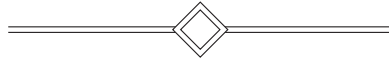


CHAPTER 1

THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS: AN INTRODUCTION



PAUL FOSTER

1. SECOND-CENTURY CHRISTIANITY

The difference between the early Jesus movement at the beginning of the second century and its strength and status at the end of that century is immense. Around the year 100 CE the movement had spread well beyond the confines of Galilee and Palestine, but the various communities were scattered, marginal, and striving to develop a sense of permanence and identity. However, by the end of the second century, while the Christian movement had become even more dispersed, it had developed a greater sense of being an established and empire-wide community, with a united and global identity. By the year 200 CE, communities of Christ believers existed throughout the entire Roman Empire and even beyond its territorial boundaries. Within communities there was a more developed hierarchical system of leadership. The literary output of the movement sought to compete with the philosophical and intellectual ideas of the period. While subject to sporadic and unpredictable persecution, there was a greater sense of confidence in the movement's status, social importance, and permanence. Moreover, a series of Jewish revolts resulted in "a significant shift in the centre of gravity of Christian geography."¹ This commenced with the first revolt of 66–70 CE that led to the destruction of Jerusalem, followed by a series of revolts at multiple sites late in Trajan's reign (115–117), and a couple of decades later with the Bar Kokhba revolt (132–135). Not only did this series of events result in early Christians leaving or being displaced from Jerusalem and Judea, but many distanced themselves from fellow Judeans. Consequently, they settled elsewhere in the Empire, and thus they organically promulgated the new faith among pagans.

Despite the momentous changes for the Christian movement in this period, the sources documenting the movement's expansion and the development of its internal structures and practices are sparse. This is particularly true for the first half of the second century. Even for those surviving Christian writings traditionally dated to this period, there are questions relating to the correctness of dating them to this period and concerns raised about whether such texts are representative of the movement as a whole. While overly precise dating should be avoided, the tendency to redate such documents to later periods is typically unwarranted. By contrast, issues raised in a single text should perhaps not be understood

1. M. M. Mitchell, "From Jerusalem to the Ends of the Earth," in *Origins to Constantine*, vol. 1 of *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, ed. M. M. Mitchell and F. M. Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 296.

as representative of events in the wider movement without further support. Therefore, in many ways the second century is one of the most formative periods in the history of Christianity, but it is also one of the most sparsely documented and least understood. Yet, while the limitation of sources prevents a fully connected and global understanding, the texts that are extant present multiple fascinating windows into this exceptionally important period. They provide evidence of both continuing diversity as well as efforts toward standardization. They reveal many shared beliefs alongside points of highly contested theological debate. Christian communities are sometimes portrayed as existing in relative peace, but at other times as being subject to hostile opposition and even persecution. The contents of these texts show early Christians attempting to interact with highest examples of intellectual, literary, and philosophical thought on the one hand, while on the other engaging in wider culture in terms of folk beliefs and practices. In other words, even with all its shared core commitments and common practices, the early Christian movement was able to encompass diverse behavior and forms of faith. It continued to express itself as popular and accessible to the masses, while striving to situate itself alongside the intellectual elites. While this mix created tensions, such hybridity was probably key to the survival and growth of a movement that could offer different things to various classes of people. The diversity of the movement is reflected in a number of the texts that survive from the first half of the second century and beyond. Chief among those texts is the collection that has become known as the writings of the Apostolic Fathers.

2. WHO AND WHAT ARE THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS?

The term “Apostolic Fathers” has a dual reference. It refers both to a group of individuals who were prominent in the early church about a generation or two after the time of the apostles, as well as initially denoting a set of writings that were written by those same figures. Over the course of time, the contents of that collection of writings have been enlarged. Now the collection of writings is seen typically as containing a maximum of eleven writings, or more correctly ten writings that survive in full or in fragmentary form, and a collection of seven letters by Ignatius, which are typically counted as a single unit among the eleven-item collection.

There is some scholarly dispute concerning the origin of the term “Apostolic Fathers.” Often this is traced to a possible antecedent used in Cotelier’s first printed edition of a collection of several of the texts included in what is now known as the Apostolic Fathers. Cotelier’s first edition contained seven texts: the Epistle of Barnabas, two letters ascribed to Clement, the seven letters of Ignatius (taken as a single entry), Polycarp’s *Epistle to the Philippians*, the Martyrdom of Polycarp, and the Shepherd of Hermas, along with several other writings that have not established themselves as part of the typical collection of texts that form the collection. This collection was published under the title *SS. Patrum qui Temporibus Apostolicis Floruerunt Opera*,² which is in English translation *Works of the Holy Fathers Who Flourished in the Time of the Apostles*. While some of the texts are attributed to figures who were directly connected with the apostles, such as the Epistle of Barnabas (Acts 4:36; 9:27; 11:22–15:39; Gal 2:1, 9, 13; Col 4:10) and Clement (Phil 4:3), the majority are more correctly ascribed to authors who lived in the decades after the death of the apostles. In this sense, these are the part of the literary record of the early Christian

2. Jean-Baptist Cotelier, *SS. Patrum Qui Temporibus Apostolicis Floruerunt; Barnabae, Clementis, Hermae, Ignatii, Polycarpi; Opera Edita et Inedita, Vera et Suppositicia. Una cum Clementis, Ignatii, Polycarpi Actis atque Martyriis* (Paris: Petri le Petit, 1672).

movement in the period after the composition of many of the writings that were later to be collected to form the New Testament.

While the specific title *Patres Apostolici*, or “Apostolic Fathers,” did not originate with Cotelier’s first printed edition of several of the texts that have come to form the corpus,³ a virtually identical form is found in the title of the first English edition of these texts. In 1693, some twenty-one years after Cotelier’s volume appeared and undoubtedly dependent on that work, William Wake published the seven texts along with the account of the martyrdom of Ignatius under the title *The Genuine Epistles of the Apostolical Fathers*.⁴ This terminology influenced the reprinting of Cotelier’s own work with the editor of the 1699 edition, Thomas Ittig, using the title *Patres Apostolici*. However, it has recently been observed that Wake was perhaps not the person who originated the use of the title Apostolic Fathers in relation to these texts. In a splendid piece of recent detective work, David Lincicum examines several copies of Cotelier’s volume. He argues that the title “Apostolic(al) Fathers,” in Latin *Patres Apostolici*, was due to what he describes as “paratextual attempts to shorten Cotelier’s lengthy title, *SS. Patrum Qui Temporibus Apostolicis Floruerunt*.”⁵ He observes that the book was shipped as unbound gatherings, which were individually bound either by the booksellers or the purchasers of the prebound volumes. This is seen as accounting for the diversity in spine titles. Lincicum surveys around thirty copies of the 1672 edition of Cotelier’s work in order to compare the titles on the spines. It is noted that there exists “a certain predominance among British copies of *patres apostolici* and variants . . . the binding of at least one of which can be securely dated to 1674.”⁶ This phenomenon may not be the sole factor, but it is a further contributory feature in the emergence of the terminology of “Apostolic Fathers” becoming the typical designation for the collection of texts printed in Cotelier’s volume and subsequent editions of these texts.

Thus, by the end of the seventeenth century the Latin term *Patres Apostolici*, or in English “Apostolical Fathers,” had become an established designation for the set of seven texts that Cotelier first published as a collection. However, this raises both a prior and a posterior question. The prior question concerns how and why Cotelier came to group together the seven texts that he selected. That question pertains to the basis of the emergence of this corpus of seven writings. The posterior question concerns the enlargement of the corpus from Cotelier’s core of seven writings of the Apostolic Fathers to the now commonly established collection of eleven texts. It is those two questions that are addressed in the following sections.

3. THE FORMATION OF THE COLLECTION OF THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS

While Cotelier is often credited as the originator of the formation of the collection of writings that would later become known as the Apostolic Fathers, that is incorrect and reifies

3. Bart Ehrman describes the discussion over the origin of the title “Apostolic Fathers” as being “rather pointless.” He notes that in the preface, Cotelier twice “refers to his ‘Apostolicorum Patrum collectio’ (pp. vii and x)” (B. D. Ehrman, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2 vols., LCL [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003], 1:8).

4. The complete title, reflecting the style of the day, is fulsome and describes the contents: W. Wake, *The Genuine Epistles of the Apostolical Fathers; St. Clement, St. Polycarp, St. Ignatius, St. Barnabas, the Pastor of Hermas; and an Account of the Martyrdoms of St. Ignatius and St. Polycarp Written by Those Who Were Present at Their Sufferings: Being, Together with the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament, A Complete Collection of the Most Primitive Antiquity, for about a Hundred and Fifty Years After Christ* (London: Printed for Ric. Sare at Grays-Inn Gate next Holbourn, 1693).

