

THE CAMBRIDGE
HISTORY OF

EARLY
CHRISTIAN
LITERATURE

EDITED BY
FRANCES YOUNG, LEWIS AYRES
AND ANDREW LOUTH

THE CAMBRIDGE
HISTORY OF
EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

*

Edited by

FRANCES YOUNG

LEWIS AYRES

ANDREW LOUTH

Assistant editor: Augustine Casiday



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge, CB2 2RU, UK
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa
<http://www.cambridge.org>

© Cambridge University Press, 2004

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2004

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typeface DanteMT 10.5/13 pt. System L^AT_EX 2_ε [TB]

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data
The Cambridge history of early Christian literature / edited by Frances Young, Lewis
Ayres, Andrew Louth.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 46083 2

1. Christian literature. Early - History and criticism. I. Young, Frances M.
(Frances Margaret) II. Ayres, Lewis. III. Louth, Andrew.

BR67.C25 2004

270.1-dc22 2003055726

ISBN 0 521 46083 2 hardback

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

The writings of the Church Fathers form a distinct body of literature which shaped the early Church and built upon the doctrinal foundations of Christianity recently established within the New Testament and by oral and ecclesiastical tradition. Christian literature in the period c. 100–c. 400 constitutes one of the most influential textual oeuvres of any religion. Written mainly in Greek, Latin and Syriac, patristic literature emanated from all parts of the early Christian world and helped to extend its boundaries. The works of Irenaeus, Origen, Hippolytus, Eusebius, Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, John Chrysostom, Ephrem, the gnostics, the Montanists and the Cappadocians are among the best-known examples of an extensive set of texts grappling with the theological issues at the heart of early Christianity – many of which still lie at its heart today. This *History* is the first systematic account of that literature and its setting for many years. The work of individual writers in shaping the various genres and forms of Christian literature is considered, and the volume also offers three general essays covering distinct periods in the development of Christian literature. These pieces survey the social, cultural and doctrinal context within which Christian literature arose and within which it was used by Christians. The book is intended for use by theologians and historians, providing a landmark reference work for scholars, teachers and students.

FRANCES YOUNG is Edward Cadbury Professor of Theology at the University of Birmingham.

LEWIS AYRES is Assistant Professor of Historical Theology at the Candler School of Theology and Graduate Division of Religion, Emory University.

ANDREW LOUTH is Professor of Patristic and Byzantine Studies at the University of Durham.

Contributors

LEWIS AYRES, Emory University
JOHN BEHR, St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary
SEBASTIAN P. BROCK, University of Oxford
HENRY CHADWICK, University of Cambridge (Emeritus)
JOHN DAVID DAWSON, Haverford College
SUSAN ASHBROOK HARVEY, Brown University
RONALD E. HEINE, Puget Sound Christian College
DAVID G. HUNTER, Iowa State University
ANDREW LOUTH, University of Durham
R. A. MARKUS, University of Nottingham (Emeritus)
OLIVER NICHOLSON, University of Minnesota
RICHARD A. NORRIS, JR., The Union Theological Seminary (Emeritus)
KAREN JO TORJESEN, Claremont Graduate University
MARK VESSEY, University of British Columbia
FRANCES YOUNG, University of Birmingham

Editors' preface

The excellent Cambridge Histories have not so far included a scholarly compendium on the literature of early Christianity. This volume seeks to fill that gap, while taking note of new developments in the field, which make it particularly appropriate to undertake the production of such a volume at this time.

This literature has traditionally been studied by students of Christian theology and Christian scholars with an interest in the doctrinal and organizational development of the Church. It has commonly been described using the adjective 'patristic', since these authors were considered the 'Fathers' of the Church, and introductory handbooks have been known as 'Patrologies'. It is not intended to ignore the concerns of this clientele, though it is hoped that a wider readership may also turn to this volume as a standard work of reference. Increasing historical interest in the late Roman and early Byzantine worlds has made the subject much more interdisciplinary. Indeed, it could be argued that this material is simply a subclass of the literature of late antiquity, and a reference work should include the whole range of material. However, this would consign the material in this volume to a small section, and since it is a substantial and historically significant subclass, there is a case to be made for examining it in its own right, as long as the wider historical context, and the sharing of perspectives and concerns with non-Christian contemporaries, are made clear.

