Surveys, Introductions, and Reference Works

1. History of the Early Church: Surveys
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1. HISTORY OF THE EARLY CHURCH: SURVEYS


*The Cambridge History of Christianity* (New York / Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005-2007). This new comprehensive *Cambridge History* will be recognized in coming decades as the standard survey of Church history. Each of its massive volumes offer thorough introductions both to key events and to broad themes and includes contributions from leading contemporary historians. The two volumes that focus on early Christianity are:


Philip F. Esler, ed. *The Early Christian World*, 2 vol. (New York: Routledge, 2000). This 1300-page, two-volume textbook surveys all the key aspects of early Christianity, its social and intellectual world, its art and worship, its intellectuals and its clashes, both internal and external. Each chapter is authored by an expert, and offers an up-to-date introduction to the topic. Most interesting is the set of “profiles” that close volume 2,
chapters on Origen, Tertullian, Perpetua, Constantine, Antony, Athanasius, Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine and Ephrem.


Josef Lössl, *Early Church: Christianity in Late Antiquity* (New York: T&T Clark, 2010).


### 2. THEOLOGY OF THE EARLY CHURCH: SURVEYS


Frances Young, Lewis Ayres & Andrew Louth, ed., *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). A fine study of the literature (Greek, Latin, and Syriac) of the early Christian movement. This includes studies of individual authors as well as their intellectual, cultural, and religious context.

development of the doctrine of the divinity of Christ and of the Trinity. Not easy reading. Ayres presumes you know the standard accounts of the key figures and events, but he offers an essential re-interpretation and re-ordering of that history.


### 3. REFERENCE WORKS & HANDBOOKS

Susan Ashbrook Harvey & David Hunter, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). An extraordinarily wide-ranging survey of themes within and elements of early Christianity. There are chapters on key regions (Egypt, Syria, North Africa, Italy, Gaul), emerging authorities and structures (clergy, biblical canon, councils, monasticism), elements of Christian culture (apologetics, homiletics, hagiography, poetry, philosophy), and ritual practices and piety (baptism, Eucharist, prayer, pilgrimage). It emphasizes new discoveries and perspectives gleaned from recent scholarship and offers students insights into
methodologies used by contemporary scholars. Each chapter, authored by a leading expert, has extensive (and partially annotated) bibliographies. Not to be missed.


4. JOURNALS & ESSAYS ON EARLY CHRISTIANITY

The most important patristics journal in the English-speaking world is the Journal of Early Christian Studies (Johns Hopkins University Press). Also important is Studia Patristica, which publishes the proceedings of the International Patristics Conference held in Oxford every four years. The two leading European patristics journals are Vigiliae Christianae and the Journal of Theological Studies. The former also publishes an excellent monograph series entitled "Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae." Other English-speaking journals that publish important articles relevant to the field are: Augustinian Studies, Journal of Roman Studies, Church History, Journal of Ecclesiastical History, American Benedictine Review, Harvard Theological Review, Studia Monastica, and Theological Studies.


John Behr, Andrew Louth, & Dimitri Conomos, eds., Abba: The Tradition of Orthodoxy in the West: Festschrift for Bishop Kallistos Ware (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2003).


Peter Brown, *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).


Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall & Gerald O’Collins, eds., *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). While some essays range beyond patristics, there is much of use to patristic scholars. See especially the essays by Joseph Lienhard and Michel Barnes.


### 5. THE ROMAN EMPIRE: HISTORY & SOCIETY

The range of scholarly studies on the Roman Empire and the classical world, within which early Christianity emerged, is obviously massive. Here are some recent works especially relevant to early Christian studies:

*The Cambridge Ancient History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1970- ), 13 volumes to date. This is the standard scholarly survey history of the ancient world. Three volumes of this intersect with the patristic period:

- **Vol. 14:** Averil Cameron, ed., *Late Antiquity: Empire and Successors (AD 425-600)* (2001).
Alessandro Barchiesi & Walter Scheidel, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Studies*, Oxford Handbooks (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). A major comprehensive survey that offers chapters on materials and methods (text criticism, archeology, epigraphy, numismatics, papyrology, prosopography), genres of literature (epic, theater, letters, history, biography), historical periods, social dimensions, and key ancient ideas. The accent is on new scholarly perspectives.


