceded by a longer prologue from an alien text tradition. Such layering of prologues was common for the letter to the Romans since it generally headed the collection. The Marcionite and north Italian series seem to have been distinguished from the longer prologues by the heading *argumentum*, a Latin word that may warrant the English translation “argument” for these special prologues each derived from a fixed series. Thus, an individual Pauline epistle might be furnished with both a prologue, even several prologues, and an argument extracted from one of these series. Other prologue series developed out of, and broadly depended on, these two, which remain the only series attested in the fourth century.<sup>15</sup>

By the end of the fourth century, a general introduction to the letters to churches, including Hebrews, had appeared anonymously in the form of S 670 *Primum quaeritur*. This prologue certainly postdates the year 393, as it quotes a passage from Jerome’s *De viris illustribus* 5, a work finished between 392 and 393.<sup>16</sup> The order of epistles in this prologue adheres to the Vulgate in placing Colossians before Thessalonians: Rom–Cor–Gal–Eph–Phil–Col–Thess. Pelagius used this work in a second recension in which the sequence of epistles followed a *Vetus Latina* ordering as in his own commentary: Thess–Col.<sup>17</sup> The transmission of S 670 with Pelagian works had once supported a case for Pelagian authorship, but, as mentioned above, such claims have mostly been discarded, and the prologue was likely penned by the unknown Vulgate translator of the Pauline epistles.<sup>18</sup> Doubtless, the

<sup>15</sup> For further prologue series, see Frede, “Exkurs 1: Paulus-Prologe,” 111–112 (nos. 17–20).

<sup>16</sup> S 670 *Primum quaeritur* (W-W 2:1–5). Frede (“Exkurs 1: Paulus-Prologe,” 99) assigns the *terminus post quem* to 393. For the composition date of *Vir.*, with arguments for 392 and wider support for spring 393, see P. Nautin, “La date du ‘De viris illustribus’ de Jérôme, de la mort de Cyrille de Jérusalem et de celle de Grégoire de Nazianze,” *RHE* 56 (1961): 33–35. With gratitude to Andrew Cain for his assistance on this question.

<sup>17</sup> Frede, “Die Ordnung der Paulusbriefe,” and, in the same volume, “Zum Prolog *Primum quaeritur*,” 303–304. According to Frede, the prologue’s argument requires the version with the Vulgate letter sequence to be prior. The prologue’s apology for the letter to the Hebrews further urges against ascribing it to Pelagius, who did not comment on this book. See also Frede, “Exkurs 1: Paulus-Prologe,” 100–101 n. 7.

<sup>18</sup> Frede, “Exkurs 1: Paulus-Prologe,” 99–101. Souter regarded the prologue as an authentic work of Pelagius (*Pelagius’s Expositions of Thirteen Epistles of St. Paul*, 3 vols., TS 9/1–3 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922–1931], 1:115, 155–157). This position was

so-called Marcionite prologues, the north Italian set, and S 670 *Primum quaeritur* were circulating around Rome by the time Pelagius commented on Romans.<sup>19</sup> Throughout its known textual history, *Primum quaeritur* was frequently affiliated with S 674 *Romani (qui) ex Iudaeis gentibusque*, a special prologue for Romans.<sup>20</sup> Together they formed the Vulgate's standard general prologue to the Pauline corpus and the standard special prologue to Romans, respectively.<sup>21</sup> The two were modified and combined as S 669 *Primum intellegere* by the time of Cassiodorus.<sup>22</sup> The latter prologue employs the order Thess–Col and lacks the full development accounting for Hebrews.

The authors, dates, and original contexts of such prologues, typically attached to other works in their transmission, pose difficult questions. Many of them appear to have been composed through the combination of short pre-existing texts adapted in accordance with authorial choices, local traditions, and polemical or doctrinal tendencies. None of the Latin prologues to Paul's letters are attested in quotations before the mid-fourth century and have no earlier documentary witness. The early date for the Marcionite prologues is, for instance, partially an inference from their widespread circulation in biblical codices.<sup>23</sup> While the date has generally

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upheld by G. de Plinval, "Précisions sur l'authenticité d'un prologue de Pélagie: *Primum quaeritur*," *REAug* 12/3–4 (1966): 247–253. Following others, Scherbenske accepts the attribution of this prologue to Rufinus the Syrian (*Canonizing Paul*, 184). See, however, W. Dunphy, "Ps-Rufinus (the 'Syrian') and the Vulgate: Evidence Wanting!" *Aug* 52/1 (2012): 219–256; idem, "Rufinus the Syrian: Myth and Reality," *Aug* 59/1–2 (2009): 79–157.