This greater interdisciplinary focus has been particularly important, however, since it has meant that the material is now studied with a broader range of issues in mind. Feminists have challenged the designation 'patristic', and questions of social identity and social level have become important, together with issues such as the parting of the ways with Judaism, and the process of Christianization. 'Heretics' have been re-habilitated, and their motivations and ideas studied with greater sympathy, especially as they were history's losers. New material, such as the Nag Hammadi find and the Tura papyri, have

occasioned more intensive research. This material can no longer be presented simply as sources for the history of the development of Christian doctrine, important though that project remains.

At the same time the hermeneutical questions raised in relation to New Testament interpretation have hardly begun to touch the field, so that questions of appropriation are ripe for consideration. Conversely, there has been an awakening interest in early Christian interpretation of Scripture, as perspectives other than the historical have opened up in biblical studies. These questions are of particular interest to the editors, and attention to them should have a considerable place in a volume of this kind. The adoption of the canon and the formative place it held in Christian thinking, as interpreted by the exponents in the Church, also have their background in the ancient veneration for literature and the place of rhetoric and literary study in the educational system.

It is hoped that, given this overall context, this work will provide a major volume of reference, distilling the present lively developments in the subject area and essaying some pioneering directions. The policy adopted has not been to provide a comprehensive encyclopedia or dictionary, of which there are already recent worthy representatives, such as *Dizionario Patristico e di Antichità Cristiane* (1983–8), edited by Angelo di Berardino, translated into English as *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* and published in 1992, or *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, edited by Ferguson and others, and published in 1990. Instead of brief introductory articles in alphabetical order by an enormous variety of scholars, an attempt is made to provide a coherent focus, and to concentrate on the literature, its interpretation and significance, and its context, historical, social, philosophical. The work takes account of heterodox as well orthodox, heretic as well as bishop. It provides essays on the major figures and authors, and assesses the major schools of Alexandria, Antioch, Edessa and Nisibis. It discusses the major controversies, not abstracting the important Christological struggle from a context in which other issues were at stake, such as Origenism and asceticism. It embraces feminist and sociological approaches to the material.

In some respects this work may replace the *Patrologies*, now thirty to forty years old, though without adopting the same style or pretending to offer comprehensive bibliographies. Some overlap in material and approach with Frances Young's volume, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon*, may justly be suspected, but this should be complementary to that work: the A sections cover the literature of a much broader period and geographical location in relatively briefer compass, with the additional advantage of engaging a team of contributors

with varied expertise, while the B sections of each Part enable the generation of a greater sense of perspective than was possible in a series of essays on individual authors, as well as giving an opportunity to explore new hermeneutical questions.

This is meant to be a reference work, not necessarily a book to be read consecutively from cover to cover. Sections A and B are deliberately set up as different approaches to approximately the same material and some degree of overlap is to be expected, though in each period the A sections deal simply with extant material, surveying the literary deposit which has come down to us, while the B sections explore the contexts into which that material needs to be placed if it is to be understood in an informed way, including reference to significant works which are no longer extant and such fragmentary sources as contribute to reconstruction of those contexts.

This is not simply a general history, but a literary history, seeking to take questions concerning the genre and rhetoric of the texts seriously. It is also meant to be not just a contribution to the study of the past and its 'objective' reconstruction – the long-standing project of modernist historiography – but also a contribution to the interpretation and present appropriation of texts from the past; in other words, a resource for theological thinking that goes beyond the simple repetition of formulae or the use of past labels for present controversies.

This volume has been long in gestation. Its 'onlie begetter' was Frances Young, who designed the shape of the volume and commissioned the contributors. Soon, however, she was overwhelmed by the burdens of university administration, and the other two editors were invited to see the project through to completion. (In the final stages, the assistant editor, Dr Augustine Casiday, one-time research student at the University of Durham, proved invaluable in helping draw up the bibliography, preparing the chronological table, and compiling the index.) The final state of the volume is the responsibility of all three of us.

