

Sourcing the Patristic Interpretation: An Overview on the Recent Publication Projects*

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1. Introduction

In the early days of the Christian era, the term “father” (pavthr) by usage is almost synonymous to “bishops,” referring to witnesses to the Christian tradition. By the 5th century, the term was used (retrospectively) in a more restricted sense, referring to a “clearly defined group of ecclesiastical authors of the past whose authority on doctrinal matters carried special weight.”¹⁾ Accordingly, four features have been identified by modern patristic scholarship in characterizing the fathers of the church: orthodoxy of doctrine, holiness of life, the approval of the Church, and antiquity. If there should be a fifth feature involved, it would be their writings, whether extant or not. The element of “antiquity” is a moot point in characterizing the fathers; it is more difficult to define its end than its beginning, and in the West than in the East. For the East, modern scholarly consensus ends the patristic period at John of Damascus (c. 670-749), whereas for the West, many people would end at Gregory the Great (c. 540-604), but some (e.g., *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*) at Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636), and others (e.g., ACCS and ONT) at Bede the Venerable (c. 673-735).²⁾ Unlike the term “Doctors of the Church” (Lat. *Doctores Ecclesiae*) which is officially conferred (such as Gregory the Great, Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine) and is very limited in number, the term “fathers”

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1) F. K. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford, 1997), “Fathers of the Church”, 600.

2) In the popular use of the term, the notion of orthodoxy is often not observed. Many ancient Christian writers whose theology may not be considered orthodox are also (for convenient sake) enlisted among “fathers”, such as Origen (but not recognized as father by the Catholic [see Campenhausen 1963, 2]), and sometimes even Arius (as in the case of GNT⁴/NTG²⁷)!

is used more loosely.

The contribution of patristic literature to the re-establishment of the biblical text is the most notable one. In addition to the manuscripts (including lectionary) and ancient versions, scriptural quotations in the patristic commentaries, sermons, and other treatises provide an indispensable category of witness to the earliest form of the biblical text, and in particular, in tracing the history of the transmission history. The patristic witness shows us how the text appeared at particular times and in particular places; this is the information that can be found nowhere else. The massive amount of citations available, as in the case of the Greek NT are so extensive “...that if all other sources for our knowledge of the text of the NT were destroyed, they would be sufficient alone for the reconstruction of practically the entire NT.”³⁾

Patristic interpretation is another major contribution of patristic literature to biblical scholarship. The importance of the patristic teaching for the Catholic and Orthodox traditions hardly needs any elaboration. For the Orthodox tradition for example, the lives and teachings of the “fathers” (in its restricted sense) constitute one of the five major sources (together with the Holy Scriptures, the Liturgy, the Councils, and Church Art) through which the “Tradition of the Church” may be learned. Many Protestants by and large valued patristic writings only as historical relics. While the foundational contribution of the fathers in Christian dogma is likewise recognized by the Protestant circle, the predominant allegorical interpretation of the church fathers is often seen as an anomaly. However, in recent decade or two, we clearly see a positive appreciation of the patristic interpretation by the Protestant biblical scholarship, possibly as a reaction to the monopoly of the historical-critical method, and perhaps even more so, the restless ever-evolving post-modern hermeneutics. This renaissance is best witnessed by a number of recent publication projects on patristic interpretation of the Bible.

3) B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 126. However, before this category of evidence may be used with confidence, one must first determine whether the original text of the fathers has been transmitted. For instance, in the transmission history of the manuscripts of the patristic works, the scripture text before the commentary (called *lemma*) was very often modified or even replaced to conform to the text form familiar to the copyist. Then another major issue would of course be the distinction between quotation and allusion, which the fathers were not always conscious of.

The purpose of this paper is thus to provide an overview of the sources of patristic interpretation, and in particular, of the recent academic effort to present the patristic interpretation of the Holy Scriptures to the general public⁴).