5. D. Lincicum, “The Paratextual Invention of the term ‘Apostolic Fathers,’” *JTS* 66 (2015): 139–148, here 143.

6. Lincicum, “Paratextual Invention,” 144.

a modernist perspective on this scholarly endeavor. Initially, nearly all of the writings that constitute the current corpus circulated separately and independently. The probable exception is the case of two of Ignatius's letters sent to Smyrna, presumably together. One was addressed to the community, and the other to Polycarp, whom Ignatius describes as the bishop of that community. It is likely those two letters were dispatched at the same time from Troas (Ign. *Smyrn.* 12.1; *Pol.* 8.1), arrived at the same time, and may have been kept together from that time onward. The next stage of the collection also involves the letters of Ignatius. Writing in response to the Philippians, Polycarp informs them that "we are sending to you the letters of Ignatius that were sent to us by him together with any others that we have in our possession" (*Pol. Phil.* 13.2). Michael Holmes notes that Codex Mediceo-Laurentianus, which is the only surviving Greek manuscript of a collection of Ignatius's letters in the middle recension, presents six letters in the following order: *Smyrnaeans*, *Polycarp*, *Ephesians*, *Magnesians*, *Philadelphians*, and *Trallians*. Consequently, Holmes draws the following plausible observation: "This sequence is consistent with Polycarp's remark to the Philippians (*Pol. Phil.* 13.2) . . . and may represent the order of the letters in the earliest collection made of them."⁷

Over the next couple of centuries, there are references to several of the texts that would form the Apostolic Fathers collection, or to their authors. Additionally, there are various short citations in the works of several other early Christian writers. In that regard the most significant source of information is to be found in Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*. While not including full texts, Eusebius provides extensive descriptions or citations of a number of the writings that form the modern collection of the Apostolic Fathers. Thus, 1 Clement is described as a letter sent in the name of the church in Rome to the Christian community in Corinth (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.16.1). Eusebius also attests the existence of a second epistle attributed to Clement. He states, "There is also a second letter ascribed to Clement, but we have not the same knowledge of its recognition as we have of the former, for we do not even know if the primitive writers used it" (3.28.2). Discussing episcopal succession in various sees, Eusebius initially mentions Ignatius as being "famous as the second bishop of Antioch" (3.22.1). Later he is more fulsome as he describes Ignatius as "still a name of note" (3.36.1). In the lengthy section that follows, Eusebius mentions all seven letters of the middle recension, noting that while in Smyrna, Ignatius wrote letters to Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, and Rome. Additionally, he cites a lengthy passage from Ignatius's letter to Rome (Ign. *Rom.* 5.1–3). Next it is noted that while at Troas, Ignatius wrote letters to the communities in Philadelphia and Smyrna, and a letter to Polycarp. In this context, Eusebius cites Ignatius, *To the Smyrnaeans* 3.2 (see Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.36.1–15).

In the same passage, Eusebius mentions Polycarp, "a disciple of the apostles, who was a man of eminence in Asia, having been entrusted with the episcopate of the church of Smyrna by those who had seen and heard the Lord" (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.36.1). Significantly, Eusebius is aware that Polycarp, in his letter to the Philippians, refers to the letters of Ignatius. Additionally, Eusebius cites two passages from the letter in their entirety (*Pol. Phil.* 9.1–2; 13.1–2a). In book 4, again Eusebius mentions "a very powerful epistle of Polycarp written to the Philippians," and furthermore he notes that the letter draws on material "from the First Epistle to Peter" (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.14.8–9).

Furthermore, Eusebius also reveals knowledge of the text contained in the Apostolic Fathers under the title the Martyrdom of Polycarp. In fact, he provides lengthy excerpts

7. M. W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 177.

from the text (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.15.3–45). Thus, Eusebius states, “I consider it most important that his death, a written account of which is still extant, should be recorded in this history” (4.15.1). Eusebius’s version of the Martyrdom of Polycarp provides extensive overlap with the text preserved in manuscript sources. There are admittedly several omissions of various sizes, as well as rewording and some additions.⁸

Eusebius is also the key source for several of the fragmentary writings which now form the corpus of the Apostolic Fathers. He mentions Papias in both his *Chronicon* (Eusebius, *Chron.*), and in his *Ecclesiastical History* (3.36.2; 3.39.1–16). In the latter long section, Eusebius provides information about Papias and also cites various sections of his work (3.39.1–16). The briefer references present him as a contemporary of Ignatius and Polycarp. There are two references to Quadratus. First, he is mentioned as a prominent figure who “was renowned along with the daughters of Philip for his prophetic gifts” (3.37.1). Later, in book 4 Eusebius again mentions a figure called Quadratus, although it is not entirely clear that the two people named Quadratus are identical. In that later context, Eusebius mentions the *Apologia* written by Quadratus and cites the sole extant fragment, which is now included in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.3.1–2).

Discussing and categorizing early Christian writings into three groups—those that belong to the New Testament, those whose inclusion in the New Testament is disputed, and those that are rejected—Eusebius makes the following comment concerning the final group.

Among the rejected writings must be reckoned also the Acts of Paul, and the so-called Shepherd, and the Apocalypse of Peter, and in addition to these the extant Epistle of Barnabas, and the so-called Teachings of the Apostles; and besides, as I said, the Apocalypse of John, if it seem proper, which some, as I said, reject, but which others class with the accepted books. (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.25.4)

It would appear that here Eusebius shows further knowledge of three of the remaining writings that constitute the modern collection of the Apostolic Fathers. Without citing any portion of the relevant texts, here Eusebius reveals knowledge of the Shepherd of Hermas, the Epistle of Barnabas, and presumably the Didache. The Didache is almost certainly the text referred to as “the Teachings of the Apostles.” That text appears to have several related titles in both Greek and Latin tradition, either the Teaching of the (Twelve) Apostles or the longer version, the Teaching of the Lord to the Gentiles by the Twelve Apostles.⁹

Thus, the surviving writings of Eusebius may well reflect knowledge of ten of the eleven texts. The one text Eusebius does not demonstrate knowledge of is the Epistle to Diognetus. Of the ten others, Eusebius reveals high regard for the writings of Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Quadratus, and the account of Polycarp’s martyrdom. While Eusebius has reservations concerning Papias’s chiliastic views (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.12), overall he is happy to consider him as a contemporary representative of subapostolic Christianity. So while the writings of Clement, Ignatius, Papias, Polycarp, Quadratus, and the Martyrdom of Polycarp did not circulate as a collection, Eusebius considers them to be written by trustworthy followers of the apostles, or in the case of the Martyrdom of Polycarp, about such figures. By contrast, Eusebius is ambivalent about the text known as 2 Clement, since he

8. A synoptic comparison in parallel columns is conveniently set out in B. Dehandschutter, *Polycarpiana: Studies on Martyrdom and Persecution in Early Christianity: Collected Essays*, BETL 205 (Leuven: Peeters, 2007); see in particular ch. 1, “An Updated Edition of the Martyrdom of Polycarp,” 3–22.

9. Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 334.

cannot be certain of the pedigree of its author. Moreover, he knows of three further texts that are now part of the collection of the writings of the Apostolic Fathers: Shepherd of Hermas, the Epistle of Barnabas, and presumably the Didache. He says little about these texts and does not cite any of their contents. Instead, he simply says that they do not form part of the New Testament. Eusebius's wide-ranging acquaintance with at least ten of the eleven texts that constitute the now standard corpus of the Apostolic Fathers is remarkable, as is his ability to cite extensive passages from some of these texts, which suggests he had access to copies of these writings.

The next window into the association of multiple texts in the corpus comes not from the comments of early Christian writers but from the contents of ancient biblical codices. The fourth-century pandect biblical manuscript Codex Sinaiticus (8 01) includes as its final two texts the Epistle of Barnabas and part of the Shepherd of Hermas (Herm. 1.1–31.6). Presumably, more of the Shepherd of Hermas was originally present, although it is impossible to be certain of the original extent of the version of this text that was contained in Codex Sinaiticus. The presence of these two texts in a biblical codex perhaps helps to make further sense of Eusebius's comment that these texts should be rejected as belonging to the New Testament (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.25.4). Such a comment would appear to be required precisely because some wished to include these writings alongside other New Testament texts, and Codex Sinaiticus bears witness to that phenomenon. Similarly, the fifth-century biblical manuscript Codex Alexandrinus (02 A) contains two texts that are now part of the collection of writings of the Apostolic Fathers. These are 1 and 2 Clement. The text of 1 Clement is extant for 1.1–57.6 and 64.1–65.2 but lacks 57.7–63.4. For 2 Clement the text preserves 1.1–12.5a, but is lacunose for 12.5b–20.5. The titles of these two texts imply that they are attributed to the same author—Clement.¹⁰

After this manuscript evidence for multiple Apostolic Fathers texts, further evidence is lacking for several centuries, apart from manuscripts that contain collections of the letters of Ignatius of Antioch. Perhaps most notable in this regard are three Syriac manuscripts dating from the sixth to the tenth century, which contain abbreviated forms of three of the letters of Ignatius, *To Polycarp*, *To the Ephesians*, and *To the Romans*.¹¹ This form of the Ignatian corpus is known as the short recension.