Abbreviations of patristic and other texts

- AcPT* = *Acta Pauli et Theclae*
AcJ = *Acta Justini*
Ad Nov. = *Ad Novatianum*
Adol. = *Ad Adolescentes de legendis libris gentilium*
Ad Phil. = *Ad Philippense*
Ad Serap. = *Ad Serapionem*
Afric. = *Epistula ad Africanum*
AH = *Adversus Haereses*
An. = *De Anima*
APet. = *Acta Petri*
Apol. = *Apologeticum* or *Apologia*
Apol. c. Hier. = *Apologia contra Hieronymum*
Apol. c. Ruf. = *Apologia contra Rufinum*
Ar. = *Contra Arianos*
Autol. = *Ad Autolycum*
Bapt. = *De Baptismo*
Barn. = *Epistula Barnabae*
Bibl. Cod. = *Photius, Bibliotheca, cited by codex*
Bon. = *De bono mortis*
BPud. = *De Bono Pudicitiae*
Carn. = *De Carne Christi*
Cast. = *De Exhortatione Castitatis*
Cat. = *Catechesis*
Cels. = *Contra Celsum*
CG = *Contra Gentes*
Chron. = *Chronicon*
I Clem. = *Prima Epistula Clementis*
II Clem. = *Epistula Secunda Clementis*
Coet. = *Oratio ad sanctorum coetum*

- Comm. in Mt.* = *Commentarius in Matthaeum*
CommPs. = *Commentarius in Psalmos*
Conf. = *Confessions*
Cor. = *De Corona*
CTheod. = *Codex Theodosianum*
Dan. = *in Daniele*
Dec. = *De Decretis*
Dem. = *Demonstratio Praedicationis Apostolicae*
Demetr. = *Ad Demetrianum*
Dial. = *Dialogus*
Did. = *Didache*
Diog. = *Epistula ad Diognetum*
EcProph. = *Eclogae Propheticae*
Enn. = *Enneades*
Ep(p). = *Epistulae*
Ephes. = *Ep. ad Ephesios*
ETh. = *Ecclesiastica Theologia*
Eun. = *Contra Eunomium*
Fug. = *De Fuga*
Graec. = *Oratio ad Graecos*
Greg. = *Ep. ad Gregorium*
Haer. = *Refutatio omnium haeresium* or *Haereticarum fabularum compendium*
HE = *Historia Ecclesiastica*
Herac. = *Disputatio cum Heracleida*
Herm. = *Adversus Hermogenem*
HExod. = *Homilia in Exodum*
Hom. in Jud. = *Homilia in Iudices*
HR = *Historia Romana*
Idol. = *De Idololatria*
Idola = *Quod idola dii non sint*
Ieiun. = *De Ieiunio*
Il. = *Ilias*
In Eph. = *In Ephesios*
In Rep. = *In Rempublicam*
Inst. = *Institutiones* or *Institutiones Divinae*
Inv. = *De Inventione*
Io. = *Commentarius in Ioannem*
Ira = *De Ira Dei*
Laps. = *De Lapsis*

- Laus.* = *Historia Lausiaca*
Leg. = *Legatio*
Magn. = *Ad Magnesios*
Mand. = *Mandata*
Marc. = *Adversus Marcionem* or *Contra Marcellum*
Mart. = *Exhortatio ad Martyrium* or *De Martyribus Palestinae*
Med. = *Meditationes*
Mon. = *De Monogamia*
Mort. = *De Mortibus Persecutorum*
MPol. = *Martyrium Polycarpi*
Nat. = *Adversus Nationes*
NHC = *Nag Hammadi Codices*
Noet. = *Contra Noetum*
Od. = *Odysseas*
Opif. = *De Opificio Dei*
Or. = *De Oratione* or *Oratio*
Paed. = *Paedagogus*
Paen. = *De Paenitentia*
Pan. = *Panarion*
Pan. Or. = *Panegyrica in Origenem*
Pass. Perp. = *Passio Perpetuae*
Pass. Scil. = *Passio Sanctorum Scillitanorum*
Philad. = *Ad Philadelphenos*
Polyc. = *Epistula ad Polycarpum*
Praescr. = *De Praescriptione*
Prax. = *Adversus Praxean*
PrEv. = *Praeparatio Evangelica*
Princ. = *De Principiis*
Procat. = *Procatechesis*
Pud. = *De Pudicitia*
Q. = *Quaestio*
Ref. = *Refutatio Confessionis Eunomii*
Rep. = *Respublica*
Res. = *De Resurrectione Carnis*
Rom. = *Ad Romanos*
Ruf. = *Adversus Rufinum*
Scap. = *Ad Scapulam*
Scorp. = *Scorpiace*
Sim. = *Similitudines*