<sup>19</sup> De Bruyn, *Pelagius' Commentary*, 9–10: "All these various currents – the concise literal style which was grounded in Latin rhetorical training and corresponded to Antiochene approaches, the theological perspective derived from Origen, the weight of the Latin tradition of North Africa, the older Italian version and the new Vulgate version of the epistles, and the lineaments of interpretation put forward by the prologues to these versions – flowed into the stream of Pauline commentaries at Rome and into the work of Pelagius."

<sup>20</sup> S 674 (W-W 2:35–38) *Romani (qui) ex Iudaeis gentibusque*. Here too, earlier claims for Pelagian authorship have generally been discarded. See de Bruyn, *Pelagius' Commentary*, 9–10 and 57 n. 1.

<sup>21</sup> Frede, "Zum Prolog *Primum quaeritur*," 303–304.

<sup>22</sup> W-W 2:5–7. For the date, see Frede, "Exkurs 1: Paulus-Prologe," 102 (no. 3).

<sup>23</sup> The second-century date was proposed after independent observations in the early twentieth century by D. de Bruyne "Prologues bibliques d'origine Marcionite," *RBén* 24 [1907]: 1–16), and P. Corssen ("Zur Überlieferungsgeschichte des Römerbriefes," *ZNW* 10/1 [1909]: 1–45; idem, "Zur Überlieferungsgeschichte des Römerbriefes, Nachtrag," *ZNW* 10/2 [1909]: 97–102), that the prologues corresponded to Marcion's epistolary ordering and reflected his movement's concerns. However the prologues developed, the similarities to Marcionism that have been imputed to them may reflect widespread theological concerns rather than a specific polemical context. A. von Harnack offered a supportive review of De Bruyne's argument in "Prologues bibliques d'origine Marcionite," *TLZ* 32 (1907): 138–140, as did J. R. Harris, "Marcion and the Canon," *Exp Tim* 18/9 (1907): 392–394. De Bruyne's

been retained, the Marcionite attribution of this group, it should be noted, remains disputed. If they do originate with Marcion, their success in the tradition of the early Latin Bible is a brilliant example of the changing dynamics of belief and orthodoxy, such that non-orthodox affiliations were forgotten in transmission. The prologue tradition was cumulative, and later writers and readers failed to recognize original polemical contexts. A similar disengagement from original polemical motives may have unfolded in the reception of *Primum quaeritur*, whose possible Pelagian tendencies did not prevent it from becoming the Vulgate's standard introduction to the *corpus Paulinum*.<sup>24</sup> Apart from the passages extracted from Jerome, the only fourth-century prologue clearly attaching itself to a known author is the prologue to Romans written in the early 380s by the anonymous Ambrosiaster. This text was excerpted from the front of his commentary to form a self-standing work, S 680 *Vt rerum notitia habeatur*.<sup>25</sup> The most important copy of its