Around the eleventh century onward, two further pieces of significant evidence emerge that are of significance in determining the circulation and collection of multiple texts that would later become known as the Apostolic Fathers. First, from the eleventh to sixteenth centuries twelve Greek manuscripts survive, which contain parts of Polycarp's *To the Philippians* and the Epistle of Barnabas. What is interesting here is that these do not circulate as separate texts, but rather significant portions of both texts have been spliced together to form a new single text circulating as Polycarp's letter. These twelve manuscripts are all genetically related, since they join these two texts in the same manner. The contents comprise Polycarp's *To the Philippians* salutation + 1.1–9.2, with only the three final words of 9.2 lacking (τοῦ θεοῦ ἀναστάντα), immediately followed by text from the Epistle of Barnabas beginning at

10. In the manuscript of Codex Alexandrinus, the title of 1 Clement is given as Κλημεντος προς Κορινθιους A. Second Clement has no title with the text, but in the table of contents it is listed as Κλημεντος ε[πιστολ]η β'. See Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 44, 138.

11. It should be noted that toward the end of the short recension of *To the Romans*, the Syriac redactor inserts a passage from *To the Trallians* 4–5. The aim is to heighten the portrait of Ignatius as a calm and resolute martyr. See the discussion in P. Foster, "The Ignatian Problem: The Recensions of a Letter Corpus as a Reflection of Theological Concerns and Developments," in *Texts in Context: Essays on Dating and Contextualising Christian Writings from the Second and Early Third Centuries*, ed. J. Verheyden, J. Schröter, and T. Nicklas, BETL 319 (Leuven: Peeters, 2021), 5–50, here 45.

5.7 (τὸν λαὸν τὸν καινόν) and continuing to the end of that epistle. The earliest surviving manuscript of this arrangement of this conflation of the epistles of Polycarp and Barnabas is the eleventh-century Vaticanus Graecus 859 (V), housed at the Vatican Library.

The second piece of evidence from the eleventh century is of far greater significance for understanding the process of collecting writings that would become known as the Apostolic Fathers and for the shape of modern editions of the corpus. In 1873, Bryennios discovered a medieval codex, which would become known as Codex Hierosolymitanus,¹² usually designated with the siglum H or more fully as H54.¹³ A colophon permits the codex's completion to be dated precisely to 11 June 1056. The manuscript was discovered in the monastery of the Holy Sepulchre in Constantinople (modern Istanbul), but was moved by Bryennios to the library of the Greek Patriarchate in Jerusalem for safekeeping. Images of the complete manuscript are available online.¹⁴ The manuscript is written on parchment, with a precise minuscule hand that makes some use of ligatures and abbreviations. The manuscript achieved fame for bringing to light the text of the Didache, which was previously unknown, although its contents had been reused in later Christian texts. An abbreviated list of the contents of Codex Hierosolymitanus is sometimes presented in works on the Apostolic Fathers, implying that it only contained works from that corpus. In fact, the first text in the manuscript is John Chrysostom's *Synopsis of the Testaments*. There then follows the Didache, the Epistle of Barnabas, 1 Clement, 2 Clement, and the long recension of the letters of Ignatius. Not only did Codex Hierosolymitanus herald the discovery of the text of the Didache, which subsequently has typically been included among the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, it is also the Greek manuscript that contains the largest collection of multiple texts that would become part of modern editions of the corpus. Counting the long recension of Ignatius as a single entry, it contains in the same codex five of the eleven writings that would form the standard modern collection.

From the twelfth century onward, multiple manuscripts survive with various combinations of the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. For instance, manuscripts of the conflated version of Polycarp's *To the Philippians* and the Epistle of Barnabas often circulated with the long recension of the Epistles of Ignatius.¹⁵ However, this combination of the version of Polycarp's *To the Philippians* supplemented with the Epistle of Barnabas, alongside the long recension of thirteen Greek letters of Ignatius, does not relate to Polycarp's initial response to the Philippians in sending his own letter along with the letters of Ignatius that he was able to obtain. Rather, this is a much later development that postdates the first phase of the formation of Greek long recension and occurred before the phenomenon is first observed in manuscript Vaticanus 859.¹⁶ Such late medieval manuscripts became part of the basis of the earliest first printed editions of the individual texts that would subsequently be collected to form the Apostolic Fathers collection.

12. The codex has also been designated with the Anglicized form the Jerusalem Codex, or sometimes named after its discoverer as the Bryennios manuscript, or as Codex Constantinopolitanus.

13. Holmes uses the siglum C to designate this manuscript, after the title Codex Constantinopolitanus. See Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 38.

14. "Panagios Taphos 54. John Chrysostom: Synopsis of the Testaments; Apostolic Fathers. 1056 A.D. 120 f. Pg. 16ft.," Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/resource/amedmonastery.00279389694-jo/?sp=1&st=list.

15. For a description of the contents of some of the relevant manuscripts, see J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers, Part II: S. Ignatius, S. Polycarp. Revised Texts with Introductions, Notes, Dissertations, and Translations*, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1889–1890), 1:545–51.

16. Lightfoot describes this connection as "late and accidental." While being late, accidental is probably incorrect. The connection appears to have been motivated by knowledge of the relationship between Polycarp and Ignatius as two closely associated figures from the same period (Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers, Part II*, 1:547).

4. INDIVIDUAL TEXTS OF THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS IN PRINT

The surviving manuscripts reveal only a limited part of the story of the formation and evolution of the collection of writings that emerged as the typical corpus of the Apostolic Fathers. As has been noted, taking the letters of Ignatius as a single entry, Cotelier's volume contained seven of the eleven texts that would later become the standard corpus of the Apostolic Fathers. Such a volume would not have been possible prior to the seventeenth century. Codex Alexandrinus was brought from Alexandria to Constantinople in 1621 by Cyril Lucaris, after he was translated from the post as Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria to the role of Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. The protestantizing Cyril was influenced by Calvinism, especially while studying at Geneva. Cyril was an admirer of the Church of England. Moreover, the British government had provided support to Cyril during his struggles with Turkish authorities. In gratitude, Cyril arranged for Codex Alexandrinus to be sent as a gift to James I. However, James died before the gift could be received. In 1627, the codex was finally presented to Charles I. It was this gift of a fifth-century pandect codex that made available the text of 1 and 2 Clement to modern scholarship in western Europe.

The first edition of the extant text of these two writings was published in 1633,¹⁷ and then reissued by Patrick Young, the royal librarian, in 1637.¹⁸ The title page of this volume refers only to the first letter, but after the text of the first letter concludes Young adds the title *Fragmentum Epistolae Secundae ex Eodem Ms* ("fragments of the second epistle from the same manuscript"), although there is no reference to the second text on the title page of Young's editio princeps. Young's edition was less than perfect, and according to Lightfoot the two epistles "were transcribed with tolerable but not strict accuracy."¹⁹ Therefore, over the following two hundred and forty-two years, until the publication of the text of these letters based on the form of text found in Codex Hierosolymitanus, the chief improvement was due to a more accurate transcription and careful attempts to resolve various lacunae.

The history of the publication of the Letters of Ignatius is complicated by the various recensions in which those writings appear. Various forms of the long recension exist, with certain Ignatian letters found only in Latin. In fact, a Latin form of the long recension was first published by Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples in 1498.²⁰ The text of the long recension containing thirteen letters, including the expanded versions of the seven letters of the middle recension, was initially published sixty years later.²¹ Here, however, the concern is with the publication of the middle recension of what are widely regarded as the seven authentic letters of Ignatius. In 1644 James Ussher published the Latin text of the middle recension.²² Two years later in 1646, Isaac Voss published the Greek text of six of the seven letters of the middle recension based on the then newly discovered Codex Mediceo-Laurentianus

17. The editio princeps was published as P. Young, ed., *Clementis ad Corinthios Epistola Prior* (Oxford: Iohannes Lichfield, 1633).

18. P. Young, ed., *Clementis ad Corinthios Epistola Prior*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Iohannes Lichfield, 1637).

19. J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers, Part I: S. Clement of Rome*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1890), 1:118.

