

Early Testimony to the Dating of Revelation

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Thursday, 09 May 2019 10:09 - Last Updated Thursday, 09 May 2019 10:49

Today I found an interesting quote from Irenaeus.

If you are unfamiliar with him, he was a minister not long after the time of the apostles. Many call them the apostolic Fathers or early church fathers. Irenaeus was a disciple of Polycarp. Polycarp is believed to be a disciple of the Apostle John. Here is a quote from Irenaeus discussing the dating of Revelation:

“We will not, however, incur the risk of pronouncing positively as to the name of Antichrist; for if it were necessary that his name should be distinctly revealed in this present time, it would have been announced by him who beheld the apocalyptic vision. For [it or he] was seen not very long time since, but almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian’s reign” (Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 5, 30, 3).

To give further context, Domitian reigned between AD 81-96. The quote from John's ministerial grandson claims that Revelation was given sometime during Domitian's reign, between AD 81 and AD 96. It is possible that Irenaeus is wrong, however, the quote is still valuable for consideration when also considering the internal evidence for a late dating of Revelation.