2. Original Sources

Prior to the 20th century, *Patrologia Graeca*, *Patrologia Latina*, and *Patrologia Orientalis* together with *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* and *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*⁵) have been the major source of language collection in patristic writings. These are now supplemented or even superseded by the critical editions published in the past decades.

The most complete and scholarly recognized original language sources for the patristic literatures are the following two series. *Corpus Christianorum* for the West (in this case including both Greek and Latin literatures), more than 500 volumes have been published thus far; it includes a whole cluster of patristic and medieval editions and studies on the critical patristic texts and references. More than 600 volumes were already published for the *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, and they are intended to serve the purpose of making available the works of the Eastern Fathers whose writings were in Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, Coptic, Armenian and Georgian; each text of the series was published in two parts: (1) a critical edition of the text and (2) a modern translation.⁶) For text-critical purpose, critical editions of the patristic work are mandatory but still inadequate. A new monograph series has been established to meet the need. Originally edited by

4) For a general introduction to patrology, J. Quasten's *Patrology* 4 (Utrecht: Spectrum; Westminster: Christian Classics, 1950-1986) remains as the most comprehensive treatments; others are: O. Bardenhewer, *Patrology*, T. J. Shahan, trans. (Freiburg; St. Louis: Herder, 1908); F. Cayré, *Manual of Patrology and History of Theology* 2, H. Howitt, trans. (Paris: Society of St. John the Evangelist, 1936-1940); J. Tixeront, *A Handbook of Patrology*, S. A. Raemers, trans. (St. Louis: Herder, 1946); B. Altaner, *Patrology*, H. Graef, trans. (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1960).

5) *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (Vindobonae: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1866-); *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* 49 (Bonnae: Weberi, 1828-1878); *Patrologia Graeca* 162 (Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1857-1866); *Patrologia Latina* 221 (Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1844-1864); *Patrologia Orientalis* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1907-).

6) *Corpus Christianorum* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954-), see <http://www.corpuschristianorum.org/home.html>; *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* (Louvain etc.: Peeters etc., 1903-).

Gordon Fee, *The New Testament in the Greek Fathers: Texts and Analyses* (now published by SBL Press) is intended to devote separate volumes to individual fathers, either for their complete NT text or for a portion of it.⁷⁾

The abovementioned editions are absolutely unaffordable in terms of not only price but also shelf space. Electronic media for this reason would be a viable alternative in accessing this massive data.

The *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG) by University of California at Irvine is the most well-known and probably the earliest effort of digitalization of ancient texts. It includes all the Greek literatures (more than 12,000 documents of 3,700 authors) from 8th Cent. BCE to 15th Cent. CE.⁸⁾ In the area of Christian literature, the CETEDOC Library from the Centre de traitement électronique des documents (Université catholique de Louvain) is the most important electronic source. It offers the volumes of *Corpus Christianorum* in digital form, but restricts to the Christian Latin literature (including patristic literature and church documents), from 3rd Cent. BCE. to the Second Vatican in 1960s.⁹⁾ Then, we also have Chadwyck-Healey Patrologia Latina Database (Migne) and the Packard Humanities Institute Latin databases.

These can all be accessed through subscribing or purchasing their licenses, but free online resources are also available. The *Bibliotheca Augustana* operated by Fachhochschule Augsburg makes available ancient texts in Greek, Latin, German, English, and many modern language translations. But *Corpus Scriptorum Latinorum* of Forum Romanum perhaps is the most complete one, which includes Christian Latin text down to the 19th Cent. Likewise, the *Christian Latin* of Latin Library also includes texts from Tertullian (c.155-c.225) to Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471).¹⁰⁾

7) To date, volumes have appeared on Didymus the Blind (the Gospels), Gregory of Nyssa (entire NT), Origen (separate volumes on the Gospel of John and 1 Corinthians), and Cyril of Jerusalem (the entire NT). Forthcoming volumes would include Athanasius (the Gospels), Basil the Great (Matthew), and Epiphanius (Acts, Epistles, and Revelation). See Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 2005, 129-130.