20. J. L. d'Étaples, *Theologia Vivificans, Dionysii Coelestis Hierarchia, Ss. Ignatii XV Epistolae, Polycarpi Epistolae* (Paris, 1498). This edition comprised eleven letters in the following order: 1. Trallians, 2. Magnesians, 3. Tarsians, 4. Philippians, 5. Philadelphians, 6. Smyrneans, 7. Polycarp, 8. Antiochians, 9. Hero, 10. Ephesians, 11. Romans.

21. H. Frid, *Του Μακαρίου Ιερομάρτυρος Ιγνατίου, Beati Ignatii Opuscula Omnia* (Dilligen: Sebaldus Mair, 1557). This edition contains twelve letters of the long recension: 1. *To Mary Cassobola*, 2. *To the Trallians*, 3. *To the Magnesians*, 4. *To Those in Tarsus*, 5. *To the Philippians*, 6. *To the Philadelphians*, 7. *To the Smyrnaeans*, 8. *To Polycarp*, 9. *To the Antiocheans*, 10. *To Hero*, 11. *To the Ephesians*, 12. *To the Romans*.

22. J. Ussher, ed., *Polycarpi et Ignatii Epistolae* (Oxford: Leonardus Lichfield Academiae Typographus, and Henry Hall, 1644).

57,7.²³ The middle recension of Ignatius's *To the Romans* has a different transmission history. At an early stage it was "incorporated into the Antiochene Acts of Martyrdom of Ignatius, and thus dislocated from the other six."²⁴ The Greek text of the middle recension of *To the Romans* was first published in 1689 by T. Ruinart.²⁵

No complete manuscript of the Greek text of Polycarp's *To the Philippians* survives. The text is fully extant in Latin, and the editio princeps of that version was published by Lefèvre in 1498, along with the Latin long recension of the letters of Ignatius (see above). Of the fourteen chapters that comprise *To the Philippians*, the first nine chapters and the majority of chapter fourteen survive in Greek. The Greek text was first published by Halloix in 1633.²⁶ However, just over a decade later, "James Ussher published an improved text of the Greek in 1644."²⁷ Ussher appears to have used copies of the Greek text originally made by Turrianus and Andrew Schott that had been supplied by Voss. In his edition,²⁸ Ussher corrected the edition of Halloix based on the copies of these two transcriptions.²⁹

The first Greek edition of the Martyrdom of Polycarp stems from the work of Ussher. It was published in 1647 as *Appendix Ignatiana*, and the edition followed a single eleventh century manuscript of the Greek text, Codex Baroccianus.³⁰

In this same period, the first published edition of the Epistle of Barnabas was prepared by Hugh Menard. It was published in Paris in 1645 under the oversight of Luke D'Achery, following Menard's death. However, prior to this publication another edition of the Epistle of Barnabas had been prepared by Ussher in conjunction with Voss. According to J. Backhouse, the intention was for this edition to be included with Ussher's edition of Polycarp and Ignatius published in 1644 and mentioned above.³¹ The printed sheets for that edition, which had been stored ready for binding, were destroyed by fire on Sunday, 6 October 1644.³² However, a single copy has survived in the Bodleian Library at least since 1674, bound with an unrelated work published in 1658, and preserving the entirety of Ussher's preface and slightly more than the first eight chapters of the text of the epistle.³³

The history of publication of the text of the Shepherd of Hermas is distinctive and different from other texts among the Apostolic Fathers in several ways. The first edition was printed early in the sixteenth century. In 1513 the Shepherd was edited by Lefèvre and printed in Paris.³⁴ However, this was an edition of the Latin Vulgate version, which probably came into existence between the end of the second century and the middle of the third century (i.e., 180–250 CE). The Shepherd of Hermas, however, was originally composed in Greek. Manuscripts of the Greek text did not come to light until around the middle of the nineteenth century. The first to come to light was Codex Athos (A),

23. I. Voss, ed., *Epistole Genuine s. Ignatii, ex Bibl. Florentina. Adduntur s. Ignatii Epistole, Quales Vulgo Circumferuntur. Adhaec s. Barnabae Epistola* (Amsterdam: Ioannem Blaev, 1646).

24. J. B. Lightfoot, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers: Revised Texts with Short Introductions and English Translations*, edited and completed by J. R. Harmer (London: Macmillan, 1891), 101.

25. T. Ruinart, *Acta Primorum Martyrum Sincera et Selecta* (Paris: Franciscus Muguet, 1689).

26. P. Halloix, *Illustrium Ecclesiae Orientalis Scriptorum Vitae et Documenta* (Douai: Bogard, 1633), 525ff.

27. Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers*, 330.

28. Ussher, *Polycarpi et Ignatii Epistolae*.

29. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers, Part II*, 3:318–19.

30. J. Ussher, ed., *Appendix Ignatiana* (London: Georgii Thomasoni, 1647).

31. J. H. Backhouse, *The Editio Princeps of the Epistle of Barnabas by Archbishop Ussher, as Printed at Oxford A.D. 1642, and Preserved in an Imperfect Form in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1883), vii–viii.

32. The surviving title page contains the date 1642, which suggests the printed pages had been in storage for perhaps around two years.

33. Backhouse, *Editio Princeps of the Epistle of Barnabas*, x.

34. J. Lefèvre, *Libre Trium Vivorum et Trium Spiritualium Virginum* (Paris: Estienne, 1513).

which was discovered in a monastic library on the eponymous Mount Athos in the 1850s. This led to the publication of the editio princeps of a Greek text of the surviving part of the Shepherd of Hermas (Vis. 1.1.1–Sim. 9.30.3 [1.1–107.3]).³⁵ Thereafter, there appeared further Greek manuscripts, most notably Codex Sinaiticus, which came to the attention of Constantin Tischendorf in the period 1846–1860 with publication of the contents of the codex taking place in 1862.³⁶ Since this period, various critical editions have been published both individually and in editions of collections of the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. However, the section of Shepherd of Hermas 107.4b–114.5 does not survive in Greek and hence is typically printed in Latin in most critical editions.

Henri Estienne made a transcription of the Epistle to Diognetus in 1586. This transcription was later published by Estienne under the Latinized form of his name, Henricus Stephanus, in 1592. This printed text thus became the editio princeps of the Epistle to Diognetus. However, although this text was available to Cotelier and other seventeenth- and eighteenth-century editors of collections of the texts of the Apostolic Fathers, the first to include it in a collection under that title was K. Hefele in 1839.³⁷ Presumably one of the reasons for not including it was that it was viewed as a representative of the apologetic tradition that is typically understood as arising chiefly in the second half of the second century. Thus, in all likelihood it was deemed to belong to a subsequent generation of early Christianity after the writings of the other Apostolic Fathers.

The text of the Didache is the most recently discovered new text to be added to the corpus of the Apostolic Fathers. The manuscript containing the text, Codex Hierosolymitanus, was discovered in 1873 by Bryennios, who later published the editio princeps of the Didache in 1883.³⁸ The reason for this delay of ten years is not fully apparent. While it has been suggested that the delay was due to the fact that Bryennios initially overlooked the presence of this text in the codex and instead was captivated by the discovery of the complete texts for the two writings attributed to Clement in the corpus of the Apostolic Fathers, this seems unlikely. Lightfoot in his 1877 volume, which published the additional portions of 1 and 2 Clement that were found in Codex Hierosolymitanus, also refers to the contents of the codex as including “fol. 76a–80 Διδαχὴ τῶν δώδεκα Ἀποστόλων [Teaching of the Twelve Apostles].”³⁹ Thus, it appears that Bryennios did recognize the presence of the Didache in the manuscript at an early stage. However, he published the

35. R. Anger and G. Dindorfius, eds., *Hermæ Pastor: Graece* (Leipzig: Weigel, 1856).

36. C. Tischendorf, *Bibliorum Codex Sinaiticus Petropolitanus* (Leipzig: Giesecke & Devrient, 1862).

37. K. J. Hefele, *Patrum Apostolicorum Opera: Textum ex Editionibus Praeantissimis Repetitur Recognovit, Annotationibus Illustravit, Versionem Latinam Emendatiorem, Prolegomena et Indices* (Tübingen: Henrici Laupp, 1839). Prior to this, Andreas Gallandi had included the Epistle to Diognetus alongside nine of the other texts that form the Apostolic Fathers corpus (the text of the Didache had not been discovered at that stage). However, Gallandi's work, *Bibliotheca Veterum Patrum Antiquorumque Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum*, was not simply a collection of texts that constituted the Apostolic Fathers. It was a much larger project ranging over fourteen volumes published in Venice between 1765–1781, presenting texts from the second to the eighth century. As such, it is probably incorrect to see it as the first collection of the Apostolic Fathers to contain the Epistle to Diognetus. Rather, as the name states, it is a compendium or ecclesial library of texts attributed to early Christian writers. However, after Hefele's volume the inclusion of the Epistle to Diognetus in the collection of the Apostolic Fathers becomes more standard.