Joel Kalvesmaki, *The Theology of Arithmetic: Number Symbolism in Platonism and Early Christianity* (Center for Hellenic Studies, 2013) paperback, $23. NEW.


Fergus Millar, *A Greek Roman Empire: Power and Belief under Theodosius II, 408-450* (Berkeley: University of California, 2007).


Edward J. Watts, *City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).


### 6. FATHERS OF THE CHURCH: TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

The monumental collection of the Greek and Latin texts of the Church Fathers was done by J.P. Migne in the mid-19th century: the *Patrologia Graeca* (PG) and the *Patrologia Latina* (PL). Migne's editions are slowly being replaced by modern critical editions. Two important series offering critical editions are the *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (CSEL) and the *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* (CCL). The most important contemporary series is the *Sources chrétiennes* (SC) (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1950s–), which has published 500+ volumes to date; it has the original text (either Greek or Latin) with a French translation on the facing page; volumes also include extensive introductions and notes. Also important is the 500+ volume series, *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* (CSCO), which publishes texts preserved in the languages of the Christian East (Coptic, Syriac, Armenian, Georgian, Arabic, and Ethiopic), with a translation into a modern European language (usually English, French, or German). There are also series that offer English translations. The major series with complete works are the following:

*Fathers of the Church*, 126 volumes to date (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1948–). The early volumes from the 1940s and 1950s are uneven, but recent volumes are dependable and often excellent both in the quality of the translations and in the accompanying introductions and notes.

*Ancient Christian Writers*, 66 volumes to date (Westminster, MD: Newman Press / New York: Paulist Press, 1946–). Overall, solid translations. This was once a top series, but not many volumes have come out in recent years.

*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 10 volumes (reprint: Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995). These translations were done in the mid 19th century, but remain often the only English translation of certain works.
Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 28 volumes (reprint: Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995). The first series contains the works of Augustine and John Chrysostom; the second, translations of other major figures and documents. These translations were done in the mid 19th-century, and many remain the only ones available in English.

The Works of St. Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century, ed. John E. Rotelle and Boniface Ramsey (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1990- ). This series, which began in 1990, will take at least another decade to complete. It is sponsored by the Augustinian Heritage Institute. Already published are the complete Sermones ad Populum (11 volumes, including the newly discovered Dolbeau sermons), the complete Expositions of the Psalms (6 volumes), the complete Letters (4 volumes, including the recently discovered Divjak letters), the complete anti-Pelagian treatises (4 volumes), and the complete anti-Manichean writings (2 volumes). The latest publications include a two-volume translation of Augustine's classic City of God.


Translated Texts for Historians (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1985- ). This series concentrates on individual classic works both from late antiquity (such as Optatus of Milevis, Ambrose, Gregory of Tours) and from the early Middle Ages (notably from Cassiodorus, Gregory of Tours, and Bede). Generally excellent translations, introductions, and notes.

Cistercian Studies Series (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications / Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1975- ). This series mainly includes translations and studies of medieval monastic figures, but it does have a number of valuable translations of early monastic texts, such as the works by Pachomius, Evagrius Ponticus, Theodoret of Cyrus, Diadochus of Photike, the Syriac Liber Graduum (Book of Steps) and The Book of the Elders: Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Systematic Collection (2012) It also has valuable translations of works by Gregory the Great.

Classics of Western Spirituality, ed. Bernard McGinn (New York: Paulist Press, 1978-). While this 100+ volume series is not limited to patristic authors, it does contain the works of a number of the leading Church Fathers, including Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, John Cassian, Pseudo-Macarius, Maximus the Confessor, and Pseudo-Dionysius.

7. FATHERS OF THE CHURCH: ANTHOLOGIES

For most people, the best entrance into Church Fathers is reading anthologies. It is a good way to find out who and what interests you. Here are some of the better anthologies or collections:

Carol Harrison, ed., Early Church Fathers Series, 18 volumes to date (New York: Routledge, 1996-2009) paperback, $25-35 per volume. This recent series concentrates on individual Church Fathers. Each volume has a lengthy introduction followed by new translations of major (and often previously untranslated) works:

- Andrew Louth, Maximus the Confessor (1996).
- Frederick McLeod, Theodore of Mopsuestia (2009).
- Bronwen Neil, Leo the Great (2009).
- Stefan Rebenich, Jerome (2002).


Thomas C. Oden & Christopher H. Hall, eds., *The Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, 26 volumes to date (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1998-).