8) Thesaurus Linguae Graecae website (<http://www.tlg.uci.edu>).

9) The fifth edition is available in 2002, and is still constantly updated. Brepols Publishers website (<http://www.brepols.net/publishers/cd-rom.htm#CLCLT>).

10) Bibliotheca Augustana [documents on-line]; available from Fachhochschule Augsburg website (<http://www.fh-augsburg.de/~harsch/augustana.html#gr>). Corpus Scriptorum Latinorum [documents on-line]; available from Forum Romanum website (<http://www.forumromanum.org/literature/>

As far as translation is concerned, the most complete modern language translation of patristic literature is the *Sources Chrétiennes* in French; this series has already been published in 490 volumes, and each volume has both the original source text (often with critical apparatus) and the French translation on the opposite page.¹¹⁾

For the English translation, the most well-known is the 38-volume series *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (ANF) and *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (NPNF),¹²⁾ which is now in the public domain and may be accessed freely over the internet. But there are many new translation series of classic Christian texts underway too, such as the *Fathers of the Church* series (Catholic University of America Press), *Ancient Christian Writers* (Paulist), *Cistercian Studies* (Cistercian Publications), *Message of the Fathers of the Church* (Michael Glazier, Liturgical Press), and *Texts and Studies* (Cambridge).

Compared with the corpus of the biblical canon, the amount of the patristic text is hundred times more. This would inhibit any reader who attempts to get familiar with the patristic insights into the Bible. Any anthology, or *catenae* approach, is deemed to be a welcomed resource to anyone who would like to tap into this thesaurus.

3. Catenae Approach

Detailed commentary writings that are familiar to modern readers began with Origen in the third century, but most of his homilies together with those of many others such as Didymus the Blind, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Cyril of Alexandria, which were lost, and are preserved only in fragments through medieval works called *catenae* (from Latin *catena*, “chain”) and *glossa ordinaria*. These are extracts from earlier writers linked together; they attest the admiration of later

index.html). Christian Latin [documents on-line]; available from Latin Library website (<http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/christian.html>).

11) *Sources Chrétiennes* (Paris: Cerf, 1942-); http://www.sources-chretiennes.mom.fr/index.php?pageid=presentation_english, and http://www.editionsducerf.fr/html/index/collection.asp?n_col_cerf=209&id_theme=2&id_cat=99. Another similar edition is: *Collection les Peres dans la foi* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1977-).

12) A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 10 (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999); P. Schaff and H. Wace, eds., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 1st and 2nd series (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999); the original editions were published in 1885-1900.

Christian generations for exegesis of the church fathers and their determination to preserve them as precious resources.¹³⁾

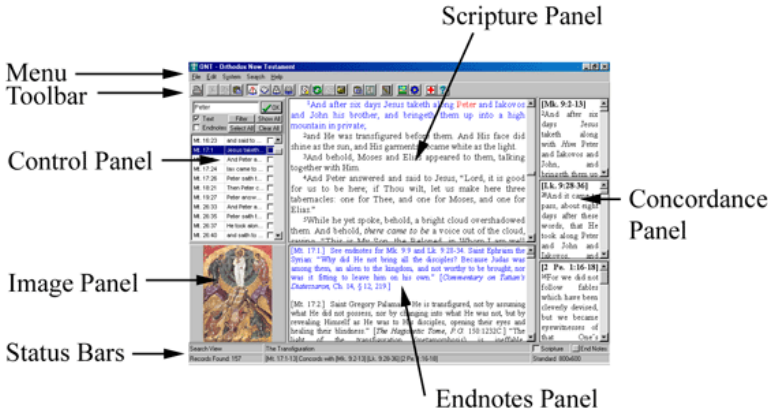
With the exception of the NTP (see below), all the other recent major scholarly publication projects reviewed here adopt the literary form of the medieval tradition of the *catenae* approach. Apart from these being reviewed here, one may also like to note the Blackwell Bible Commentaries Series, the four volumes (Exodus, Judges, John, and Revelation) which have already been published. The series places its emphasis on the “the way the Bible down the ages has been — and still is — used in hymns, sermons, official church statements and the like, its role in the evolution of religious beliefs and practices, the way it has influenced social and political developments and its influence on literature, music and the arts.” (<http://www.bbibcomm.net/reference/whatnew.html>). It is the reception history (rather than the authorial intention) that the series purports to document. Accordingly, the series will consider patristic, rabbinic, and medieval exegesis as well as insights from various types of modern criticism.