38. P. Bryennios, ed., *Διδαχὴ τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροσολυμιτικοῦ χειρογράφου νῦν πρῶτον ἐκδιδομένη μετὰ προλεγομένων καὶ σημειώσεων ἐν οἷς καὶ τῆς Συνόψεως τῆς Π.Δ., τῆς Ἰωανν. τοῦ Χρυσοστόμου αὐτοῦ χειρογράφου* (Constantinople: Voutyra, 1883). An English translation of the text only can be found in R. D. Hitchcock and F. Brown, eds., *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles: Recently Discovered and Published by Philotheos Bryennios, Metropolitan of Nicomedia* (New York: Scribner, 1884).

39. J. B. Lightfoot, *S. Clement of Rome: An Appendix containing the Newly Recovered Portions, with Introductions, Notes, and Translations* (London: Macmillan, 1877) 224.

edition of First Clement and Second Clement prior to the publication of the Didache. According to an interview conducted with Bryennios, he recollected his discovery in the following ecstatic terms:

This! This! This! This must be the Διδαχή [the Didache], the book that was lost, that the church mourns over to this day, the foundation of part of the Apostolic Constitutions. Εὗρηκα εὗρηκα εὗρηκα [I have found it, I have found it, I have found it].⁴⁰

A few years later in 1887 the first facsimile images of the manuscript appeared.⁴¹

The fragments of Papias and the single fragment of Quadratus do not have first printed editions in the same sense as other texts in the Apostolic Fathers corpus. Various of these fragments first appeared in print with the publication of the earliest editions of Eusebius's *Historia ecclesiastica* and editions of several other early Christian writers, such as Irenaeus. Thus, the publication history is more complex, and in the case of the fragments of Papias the collection of possible texts attributed to him (or about him) developed over time as a rolling and contested corpus.⁴² However, the earliest attempt at publishing an edition of the fragments of Papias was undertaken by Halloix as part of a more compendious collection of early Christian writers born in the first century.⁴³ This work has already been mentioned in connection with Polycarp's *To the Philippians*. Therefore, the first edition of a collection of the fragments of Papias appeared in 1633. Consequently, it can be seen that the Greek text of many of the writings that came to be known as the Apostolic Fathers were not available in print until the 1630s or 1640s. It was only two or three decades after this period that Cotelier published the first collection of texts in 1672 that had a recognizable resemblance to modern editions of the Apostolic Fathers. Together the discovery of various manuscripts and the publication of the individual editio princeps of each text became the building blocks for collections and editions of writings of the Apostolic Fathers.

5. COLLECTIONS OF THE WRITINGS OF THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS IN PRINT

As has been noted, the first printed collection of texts that can be described as representing the writings of the Apostolic Fathers was Cotelier's edition published in 1672. It included seven texts that are now typically included in modern editions of the collection. Five of these texts were seen as being genuine writings: the Epistle of Barnabas, 1 Clement, the Shepherd of Hermas, the seven letters of Ignatius in the form of the middle recension, and Polycarp's *To the Philippians*. Alongside this, Cotelier published texts that were either suspected to be inauthentic (2 Clement and the long recension of the Letters of Ignatius) or were not written by the Apostolic Fathers themselves, such as the text describing the death of Polycarp, the so-called Martyrdom of Polycarp. The volume contained ancient-language versions of the text either in Greek or Latin. Thus, for the first time, a collection of texts that represented the core of modern editions of the Apostolic Fathers appeared in print.

Of particular interest for the history of the collection of the writings of the Apostolic Fathers in the English-speaking world is the edition of Wake first published in 1693.

40. E. A. Grosvenor, "An Interview with Bishop Bryennios—The Discovery of the Teaching," *Andover Review* 2 (1884) 515–516, here 516.

41. J. R. Harris, *The Teaching of the Apostles: Newly Edited with a Facsimile Text and a Commentary* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1887).

42. For a recent, excellent treatment of the surviving fragments and testimonies of Papias, see S. C. Carlson, ed., *Papias of Hierapolis Exposition of Dominical Oracles: The Fragments, Testimonia, and Reception of a Second-Century Commentator*, OECT (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

43. Halloix, *Illustrium Ecclesiae Orientalis Scriptorum Vitae et Documenta*, 635–49.

Wake was later Archbishop of Canterbury (1716–1737). Wake's volume contains English translations (without original-language texts) of the same seven texts that Cotelier's volume has in common with current standard editions of the Apostolic Fathers. Additionally, and also in common with Cotelier, Wake included the account of the Martyrdom of Ignatius. However, he did not include the extra letters contained in the long recension of the writings of Ignatius. Wake acknowledged that 2 Clement was of lesser reputation in the early church than 1 Clement. However, for Wake this lack of repute was not determinative of the authenticity of the authorship by Clement of the Second Epistle. Thus he states, "It is most probable that it was written by *St. Clement*; and has many excellent things, and worthy of that holy man in it."⁴⁴ Hence, for Wake the value of the writings collected in his volume was that, apart from the New Testament, "there is nothing remaining of the truly genuine Christian antiquity more early than these pieces I have put together here."⁴⁵

During the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a few further editions of the writings of the Apostolic Fathers appeared. These tended to do one of two things. Some editions reduced the scope of Cotelier's collection, removing the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas.⁴⁶ Presumably, such volumes did not see these two texts as exhibiting the same degree of fidelity to the apostolic tradition and lineage as writings associated with Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp. On the other hand, other editions reproduced Cotelier's set of texts.⁴⁷

The next development relating to the size of the corpus of writings of the Apostolic Fathers occurred with the publication of Hefele's 1839 volume, *Patrum Apostolicorum Opera*. Hefele was the first to include the Epistle to Diognetus in a collection of texts under the title *Works of the Apostolic Fathers*.⁴⁸ A few decades later, printed editions began to include the fragments of Papias. The first example occurred in the 1875–1877 three-volume edition edited by Gebhardt, Harnack, and Zahn.⁴⁹ The editors included nineteen possible fragments from the works of Papias. Just over a decade later, the text of the Didache was included in the Lightfoot and Harmer single volume edition of the Apostolic Fathers that was published in 1891.⁵⁰ As Harmer states in the introductory note to that volume, Lightfoot had prepared the text and translation for the edition prior to his death

44. Wake, *Genuine Epistles of the Apostolical Fathers*, part 2, page 1.

45. Wake, *Genuine Epistles of the Apostolical Fathers*, part 1, paragraph 25.

46. T. Ittig, *Bibliotheca Patrum Apostolicorum Graeco-Latina, Qua Continentur I. S. Clementis Romani Prior & Posterior ad Corinthios Epistola, II. S. Ignatii Epistole Septem Genuinae, Quibus ejusdem Interpolate & Spuriae Epistole, Nec Non Acta Ignatiani Martyrii Accedunt, III. S. Polycarpi Epistola ad Philippenses, Cui Praeter Fragmenta Polycarpi Ecclesiae Smyrnenensis de Polycarpi Martyrio Epistola Integra Adjungitur Praemissa Est Dissertatio de Patribus Apostolicis, Seu Scriptioribus Ecclesiasticis, Qui Apostolorum Comites & Discipuli Fuisse Perhibentur* (Leipzig: Lipsiae Lanckisch Lipsiae Richter, 1699); J. L. Frey, *Epistolae Sanctorum Patrum Apostolicorum Clementis, Ignatii et Polycarpi atque Duorum Posteriorum Martyria: Omnia Graece et Latine cum Variorum Annotationibus et Praefatione* (Basel: J. K. von Mechel Witwe, 1742).

47. R. Russel, SS. *Patrum Apostolicorum Barnabae: Hermae, Clementis, Ignatii, Polycarpi, Opera Genuina; Una cum Ignatii & Polycarpi Martyrii: Versionibus Antiquis ac Recentioribus, Variantibus Lectionibus, Selectisque Variorum Notis Illustrata: Accesserunt S. Ignatii Epistolae, tum Interpolatae, tum Supposititiae, I–II* (London: Apud Gulielmum Russel, sub Horatii Capite, extra Portam Temple-Bar, 1746).

48. Pratscher attributes the inclusion of the Epistle to Diognetus to Gallandi in his multivolume work *Bibliotheca Veterum Patrum Antiquorumque Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum*, dated to 1765–1781. In part this is a question of definition. Gallandi's compendious collection was an assembly of a vast array, or a library of early Christian texts. In this collection the Epistle to Diognetus appeared as an early Christian text, not necessarily as a text grouped with those known as the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. That happened in an unambiguous way only with Hefele's edition in 1839. See W. Pratscher, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers: An Introduction* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 2–3.