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argument for Marcionite origin (followed by Harnack, Vogels, Souter, Harris, Schäfer, Hoffmann, Metzger, Ehrman; rejected by Mundle, Frede, Dahl) emphasizes the collection of ten and their reconstructed order, the presence of Laodiceans rather than Ephesians, the absence of Hebrews and the Pastorals, and reactions to the prologues in anti-Marcionite directions. He regards the letter order as the weightiest supporting evidence, since it lines up with the order of the letters in Marcion's collection, as reported by Tertullian. Dahl ("The Origin of the Earliest Prologues to the Pauline Letters," *Semeia* 12 [1978]: 233–277) argues influentially against de Bruyne's thesis. Although Dahl does not dispute de Bruyne's reconstruction of the order of Marcion's prologues (245–246), he rejects it as evidence in favor of Marcionite attribution, arguing that this order had a wider circulation (with Ephesians going by Laodiceans) than Marcion's circle. Dahl dismisses the significance of arguments based on the relationship of the prologue to Romans and Marcion's version of that letter and anti-Marcionite doctrinal positions in the prologues to Romans (259–260) and 1 Corinthians (258–259). For the date, see *ibid.*, 251, 263, 267 n. 6. See further Frede, *Allateinische Paulus-Handschriften*, 177; K. T. Schäfer, "Marcion und die ältesten Prologe zu den Paulusbriefen," in *Kyriakon: Festschrift Johannes Quasten*, ed. P. Granfield and J. A. Jungmann, 2 vols. (Münster: Aschendorf, 1973), 1:135–150, here: 147; and the recent treatment, rejecting Dahl's thesis and striving to rehabilitate Marcionite attribution, by D. Jongkind, "On the Marcionite Prologues to the Letters of Paul," in *Studies on the Text of the New Testament and Early Christianity: Studies in Honor of Michael W. Holmes on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, ed. D. M. Gurtner, J. Hernández, Jr., and P. Foster, NTTSD 50 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), 389–407, here: 392–395. Scherbenske rejects Dahl's view but acknowledges, as Dahl had, that the relationship between Marcionite and orthodox Christianity may be "fluid" (*Canonizing Paul*, 92; also, 10 and "Appendix," 237–242).

<sup>24</sup> Scherbenske, *Canonizing Paul*, 185–196.

<sup>25</sup> W-W 2:33–35. According to Stephen Cooper, Ambrosiaster's *argumenta* "contain some material of a more theoretical nature, concerning, for example, the relationship of Christianity to Judaism (particularly in Galatians) and on Ambrosiaster's general approach to the interpretation of the epistles. The *argumentum* to the commentary on Romans is as close as our exegete ever comes to describing his exegetical method, one

self-standing form, the Book of Armagh, ascribes the prologue to a certain Hilary, presumably of Poitiers.<sup>26</sup>

General prologues to the *corpus Paulinum* differ in regard to the total number and order of Pauline letters, and discrepancies within one and the same prologue or prologue series may arise from the work's textual stratification, the accumulation of elements from different sources, and specific motivating contexts. The order of the letters was governed by principles such as length, chronology, and theme. In the main, there were three options, and the order of letters could vary considerably:

(1) *Seven-part corpus* of letters to seven churches, sometimes with Hebrews added as an eighth: Rom, Cor, Gal, Eph, Phil, Col, Thess, (Heb).

(2) *Ten letters* taking account of Hebrews and the second letters addressed to the Corinthians and Thessalonians: Rom, 1–2 Cor, Gal, Eph, Phil, Col, 1–2 Thess, Heb.

(3) *Fourteen letters* comprising all the corporate letters, including Hebrews, and letters to individuals: Rom, 1–2 Cor, Gal, Eph, Phil, Col, 1–2 Thess, Heb, 1–2 Tim, Titus, Phlm.

Prologues featuring different numbers of letters were combined both as sources in the composition of new prologues and as consecutive prologues in novel manuscript clusters apparently brought together without minding contradictions.<sup>27</sup>

In connection with the number of letters, the Pauline prologues elaborated on another prominent dispute of the early church: “What should be said about Hebrews?”<sup>28</sup> As an anonymous text exhibiting marked stylistic differences from Paul's letters, the authenticity of Hebrews was a matter of ardent discussion.<sup>29</sup> In the early third century, Gaius of Rome rejected it for being part of an alleged proliferation of spurious Pauline epistles.<sup>30</sup> Later, Clement of Alexandria and Origen acknowledged the question of

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central component of which is a historical understanding” (T.S. de Bruyn, S.A. Cooper, and D.G. Hunter, WGRW 41:lxviii).

<sup>26</sup> For the genesis of this misattribution to Hilary, see H. Zimmer, *Pelagius in Irland: Texte und Untersuchungen zur patristischen Literatur* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1901), 119; A. Souter, *A Study of Ambrosiaster*, TS 7/4 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1905), 162–163.

<sup>27</sup> Scherbenske (*Canonizing Paul*, 207) makes a similar point about the diverse prologue materials gathered in the sixth-century codex Fuldensis. See also *ibid.*, 230.

<sup>28</sup> S 670 (W-W 2:4, ll. 13–14): *De Hebraeis uero quid dicendum est?*

<sup>29</sup> See now D. Young, *The Concept of Canon in the Reception of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, LNTS 658 (London: T&T Clark, 2021).