3.1. The Orthodox New Testament (ONT)¹⁴⁾

The two-volumes *The Orthodox New Testament* (ONT) represents the seven years of devotion by the committee organized by the two Orthodox monasteries, Holy Apostles Convent and Dormition Skete, in Colorado (USA). It was printed with the blessing of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church and the Holy Synod of the Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece. A CD-ROM edition was also made available in 2003/4. Apart from equipping with standard functionalities, the electronic edition also includes over 365 icons (most in full color! But there are 367 in the printed edition); it also enables the latest updates to text to be installed via internet (<http://www.holyapostlesconvent.org/ont1-advertisement.shtml#5>).

13) Fragments of commentary preserved in the *catenae* can be found in K. Staab, ed., *Pauluskommentar aus der griechischen Kirche aus Katenhandschriften gesammelt* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1933) which is a collection of all the fragments of the commentaries written by Didymus, Eusebius of Emesus, Acacius of Caesarea, Apollinaris, Diodorus of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, etc. For the Gospels, Staab’s work has been continued by J. Reuss (1941-84).

14) *The Orthodox New Testament*, vol. 1: *Evangelistarion*. Holy Apostles Convent, 2000; vol. 2: *Praxapostolos*. Holy Apostles Convent, 2000 [4d, 2004]. <http://www.BuenaVistaCO.com/GOC>



ONT is certainly not the first Study Bible edition coming from the Orthodox community. *The Orthodox Study Bible: New Testament and Psalms* (Nelson, 1993; copyrighted by St. Athanasius Orthodox Academy) is perhaps a better represented Study Edition by modern Orthodox scholars.¹⁵⁾ However, ONT is unique in that it amasses the patristic teachings of the first eight centuries in a relatively handy edition (compared with ACCS or CB) together with 367 icons (230 + 137) — alas in black and white only — interspersed throughout the biblical texts. In many ways, it resembles an *Orthodox Talmud*.

The layout of the two volumes enables readers to use each volume independently, each having identical preface and appendices (background, format of this version, and Greek and English grammar notes) together with its respective back-matter materials such as “List of icons,” the volume on *Evangelistarion* also includes a “Chronological index of the gospel parallels” at the end of the book.

“Texts, Bibliography, and References” include various kinds of source information in each respective volume: NT Greek manuscripts, editions and dates, Greek Witnesses, OT sources, modern NT sources, other early versions, lectionaries and service books, abbreviations, bibliography, and general reference list (such as background studies, dictionaries, grammars, lexica, and word studies). Most of the

15) The text used is a red-letter edition of NKJV. Most notes as expected are general by nature, although some may reflect Orthodox theology (as in Mar 6:3, “brothers and sisters” of Jesus are interpreted as “stepbrothers and stepsisters”; the perpetual virginity is obviously implied). Quotations from the church fathers are only occasional (e.g., Mar 4:24). In 1997, a special edition with extensive “Special Helps” was published.

information is reproduced (sometimes even verbatim) from NTG²⁷. The reference list is compiled carelessly. On the other hand, some biographical notes which are cited by the fathers should be provided for the general readership.

The English translation used in this study edition is an adaptation of KJV. It was based on the KJV but was “diligently compared with the approved text of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, published first in 1904, by B. Antoniades, which was drawn up directly from 125 manuscripts.” (p. xvii)¹⁶ Detailed description on the making of the adaptation is described in the appendix; generally speaking, the translation keeps the KJV style and its base text. Departure from KJV is frequently (consistently?) noted in the endnotes.