49. O. von Gebhardt, A. von Harnack, and T. Zahn, eds., *Patrum Apostolicorum Opera: Textum ad Fidem Codicum Graecorum et Latinorum Adhibitis Praestantissimis Editionibus*, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1875–1877).

50. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*. Harmer edited and completed the work.

in 1889.⁵¹ It was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that the fragment of Quadratus was first included as a member of the collection of the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. This occurred in Funk's edition of 1901.⁵²

Several editions of the writings of the Apostolic Fathers have appeared throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Not all of these have included the eleven members that now form a standard established corpus of the Apostolic Fathers. However, the more significant scholarly editions that contain original-language texts and modern-language translations tend to contain these eleven members of the corpus or a close approximation to that set of writings. Occasionally some of the fragmentary texts are omitted, or in the case of the fragments of Papias, varying numbers of fragmentary texts are presented. In other instances, the Shepherd of Hermas has been omitted, presumably due to its length. However, over the more than three centuries that have elapsed since the appearance of Cotelier's defining landmark volume, the seven items he included in his collection have remained the firm core of later editions. However, over that time four further items have been added. Thus, as a result of a fresh manuscript discovery, the Didache quickly became established as a fixed member of the corpus in subsequent editions. By contrast, the Epistle to Diognetus, the fragment of Quadratus, and the fragments of Papias had a slower path to inclusion in the collection. Their place was established by a more gradual evolving scholarly consensus that developed from the mid-nineteenth century onward. Currently the corpus is relatively fixed with eleven members. However, fresh manuscript discoveries, or perhaps further changes of scholarly opinion, might alter the size and contents of the collection. The corpus of writings labeled as the Apostolic Fathers has always been and remains a somewhat artificial assemblage of texts of different genres, written at various times and in multiple places by authors with unique perspectives. Yet, despite this diversity, this rolling corpus provides a glimpse into rich streams of Christian faith and practice primarily, but not exclusively, for the period of the first half of the second century.

6. SCHOLARLY RESOURCES FOR THE STUDY OF THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS

For continuing and deeper study of the Apostolic Fathers, a range of resources are necessary and available. The main tools required are editions of the texts in the original languages, a range of detailed commentaries, and for those wishing to gain an overview of the texts as a whole there are several helpful introductory works.

6.1 Recent Original-Language Editions of the Apostolic Fathers

The key resource is an edition of the primary texts that constitute the corpus. Here there are three main alternatives. In order of date of publication, first from 1992 there is the volume edited by Andreas Lindemann and Henning Paulsen, *Die apostolischen Väter*.⁵³ This edition presents original-language texts with facing German translation. The volume is a revision of the earlier and often reprinted version of Karl Bihlmeyer first published in 1924,⁵⁴ but it also integrates Molly Whittaker's Greek and Latin text of the Shepherd of Hermas.⁵⁵ This volume may be the natural choice for German speakers.

51. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, ix.

52. F. X. Funk, *Die apostolischen Väter*, SAQ 2.1 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1901).

53. A. Lindemann and H. Paulsen, eds., *Die apostolischen Väter: Griechisch-deutsche Parallelausgabe* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992).

54. K. Bihlmeyer, *Die apostolischen Väter: Neubearbeitung der Funkschen Ausgabe, Teil I: Didache, Barnabas, Klemens I und II, Ignatius, Polykarp, Papias, Quadratus, Diognetbrief*, SAQ 2.1.1 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1924).

55. M. Whittaker, *Die Hirt des Hermas*, 2nd ed., *Die griechische christliche Schriftsteller 48* (Berlin: Akademie, 1967).

Two important English editions of the Apostolic Fathers have been published that contain original-language texts with facing English translation. Bart Ehrman's two-volume edition in the Loeb Classical Library contains all eleven texts that now form the standard collection of the writings of the Apostolic Fathers,⁵⁶ although the subtitle to the first volume that simply lists "Polycarp" as an entry has misled some into thinking that the Martyrdom of Polycarp is omitted. That is incorrect. Ehrman's edition is itself an updated edition of the earlier Loeb Classical Library two-volume set edited by Kirsopp Lake and published in 1912–1913.⁵⁷ Ehrman provided a new introduction and fresh translations of the texts. However, the Greek (and Latin) text remained unchanged throughout, since Ehrman was not commissioned to work on the original-language text. Instead, he was asked only to update the English-language translation. This remains one of the two key scholarly editions available for English-speaking readers.

The second significant collection of the Apostolic Fathers providing original-language texts with English translations is now in its third edition. This is the single-volume collection of Michael W. Holmes.⁵⁸ Again, this is a revision of an earlier edition—namely, the collection that drew on the work of Lightfoot, posthumously completed by Harmer.⁵⁹ While the edition of Lightfoot and Harmer was a model of late nineteenth-century erudition, the various revisions made by Holmes have further strengthened the scope, utility, and quality of that original work. The Lightfoot edition lacked the text of the fragment of Quadratus that is present in the third edition of Holmes. Whereas in the Lightfoot edition the Greek texts are continuous with English translations following on subsequent pages, the Holmes edition provides facing English translations. This makes working with the text more straightforward and accessible. There are also new introductions provided for each text, with references to recent scholarly debates and relevant bibliographical entries. However, the most important change involves the revision of original-language texts based on recent manuscript finds or on a reevaluation of the textual evidence. Thus, as Holmes notes, "This third edition, then, while genetically descended from the 1891 Lightfoot-Harmer diglot edition, is in effect a fresh and comprehensive revision."⁶⁰ With the whole corpus in a single volume, this is now perhaps the most widely used and consulted edition of the Apostolic Fathers corpus.

6.2 Commentary Series on the Apostolic Fathers

In this section, seven commentary series will be briefly discussed. Four are in-depth, advanced treatments that offer detailed analysis of the texts in their original languages with attention to philological and text-critical matters. The other three series are highly valuable and contain a wealth of insights in their comments. However, they do not contain the same level of concern with the details of original-language text. None of these series as yet provides a complete treatment of all eleven texts that constitute the Apostolic Fathers. Moreover, only one of the popular series is complete in terms of the volumes to be published—although it does not cover all eleven texts. Here more will be said in regard to the four series that offer more in-depth treatments of the text.

The first of the Sources Chrétiennes volumes dealing with the Apostolic Fathers was

56. B. D. Ehrman, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2 vols., LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

57. K. Lake, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2 vols., LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1912–1913).

58. M. W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007).

59. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*.

60. Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, xii.

published in 1945. This first volume provides an edition of the original-language texts of the letters of Ignatius, Polycarp's *To the Philippians*, and the Martyrdom of Polycarp, with French translations and commentary. This edition by P.-T. Camelot was republished in a revised form in 1998.⁶¹ Since the publication of that volume in 1945, a total of six Sources Chrétiennes volumes have appeared covering eight of the eleven texts in the corpus of the Apostolic Fathers. In addition to the texts covered in Camelot's volume, others have dealt with the Epistle to Diognetus,⁶² the Shepherd of Hermas,⁶³ 1 Clement,⁶⁴ the Epistle of Barnabas,⁶⁵ and the Didache.⁶⁶ The three texts that are yet to receive coverage in the Sources Chrétiennes series are 2 Clement, the fragment of Quadratus, and the fragments of Papias. Due to their fragmentary state, it is perhaps unsurprising that a volume has not been devoted to the latter two sets of textual remains.

Published by Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, the Kommentar zu den Apostolischen Vätern (KAV) presents technical and highly detailed treatments of individual texts among the corpus of the Apostolic Fathers. These volumes are written in German and provide original texts with German-language translations combined with detailed introductions tackling standard questions pertaining to authorship, date, state of the text, rhetorical and compositional analysis, and an account of the history of research. Currently, seven volumes have appeared covering the following texts: 1 Clement,⁶⁷ 2 Clement,⁶⁸ the Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians,⁶⁹ the Martyrdom of Polycarp,⁷⁰ the Didache,⁷¹ the Epistle of Barnabas,⁷² and the Shepherd of Hermas.⁷³ The majority of these are landmark volumes, which are required reading for those conducting detailed research on these texts. Only one, Niederwimmer on the Didache, has been translated in English. The others must be read in German.

The next significant series is a subseries of the Hermeneia commentaries. To date only three volumes have appeared, although others are in preparation. It is in this series that the English-language translation of Niederwimmer's commentary on the Didache appears.⁷⁴ The other two volumes are William Schoedel's *Ignatius of Antioch* (1985),⁷⁵ and Carolyn Osiek's *Shepherd of Hermas*.⁷⁶ The same qualities that exemplify the treatment of biblical texts covered in the series are also to be found in these volumes. There is close analysis of the text in the original languages, detailed interaction with the best secondary literature, and extensive commentary typically provided in verse-by-verse format.