<sup>30</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.20.2.

Pauline authorship but opted to receive the text.<sup>31</sup> By the decades around 400, the letter's canonical status gained traction, and factors such as its Latin translation distanced it from earlier stylistic objections. Marcionite and Arian rejection may have further encouraged this letter's acceptance by the contrarian polemic of Jerome and Augustine.<sup>32</sup> Though Hebrews held different positions in Pauline collections,<sup>33</sup> Jerome declared it the eighth epistle so as not to disrupt the corpus of seven.<sup>34</sup> The stylistic problem first

<sup>31</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *apud* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.14; Origen, *apud* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.25. As Greek speakers, this stylistic observation was inevitable. Clement argued that the letter was originally written in Hebrew. Origen's assessment is well-known: "Who wrote this letter, in truth, God knows."

<sup>32</sup> Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 5.10 (ed. A. Ceresa-Gastaldo, *BibPat* 12:84–87); *Ep.* 53.9.3 (ed. I. Hilberg and M. Kamptner, *CSEL* 54:4:62.18–563.1); 129.3.7 (ed. Hilberg, *CSEL* 56:169.7–12); Augustine, *Doctr. chr.* 2.8.13 (ed. K. D. Daur and J. Martin, *CCSL* 32:40.54); *Civ.* 16.22 (ed. B. Dombart and A. Kalb, *CCSL* 48:524.10–12). See further C. K. Rothschild, *Hebrews as Pseudepigraphon*, *WUNT* 1/235 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 33–36. The omission of Hebrews in the Muratorian Fragment points to larger problems in interpreting the work. The Fragmentist may receive Hebrews but not mention it because the writer lists only the seven churches to which Paul wrote *nominatim* ("by name," MF l. 49; cf. *nonnisi nominatim*, BP l. 8), whereas Hebrews is an anonymous text. For Jerome too (*Vir. ill.* 5), Hebrews is anonymous, and his opinion was reproduced in S 663 *Paulus apostolus scripsit ad septem ecclesias* (W-W 2:7, ll. 8–9): *et propter inuidiam sui apud eos nominis titulum in principio salutationis amputauerat*. The Fragment next (ll. 59–61) mentions letters to individuals (Phlm, Tit, 1–2 Tim). The writer may not report about Jas, 1–2 Pet, and 1 John, because these letters are "catholic," that is, correspondence intended to be distributed widely, and hence not addressed to a church or individual "by name." Alternatively, in the preface to *Vir. ill.* (ed. Ceresa-Gastaldo, *BibPat* 12:56), Jerome says that Flavius Lucius Dexter urged him to draw up a list of ecclesiastical writers like those known to pagans. If the Fragmentist answers a similar call, the missing segment at the beginning may have covered Peter, James, and Matthew, explaining the absence of those texts. As in *Vir. ill.*, they would have already been addressed under those authors. As Jude follows Matthew in *Vir. ill.*, the Fragment's treatment of this text as antilegomenon would still require an explanation. Jerome handles Paul after Jude, but the Fragment treats Luke (ll. 2–8) and John (ll. 9–34) before introducing Paul (l. 39).

<sup>33</sup> On the shifting location of Hebrews within Pauline letter collections, see Frede, "Die Ordnung der Paulusbriefe," 292–303. The placement of Hebrews after Thessalonians is primarily Alexandrian. It begins to surface in testimonies in the West in the latter fourth century. Jerome reveals awareness of this position in the letter to Paulinus, but the Vulgate places Hebrews after Philemon. See W. H. P. Hatch, "The Position of Hebrews in the Canon of the New Testament," *HTR* 29/2 (1936): 133–151, here: 136–143.