The endnote section is extensive; for the volume *Evangelistarion*, the total number of the pages of the notes actually outnumbered that of the text, and in the case of Luke, by almost 50%. The notes consist of different kinds of information: the predominant are quotations from the ancient fathers, but there are also editorial notes, cross-references and variant readings from manuscripts or Greek editions. The committee has made frequent reference to textual variants in different Greek editions. Some are simply superfluous, such as the note on the book title appeared in the subscription of the Gospels or beginning of the epistles, whereas some important variants are left unmentioned such as the ending of the Lord’s Prayer (Mat 6:9-13) and the ending of Mark (Mar 16:9-20).

The extent of the patristic quotations is substantial for such a study edition. Greek words are frequently quoted in parenthesis; this is helpful although the format is not consistent - often in Greek fonts but sometimes in transliteration and not a few times in English letters by mistake (e.g., I-82, no. 38). The selection like CB and ACCS comes from various sources: patristic homilies, apologies, epistles, commentaries, theological treatises and hymnic verses. The principle of selection is to “convey the consensual tradition of the fathers from both the East and West and those that are *most widely received by the whole Church*, though all did not entirely

16) Prior to 1902, during the Turkish occupation of the Greek lands, there were many different NT editions available which all belong to the *Textus Receptus* tradition and reflect the Byzantine/Majority text type at its best. Because of the confusion of these different editions, the Ecumenical patriarchate appointed a committee to decide on a text that would be adopted as the official text. It was first published in 1904 by B. Antoniades, “Only the Antoniades edition, published by the Holy Synod of Constantinople, is reprinted today by the Church of Greece” (p.xvii).

agree” (p.xii; emphasis mine). These notes, according to the committee, encompass the four senses represented by the traditional patristic interpretation, namely: historical sense which embraces “the knowledge of things past and visible,” allegorical sense which “prefigures the form of some mystery,” anagogical sense which “rises from spiritual mysteries even to still more sublime and sacred secrets of the heavens,” and tropological sense which is “the moral explanation which has to do with improvement of life and practical teaching” (p.xi).

Ancient fathers are very good at expanding the *co-text* of their biblical text by pulling different texts together in their interpretation. In the case of the Gospels, it is likely that they may not be as conscious of the synoptic-text boundary as modern exegetes would have. Thus it is difficult to ascertain, based on their comments, whether the fathers are actually commenting on the specific passage or the story which is also mentioned in other synoptic passage.¹⁷⁾ This issue is particularly important when interpreting the patristic quotations for the textual variant. Take the ending of Mark (16:9-20) as an example, where eight patristic quotations from the five fathers (Gregory Palamas, Gregory the Great, Theophylact, Leo the Great, Chrysostom, and Irenaeos) are cited. Without a remark on the textual problem, it is natural for the readers to assume that these quotations would attest the variant endings, but in fact, the fathers might (and likely so) comment on the synoptic parallels which have made up most of the ending.¹⁸⁾

This two-volume edition exhibits the Orthodox view of Scripture: “Scripture cannot be disassociated from the Church whose privileged property it is.” “Tradition” (paravdosi), rather than indicating merely the passing down of a series of teachings, is actually the living out of the revelation of God by His people. In many ways, ONT may be considered an abridged version of CB or ACCS, but for the Orthodox Church, it is the best representative of the written revelation of God in the Orthodox tradition, at least for the NT.

17) Take the Synoptic passage on the “Temptation on Jesus” (Mat 4:1-11 and Luk 4:1-13) as an example, many of the quotations in Luke’s text may also apply to Matthew’s text.

18) Even where there is a textual remark, it is not always expressed adequately, e.g., in John 7:53-8:11, a textual remark on 8:1 reads “This periscope has variant text readings. The *history* of the woman taken in adultery is not discussed by St. Chrysostom or by other Greek commentators.” (italic mine; I-509). Incidentally, there is a reason to believe that the story was attested by earlier Greek authors or fathers such as Papias (witnessed by Eusebius) and *Didascalia Apostolorum*, although manuscript evidence does not exist till 5th century (Codex Bezae).