61. P.-T. Camelot, *Ignace d'Antioche–Polycarpe de Smyrne: Lettres. Martyre de Polycarpe*, 2nd ed., SC 10 bis. (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1998).

62. H.-I. Marrou, *À Diognète*, SC 33 bis. (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1951 [1st ed.]; 1965 [2nd ed.; repr., 2007]).

63. R. Joly, *Le Pasteur*, SC 53 bis. (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1958 [1st ed.]; 1968 [2nd ed.; repr., 1997]).

64. A. Jaubert, *Clément de Rome: Épitre aux Corinthiens*, SC 167 bis. (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1971 [repr., 2000]).

65. R. A. Kraft and P. Prigent, *Épître de Barnabé*, SC 172 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1971).

66. W. Rordorf and A. Tuilier, *La Doctrine des douze apôtres (Didache)*, SC 248 bis. (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1978 [1st ed.]; 1998 [2nd ed.]).

67. H. E. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, KAV 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998).

68. W. Pratscher, *Der zweite Clemensbrief*, KAV 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007).

69. J. B. Bauer, *Die Polykarpbriefe*, KAV 5 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995).

70. G. Buschmann, *Das Martyrium des Polykarp*, KAV 6 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998).

71. K. Niederwimmer, *Die Didache*, KAV 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989).

72. F. R. Prostmeier, *Der Barnabasbrief*, KAV 8 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999).

73. N. Brox, *Der Hirt des Hermas*, KAV 7 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991).

74. K. Niederwimmer, *The Didache: A Commentary*, trans. L. M. Maloney, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1998).

75. W. R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985).

76. Carolyn Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1999).

More recent is the Oxford Apostolic Fathers (OAF) series. Volumes in this series provide extensive introductions covering the gamut of significant issues of manuscript evidence, attestation to the texts in the early church and beyond, discussions of authorship, provenance, date, analysis of genre and literary features, as well as an investigation of the theology and themes of each text. There then follows an edition of the text with facing English translation. Lastly, and building on the previous sections, a detailed commentary on the text in the original language is provided. Thus far, three volumes have appeared in the series, covering five of the eleven texts of the Apostolic Fathers: Christopher Tuckett, *2 Clement* (2012);⁷⁷ Paul Hartog, *Polycarp's Epistle to the Philippians and the Martyrdom of Polycarp* (2013);⁷⁸ and Clayton Jefford, *The Epistle to Diognetus (with the Fragment of Quadratus)*.⁷⁹ Volumes covering all of the remaining texts in the corpus have been commissioned.

Alongside these four series providing in-depth analysis of the texts in their original language are three further important series, which, while not providing the same detailed analysis of the original-language texts, nonetheless are important contributions that, where necessary, discuss textual issues in the Greek or Latin forms of the texts. The German Handbuch zum Neuen Testament series first included volumes dealing with the texts of the Apostolic Fathers in the early 1920s. These earlier volumes include Bauer on the Ignatian letters and Polycarp's letter to the Philippians (1920);⁸⁰ Knopf on the Didache and the Letters of Clement (1920);⁸¹ Windisch on the Epistle of Barnabas (1920);⁸² and Dibelius on the Shepherd of Hermas (1923).⁸³ More recently, two newer volumes have appeared. The first is by Paulsen, dealing with the letters of Ignatius and Polycarp's *To the Philippians* (1985).⁸⁴ The second is Lindemann's commentary on Clement's letters (1992).⁸⁵

Another important and ambitious series was initiated by Robert Grant in the 1960s, which covers nine of the eleven texts in the corpus. The omissions are the Epistle to Diognetus and the fragment of Quadratus. Grant offers a twofold explanation for the omission of these texts in his introductory volume. He states, "The letter to Diognetus and the solitary fragment of Quadratus belong not to the Apostolic Fathers but to the apologetic literature of the second century after all. They were written not for those within the Christian community but for those outside."⁸⁶ If the parameters of the collection were fixed by considerations of genre and audience, Grant's observations would be entirely correct. However, for good or for bad, the collection has developed organically without

77. C. M. Tuckett, *2 Clement: Introduction, Text, and Commentary*, OAF (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

78. P. Hartog, *Polycarp's Epistle to the Philippians and the Martyrdom of Polycarp: Introduction, Text, and Commentary*, OAF (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

79. C. N. Jefford, *The Epistle to Diognetus (with the Fragment of Quadratus): Introduction, Text, and Commentary*, OAF (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

80. W. Bauer, *Die Briefe des Ignatius von Antiochia und der Brief des Polykarp von Smyrna*, HNT Ergänzungsband, Die Apostolischen Väter 2 (Tübingen: Möhr Siebeck, 1920).

81. R. Knopf, *Die Lehre der zwölf Apostel: Die zwei Clemensbriefe*, HNT Ergänzungsband, Die Apostolischen Väter 1 (Tübingen: Möhr Siebeck, 1920).

82. H. Windisch, *Der Barnabasbrief*, HNT Ergänzungsband, Die Apostolischen Väter 3 (Tübingen: Möhr Siebeck, 1920).

83. M. Dibelius, *Der Hirt des Hermas*, HNT Ergänzungsband, Die Apostolischen Väter 4 (Tübingen: Möhr Siebeck, 1923).

84. H. Paulsen, *Die Briefe des Ignatius von Antiochia und der Brief des Polykarp von Smyrna*, 2nd ed., HNT 18 (Tübingen: Möhr Siebeck, 1985).

85. A. Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, HNT 17 (Tübingen: Möhr Siebeck, 1992), at 277 pages.

86. R. M. Grant, *An Introduction*, vol. 1 of *The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation and Commentary* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1965), vi.

strict logic being applied to its contents. In the remaining five volumes of the series, the following texts are treated: volume 2, Grant and Graham cover the letters of Clement (1965);⁸⁷ volume 3, Kraft on the Didache and the Epistle of Barnabas (1965);⁸⁸ volume 4, Grant on the Letters of Ignatius (1966);⁸⁹ volume 5, Schoedel on the Letter of Polycarp, the Martyrdom of Polycarp, and the fragments of Papias (1967);⁹⁰ and lastly, volume 6, Snyder on the Shepherd of Hermas (1968).⁹¹ The volumes differ in level of treatment, although the translation remains a focal point. For instance, the volume on the Shepherd of Hermas, no doubt due to the length of the translation, contains minimal commentary and notes. By contrast, there is much more by way of introduction and notes in the volume treating the letters of Ignatius. The volume on the Didache and the Epistle of Barnabas has a valuable introduction, but in the commentary section the Two Ways material in Barnabas 18.1–21.9 is treated in conjunction with the parallel material in Didache 1.1–6.2. While this may save space, it detracts from treating each text as a whole. The first five of these volumes have recently been reissued by Wipf & Stock.⁹²

At this stage, a series of mid-length commentaries on the writings of the Apostolic Fathers is being published by Cascade (an imprint of Wipf & Stock), under the series title Apostolic Fathers Commentary Series (AFCS). Thus far, four very helpful volumes have appeared. Each volume offers a fresh translation of the text being analyzed, a set of introductory essays, and a commentary which deals with the final form of the text in a section-by-section format. These commentaries do discuss the text in the original language where necessary, but with accompanying English translations. The first volume in the series is by Wilhite on the Didache (2020).⁹³ In many ways this is a major contribution to the study of the Didache, with a detailed introduction (pp. 3–98) and a comprehensive commentary (pp. 99–235). This work will be valued alike by specialists and those seeking an initial, detailed introduction to the text. The second entry in the series is by William Varner on 2 Clement.⁹⁴ This is equally incisive, but a little shorter in scope. The introduction discusses key topics for orienting readers to the major issues surrounding the text (pp. 3–46). There then follows a helpful commentary (pp. 49–153), with the key Greek terms and phrases discussed. The third volume to be published in the series was Jonathon Lookadoo's excellent discussion of the Epistle of Barnabas (2022).⁹⁵ The fourth and most recent volume is the jointly authored treatment by Michael J. Savigel and Caroline P. Buie on the Shepherd of Hermas (2023). In many ways this represents a landmark treatment, with some reference to the Greek text.⁹⁶ This has already proven itself to be a significant series of commentaries.

87. R. M. Grant and H. H. Graham, *First and Second Clement*, vol. 2 of *The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation and Commentary* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1965).

88. R. A. Kraft, *The Didache and Barnabas*, vol. 3 of *The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation and Commentary* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1965).