<sup>34</sup> On the antiquity of the seven-letter corpus, see Frede, "Die Ordnung der Paulusbriefe," 291. In a private conversation with Frede at the SNTS meeting in Exeter in August 1968, Dahl withdrew his position that the Muratorian Fragment assumed "our canonical order" (Frede, "Die Ordnung der Paulusbriefe," 297 n. 2). On the problem of particularity in the New Testament, see O. Cullmann, "Die Pluralität der Evangelien als theologisches Problem im Altertum," *TZ* 1 (1945): 23–42, translated as "The Plurality of the Gospels as a Theological Problem in Antiquity," in idem, *The Early Church: Studies in Early*

enunciated by Clement of Alexandria did not, however, fall away completely once the text was widely accepted. Jerome's attention to original languages compelled him to repeat Clement's explanation that the letter was originally written in Hebrew (*Vir. ill.* 5), a solution that also neatly explained the greater eloquence of the letter, composed as it was thought in Paul's mother tongue.<sup>35</sup>

Perhaps based on this perception as originally written in the Hebrew language, Hebrews is absent from the Marcionite prologue series. It is likewise absent from the earliest commentaries on the Pauline corpus by Marius Victorinus, Ambrosiaster, and Pelagius.<sup>36</sup> The Budapest Anonymous of ca. 400 is the earliest extant commentary to cover it.<sup>37</sup> That said, the absence of Hebrews in one prologue could be "rectified," as we will see, through the

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*Christian History and Theology*, ed. A. J. B. Higgins (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956), 37–54; N. A. Dahl, "The Particularity of the Pauline Epistles as a Problem in the Ancient Church," in *Neotestamentica et Patristica: Eine Freundesgabe, Herrn Professor Dr. Oscar Cullman zu seinem 60. Geburtstag überreicht*, NovTSup 6 (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 261–271; idem, "Welche Ordnung der Paulusbriefe wird vom Muratorischen Kanon vorausgesetzt?" *ZNW* 52/1–2 (1961): 39–53. T. J. Lang and M. R. Crawford identify particularity as the motivation behind the Priscillian Canons on Paul's letters ("The Origins of Pauline Theology: Paratexts and Priscillian of Avila's Canons on the Letters of the Apostle Paul," *NTS* 63/1 [2017]: 125–145, here: 143–144).

<sup>35</sup> *Vir. ill.* 5.10–11 (ed. Ceresa-Gastaldo, *BibPat* 12:84–87), paraphrased in S 670 *Primum quaeritur* (W-W 2:3, ll. 4–6): *Non est sane mirum si eloquentior uideatur in proprio id est hebraeo quam in peregrino id est graeco, quo ceterae epistulae sunt scriptae sermone* ("Of course it is no wonder if he seems to be more eloquent in his own tongue, that is, in Hebrew, than in a foreign one, that is, Greek, the language in which the other epistles were written."). For the comparison, see Souter, *Pelagius's Expositions*, 1:184–185. The same passage surfaces, drawn from S 670, again in S 669 *Primum intellegere* (W-W 2:7, ll. 2–4). *Vir. ill.* 5.9–11 was taken over verbatim in another prologue, S 663 *Paulus apostolus scripsit ad septem ecclesias* (W-W 2:7). The last two paragraphs on the style of the Hebrew language (*Vir. ill.* 5.10–11) were extracted for a self-standing prologue to Hebrews that is attested in MS Montecassino, Archivio dell'Abbazia, 552 (C<sup>3</sup>), one of the witnesses of the Benedictine Prologue (see Chapter 3). Theodoret also holds the position that Paul wrote Hebrews in Hebrew (*Interp. Heb.* arg., PG 82:673C–677B, cited from V. Blomkvist, *Euthalian Traditions: Text, Translation and Commentary*, TUGAL 170 [Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012], 283). Hilary of Poitiers (*Tract. Ps., instr. Ps.* 15, ed. A. Zingerle, CSEL 22:13) mentions the Hebrew language at the end of a canon list that emphasizes the number of books. For scriptural illustrations of Paul as a speaker of Hebrew, see Acts 21:40; 22:2; 26:14; cf. 2 Cor 11:22.

<sup>36</sup> De Bruyn, *Pelagius' Commentary*, 11. As for the fact that Pelagius left no commentary on Hebrews, de Bruyn notes Frede's speculation that Alaric's descent on Rome forced him to abort the plan (*ibid.*, 11 n. 65).

<sup>37</sup> H. J. Frede, *Ein neuer Paulustext und Kommentar*, 2 vols., VL/AGLB 7–8 (Freiburg: Herder, 1974). The prologue in the Anonymous Budapest commentary is S 669 *Primum intellegere*. See also de Bruyn, *Pelagius' Commentary*, 11 n. 65; idem, "Constantius the Tractator: Author of an Anonymous Commentary on the Pauline Epistles?" *JTS* 43/1 (1992): 38–54.

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