The ONT editorial committee has truly done a great service in bringing this publication to the general public, but it does call for a more rigorous scholarly discernment in editing and in scholarly discussion. The following blatant misrepresentation of LXX and the Hebrew MT would alarm any biblical scholar: “Today this pre-Christian Septuagint translation for Greek-speaking Jews takes the place of the original OT, *for the original Hebrew text was lost*. . . . The Hebrew version in circulation today, the so-called Massoretic Text, *is chiefly a re-translation of the Septuagint into medieval Hebrew* that was produced in stages between the second and ninth centuries, and upon which the OT of KJV is based” (I-582; II-62 9;¹⁹ emphasis mine)!

3.2. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture and Church’s Bible

These two projects are the two most important publication series in recent attempt in unveiling the patristic interpretation to the public. Both projects reflect very careful planning and admirable quality.

Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (ACCS) under the general editorship by Thomas C. Oden is planned to have 28 volumes (29 if the volume of Apocrypha is included) out of which at least 21 volumes have already been published (some of these volumes are available in Logos’ *Libronix*). The *Church’s Bible* (CB) by R. L. Wilken does not seem to aim at covering the entire biblical corpus, but only on “select books”²⁰; at least three volumes have been published by now.²¹ Each volume has its own volume editor(s) from different Christian traditions, and in the case of CB, it has “translator and editor.” A major strength of CB, in comparison to ACCS (and ONT), is that many materials cited are fresh translation from Greek and Latin texts, rather than merely excerpts from existing usually archaic English translation (such as ANF and NPNF). Nothing is said on the translation principle, but based on my reading, the translation is very readable and highly idiomatic.

19) Quoted from C. Siamakis, *Transmission of the Text of the Holy Bible* (Mass: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1997), 42. In the original, Siamakis goes on to say that the Masoretic Text is partly a re-translation of all the six Greek translations (LXX, Aquila, Theodotian, Symmachus, Quinta, etc)!

20) J. L. Kovacs, trans. and ed., *1 Corinthians: Interpreted by Early Christian Commentators* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2005), p.xviii.

21) For ACCS, see <http://www.ivpress.com/accs/>; for CB, see <http://www.eerdmans.com/series/cb.htm>.

Both editions have very similar layout and many useful appendix materials such as the biographical sketches of the fathers cited/mentioned, source texts bibliographical (mainly TLG and CETEDOC) data, and subject and scripture indices. The “Timeline of Writers of the Patristic Period” of ACCS is particularly helpful for a bird’s eye view of the historical context of the fathers. Reading the introduction to each particular volume would be a good remedy to most biblical scholars who are not so familiar with the patristic interpretation.

Both editions use RSV as the default commentary text, but additional textual notes are often provided wherever it is evident that the text of father differs from the Masoretic reading (representing the Hebrew text behind RSV). This is especially obvious for the OT volumes, say, Job in ACCS, where many textual notes (from the LXX, Vulgate, and Peshitta readings) additional to RSV are provided.²²⁾ CB in this respect would often go an extra mile. As in the case of *The Song of Songs*, CB provides a parallel translation of LXX and Vulgate. Even in the NT where textual difference is comparatively more subtle (than that of OT), CB would highlight the difference either in footnote or section summary. For example, in 1Co 13:10-12, the volume editor (J. Kovacs) points out specifically that Augustine cites 2 Kings 5:26 in two different versions LXX and Vulgate (see also 213 n.17, 223 n.3). Among all the ancient fathers quoted, Ambrosiaster deserves special mention on text-critical issues. This name is traditionally attributed to an anonymous early commentator on Pauline corpus (minus Hebrew), who was erroneously identified in some manuscripts as Ambrose (ca. 339-97). Ambrosiaster’s commentary on 1 Corinthians is the first in the Latin-speaking West, and he used an Old Latin form of the biblical text that precedes Jerome’s *Vulgate* (see for example the variant musthvriion in 1Co 2:1 [GNT⁴], cf. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*). However, none of the comments of Ambrosiaster quoted in this volume seems to exhibit any particular interest in this respect.