89. R. M. Grant, *Ignatius of Antioch*, vol. 4 of *The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation and Commentary* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1966).

90. W. R. Schoedel, *Polycarp. Martyrdom of Polycarp, Fragments of Papias*, vol. 5 of *The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation and Commentary* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1967).

91. G. F. Snyder, *Hermas*, vol. 6 of *The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation and Commentary* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1968).

92. These five volumes were republished in 2020.

93. S. J. Wilhite, *The Didache: A Commentary*, AFCS (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2019).

94. W. Varner, *Second Clement: An Introductory Commentary*, AFCS (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2021).

95. J. Lookadoo, *The Epistle of Barnabas: A Commentary*, AFCS (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2022).

96. M. J. Savigel and C. P. Buie, *The Shepherd of Hermas: A New Translation and Commentary*, AFCS (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2023).

6.3 Introductory Works

Introductory works are of primary value in providing an overview of the various texts contained in the standard collection of the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. Typically they discuss standard introductory questions and highlight key ideas or theological themes, rather than providing detailed commentary on specific texts. Furthermore, the majority of these volumes also provide bibliographical selections of works that are useful for further study of individual texts.

One particularly useful volume in this regard, first published in 1996 (with a second edition in 2012) is Clayton Jefford's *Reading the Apostolic Fathers*. This is a model of balanced perspectives and centrist observations, written by a scholar with expertise across the entire corpus of texts.⁹⁷ Two further introductions comprise chapters written by a range of authors with expertise in each of the specific texts that comprise the corpus. Treating them in order of publication date, the first, published in 2007, by Paul Foster (ed.), *The Writings of the Apostolic Fathers*, collects a series of chapters originally published as successive articles in *The Expository Times* from January 2006 to January 2007.⁹⁸ The volume contains an introductory essay by Helmut Koester, followed by eleven chapters on each of the writings contained in the corpus.⁹⁹ The third significant introductory volume was first published in German in 2009 but subsequently translated into English as Wilhelm Pratscher (ed.), *The Apostolic Fathers: An Introduction* (2010).¹⁰⁰ The volume contains an introduction to the corpus and the contents of various modern editions of the texts, followed by eleven chapters written by different experts on each of the standard texts that constitute the collection, followed by a concluding essay by Jörg Ulrich, "The Apostolic Fathers Yesterday and Today."¹⁰¹ This is a volume filled with seminal insights and drawing upon a wealth of scholarship, particularly that published originally in German. A number of contributors have authored volumes in the prestigious *Kommentar zu den Apostolischen Vätern* (KAV) series, and thus the individual essays are a distillation of many of those wider insights.

Those wishing to undertake more detailed work are well served with scholarly resources, including original language texts, introductory works, and commentaries. Not every text in the collection is equally well covered with commentaries, but most have at least one outstanding commentary to guide readers. Additionally, there are various monographs and learned articles. Many of these are referenced elsewhere in this volume, as well as in the bibliographies contained in the works discussed in this overview of scholarly resources on the Apostolic Fathers.

7. THE VALUE OF STUDYING THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS

Individually, each of the writings that constitute the collection of texts contained in modern editions of the Apostolic Fathers casts light on the concerns, practices, and beliefs of the early Jesus movement, primarily in the first half of the second century or thereabouts. These texts address different issues. Some reflect problems that had arisen in relation to community hierarchy and the cohesion of these early groups of believers. Several betray

97. C. N. Jefford, *Reading the Apostolic Fathers: A Student's Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012).

98. Individual details will not be provided, but the relevant issues are *The Expository Times* 117.4 (Jan 2006) to 118.4 (Jan 2007).

99. P. Foster, ed., *The Writings of the Apostolic Fathers* (London: T&T Clark, 2007).

100. W. Pratscher, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers: An Introduction* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010).

101. J. Ulrich, "The Apostolic Fathers Yesterday and Today," in Pratscher, *Apostolic Fathers*, 255–60.

the tense relationship with Judaism in the early second century.¹⁰² Together as a collection, albeit largely a modern construct, they form a rich repository of information about the inner spiritual life—both corporate and individual—based on a combination of ethics, eschatological hopes, core faith commitments focused on Christ, and a call for perseverance in the face of persecution that was at times feared and at other times became a reality.

While it has been repeatedly acknowledged that the collection is artificial, and in fact somewhat arbitrary, when read together these texts present greater insight into the early Jesus movement than can be gleaned from reading them individually. This is certainly a case where the value of the whole far outweighs the sum of the individual texts. The reason for this is because together they present the diversity of the early Jesus movement and the range of its concerns chiefly during the first half of the second century. Within the collection there are some more natural points of commonality. For instance, 1 Clement and Polycarp's *To the Philippians* both tackle issues of group maintenance and stability, not in the authors' own communities but in relation to other groups of Jesus believers. The letters of Ignatius have a natural connection with the figure of Polycarp and the writings associated with him. Polycarp and his community received two letters from Ignatius, and Polycarp references Ignatius in his own letter to the Philippians. Moreover, the martyrological fervor especially present in Ignatius's letter to the Romans is also to be found in a different and more developed form in the account of the Martyrdom of Polycarp. The Epistle to Diognetus, an example of a Christian apologetic text (at least in its first and largest section), shares the same outward-looking concerns as the small fragment of the Apology of Quadratus. Both these texts attempt to provide a robust and intellectually appealing defense of the Christian faith for those who were not group members. Other commonalities and points of contact could be listed among various of the texts in the collection. What emerges from this comparison is that while the texts are diverse, there is, nonetheless, a great deal of unity amid that difference. Certainly the early Christian movement in the first half of the second century was not monolithic. However, neither was it riven with irreconcilable factionalism. Alongside these differences, there was a network of communication between the disparate groups that produced the texts in the collection. In many ways, it was this combination of local group cohesion and a sense of being part of a larger, translocal movement that simultaneously sustained the larger movement and provided adherents with a sense of identity.

These texts are also of value to contemporary readers in that they show the emergence of structures, roles, and systems of belief that have had a lasting impact on the articulation of Christian faith. Admittedly, alongside these recognizable features one can at times identify elements or ways of expressing belief that did not become part of the lasting legacy of the Christian movement. In this way, one is better able to appreciate the creative attempts, some successful while others not so, to express core beliefs and to shape group structures. For instance, the ecclesial offices advocated by Ignatius and his articulation of eucharistic theology became normative and have remained so for much of subsequent Christianity. The approach to the Jewish Scriptures that read them through a heavy christological lens while perhaps picking up something already present among New Testament authors, takes

102. As Holmes observes, "Throughout the postapostolic period, then, we find the emerging Christian movement struggling to define itself vis-à-vis its Jewish roots and, increasingly, vis-à-vis the Greco-Roman culture and society into which it was expanding. Moreover, a central aspect of this struggle involved the tension between continuity and change: how to maintain and propagate the tradition received from Jesus and his followers in the midst of rapidly changing circumstances and in the face of new and often unanticipated challenges" (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 16).

this even further in several texts such as 1 Clement and the Epistle of Barnabas. From this viewpoint, the Jewish Scriptures were read as *praeparatio evangelica*—that is, as a preparation and precursor to the message of the gospel and as finding their divinely intended fulfilment in the person of Jesus. While this theological perspective is prominent in several of the texts, one must acknowledge with the wisdom of hindsight that it has resulted in consequences for Judaism that cannot be ignored. Furthermore, in many ways the ecclesial structures advocated by Ignatius appear to be harbingers of systems of church governance that would be adopted in later decades. His elevated views of the office of bishop should not be read as a developed notion of monarchical episcopacy, as that was yet to come. However, there is little doubt that his advocacy of monepiscopacy—that is, the appointment and authoritative oversight of a single person in each Christian community—laid the foundations for developments that occurred in subsequent decades and centuries.¹⁰³

Therefore, for those interested not just in the history of the Jesus movement in the second century but also with fundamental questions about the way in which the early Jewish messianic group centered on the person of Jesus transformed itself into a global faith system, the writings of the Apostolic Fathers provide vital evidence. It is possible to gain insight into multiple groups, although still small in size, which were scattered around the Eastern Mediterranean world and in the imperial capital, Rome.¹⁰⁴ These disparate groups and multiple authors do not provide a full understanding of early Christianity in the period of the early second century. However, as a collection, together they provide the surviving evidence from that period. As such they are the bright lights that emerge from that otherwise murky and little documented period of the early Jesus movement.

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103. For a seminal discussion of this issue, see F. A. Sullivan, *From Apostles to Bishops: The Development of the Episcopacy in the Early Church* (New York: Newman, 2001).

104. For a detailed study of Christian presence in Rome in this period, see P. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries* (London: T&T Clark, 2003).