Like ONT, ACCS covers how the term “patristic period” is typically understood (i.e., also in GNT⁴ and NTG²⁷)²³⁾, namely John Damascus (c. 645 – c. 749) in the east and Bede the Venerable (mid 8th cent.) in the west, but in some volumes, it

22) Edited by M. Simonetti and M. Conti; Simonetti is the widely acknowledged expert in patristic biblical interpretation.

23) 16 patristic sources are cited in NTG²⁷ (pp. 31* – 33*), and only 10 patristic sources found in NTG²⁷ are not cited in GNT⁴. As is intended, GNT⁴ presents more patristic evidence in the apparatus than that of the NTG²⁷ (176 versus 74).

would include Photius the Patriarch of Constantinople (c. 810 – c. 895) and Symeon the New Theologian (949–1022). CB seems to be more flexible. Generally, it covers the first millennium, although each volume may have limited its own extent. For example, the volume on *The Song of Songs* (by Richard A. Norris, Jr.) includes some medieval authors such as Nicholas of Lyra (d. 1340), but *I Corinthians* (by Judith L. Kovacs) includes only down to Photius.

Given the enormous corpus of the patristic commentary, any anthology (or *catenae*) of this kind is deemed to be highly selective. Unfortunately, the principle of selection is often not clear, and if there is any, the specification is so generically described (e.g., “interesting, theologically significant, and spiritually uplifting”)²⁴⁾ that it hardly says anything. Overall speaking, ACCS would include more but shorter quotations because it purports to expose the reader to a greater variety of patristic interpretation, whereas CB includes less but lengthier excerpts so that “through deeper immersion in the ancient sources can contemporary readers enter into the inexhaustible spiritual and theological world of the early Church and hence of the Bible.”²⁵⁾ Take 1 Corinthians as an example: ACCS includes about 1,200 quotations, but CB includes only 287;²⁶⁾ most excerpts of CB are at least a paragraph length, and some are more than 2 pages (e.g., pp. 235-237).

ACCS certainly gives more freedom to each volume editor in the approach, and the principle of selection of different volumes may be quite different. What happens is: the research team will elicit a huge amount patristic interpretation excerpts from various source language texts (mainly digital) for each volume editor, then it is up to the editor to determine what materials should be included. In more recent volumes, the quotations are usually lengthier and the total number is fewer. Most obvious of all is the two-volumes on Matthew (also by Manlio Simonetti) - more than 600 pages of quotations are selected from only 21 fathers/works, compared to 35 in the 316 pages of 1-2 Corinthians. The peculiar principle underlying these two volumes is well-noted when we bear in mind that Matthew is the most frequently

24) In “Interpreting of New Testament” written by the general editor R. L. Wilken, see Kovacs, *I Corinthians*, xix.

25) J. L. Kovacs, trans. and ed., *I Corinthians: Interpreted by Early Christian Commentators* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), viii.

26) Time does not permit me to go into detailed comparison between the selection of ACCS and CB, but a comparison on the first two chapters of 1 Corinthians shows significant overlapping between the two series.

quoted gospel in the early Christian period.

4. Non-Catena approach: Novum Testamentum Patristicum (NTP)

The most extensive one comes from the German soil, *Novum Testamentum Patristicum: Ein patristischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (NTP)* under the leadership of Professor Andreas Merkt with 42 volumes under planning²⁷⁾ including not only the canonical books, but also the Gnostic and Manichaeans. In contrast to the projects adopting a catena approach, NTP aims at presenting the patristic interpretation of the first six centuries in such a way that their original connection may become visible. Special weight is given to liturgical and historical contexts, in which a verse was particularly cited or commented. It is scheduled that at least the volume on Galatians (and/or the volume on Acts) should have been released by end of the year.

5. Conclusion

The contribution of patristic writings to Biblical Studies has always been manifold such as in the field of textual criticism. However, the recent growing interest in patristic interpretation deserves special attention. The purpose of the paper provides an overview of the sources of patristic interpretation.

Apart from overviewing the resources of the original languages and translation series, this paper endeavors to focus on the recent academic efforts in presenting the patristic interpretation of the Holy Scriptures to the general public. With the exception of the *Novum Testamentum Patristicum (NTP)* which is yet published, all the other recent major scholarly publication projects reviewed here adopt the literary form of the medieval tradition of the catena approach; it is similar to an anthology of patristic interpretation to the biblical texts. The two-volumes the *Orthodox New Testament (ONT)* which resembles an Orthodox Talmud, present the patristic comments alongside an English translation of their traditional text (based on the 1904 edition of B. Antoniadès). The two series *Ancient Christian*

27) <http://www.uni-regensburg.de/Fakultaeten/Theologie/alte-kg/html/ntp.html>.

Commentary on Scripture (ACCS) and Church's Bible (CB) deserves special attention because of the magnitude of the project and the scholarly standing that the published volumes have achieved thus far.

Compared with the corpus of the biblical canon, the amount of the patristic text is hundred times more. This would inhibit any reader who attempts to get familiar with the patristic insights to the Bible. Any anthology, or catenae approach, is deemed to be a welcome resource to anyone who would like to tab into this thesaurus.

<Keyword>

Patrology, Patristic interpretation, history of interpretation, catenae, ancient Christian writings.

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<Abstract>

초기 그리스도교 교부의 해석을 명시하기: 최근의 출판 프로젝트들에 대한 개관

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교부들의 저술은 본문비평 분야에서처럼 언제나 다양한 분야에 기여를 해왔다. 그러나 최근 교부들의 해석에 대해 관심이 증대되고 있다는 점은 특별히 주목을 받을 만하다. 이 논문의 목적은 교부들의 해석의 출처들에 대해 개관을 제공하는 데 있다.

그 원어로 된 자료들과 번역물 시리즈를 살펴보는 것과는 별도로, 이 논문은 일반 대중들에게 성서에 대한 교부들의 해석을 제공함에 있어 최근에 이루어진 학문적인 노력에 집중하고자 한다. 아직 출판되지 않은 *Novum Testamentum Patristicum* (NTP)을 제외하고, 이 논문에서 검토된 최근의 모든 주요한 학술 출판물 프로젝트들은 중세의 전통적인 카테나이(catenae 즉 성서 구절에 대해 초기 그리스도교 교부들의 주석들을 모아 나열하는) 식의 접근이라는 문학적 형식을 채택하고 있다. 이것은 성서본문에 대한 교부들의 해석을 모아둔 선집(anthology)과 유사하다. 두 권으로 된 정통 신약성서(Orthodox New Testament; ONT)는 정통 탈무드(Orthodox Talmud)와 비슷한데, 이 책은 (B. Antoniadès의 1904년판에 기초한) 그들의 전통적인 본문에 대한 영어 번역본문 옆에 교부들의 주석을 제시하고 있다. 두 시리즈인 *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* (ACCS)와 *Church's Bible* (CB)은 이 프로젝트들의 방대함과 이 시리즈들 가운데 출판된 책들이 지금까지 성취해온 학문적인 성과 때문에 특별한 관심을 받을 만하다.

성서 정경의 모음과 비교해본다면 교부들이 저술한 본문의 양은 백 배 이상 많다. 이것은 성경에 대한 교부들의 통찰과 친숙해지고자 하는 독자들을 저해하게 될 것이다. 선집(anthology) 혹은 카테나이(catenae) 식의 접근은 이 지식의 보고를 탐색하고자 하는 모든 이들에게 반가운 자료가 될 것이다.