List of abbreviations of patristic and other texts

Smyrn. = *Ad Smyrnaeos*
Spect. = *De Spectaculis*
SpS = *De Spiritu Sancto*
Strom. = *Stromateis*
Syn. = *De synodo* or *De synodis*
TestDom. = *Testimonium Domini*
Tom. ad Ant. = *Tomus ad Antiochenos*
Trall. = *Ad Trallianos*
Trin. = *De Trinitate*
Ux. = *Ad Uxorem*
Val. = *Contra Valentinianos*
Virg. = *De Virginitate*
Vir. Ill. = *De Viris Illustribus*
Vis. = *Visio*

Other abbreviations

These abbreviations are used in the notes, and in the bibliographies, where publication details can be found.

ACO:	<i>Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum</i>
ACW:	Ancient Christian Writers
AGLS:	Alcuin/Grove Liturgical Studies
ANF:	The Ante-Nicene Fathers
ANRW:	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
BGL:	Bibliothek der Griechischen Literatur
BLE:	<i>Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique</i>
BMus:	<i>Bibliothèque du Muséon</i>
CAH:	<i>Cambridge Ancient History</i>
CCSG:	Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca
CCSL:	Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina
CHLG:	<i>Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy</i>
CSCO:	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CSEL:	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
CPG:	<i>Clavis Patrum Graecorum</i>
CPL:	<i>Clavis Patrum Latinorum</i>
CSS:	Cistercian Studies Series
CWS:	Classics of Western Spirituality
DCB:	Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects and Doctrines
DEC:	<i>Decrees of the Œcumenical Councils</i>
DLT:	Darton Longman and Todd
DSp:	<i>Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique, histoire et doctrine</i>
ECF:	Early Church Fathers
EEC:	<i>Encyclopedia of the Early Church</i>
ET:	English translation
FC:	Fathers of the Church

List of other abbreviations

GCS:	Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller
Greg.:	<i>Gregorianum</i>
GTS:	Grazer Theologische Studien
HeyJ:	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
HeyM:	Heythrop Monographs
HTR:	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUT:	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
JAC:	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
J ECS:	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
JSNT:	<i>Journal for the Study of New Testament</i>
JSOT:	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JTS:	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LCC:	Library of Christian Classics
MGH:	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
OCA:	Orientalia Christiana Analecta
OCP:	<i>Orientalia Christiana Periodica</i>
ODCC:	<i>Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church</i>
OECS:	Oxford Early Christian Studies
OECT:	Oxford Early Christian Texts
PG:	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
PIOS:	Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum (now, Pontificio Istituto Orientale)
PL:	<i>Patrologia Latina</i>
PO:	<i>Patrologia Orientalis</i>
PPS:	Popular Patristics Series
PTS:	Patristische Texte und Studien
RBen:	<i>Revue Bénédictine</i>
RechSR:	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
REL:	<i>Revue des Études Latines</i>
SA:	<i>Studia Anselmiana</i>
SBAW:	Sitzungsberichte der bayerischen Akademie des Wissenschaften
SBL:	Studies in Biblical Literature
SC:	Sources chrétiennes
SCH:	<i>Studies in Church History</i>
SEA:	<i>Studia Ephemeridis</i> «Augustinianum»
SecCent:	<i>Second Century</i>
SP:	<i>Studia Patristica</i>
ST:	Studi e Testi
SWGS:	Schriften der wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft in Strassburg

List of other abbreviations

TCH:	Transformation of the Classical Heritage
ThH:	Théologie Historique
TRE:	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i>
TS:	Texts and Studies
TTH:	Translated Texts for Historians
TU:	Texte und Untersuchungen
VigChr:	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
ZAC:	<i>Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum/Journal of ancient Christianity</i>
ZKG:	<i>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte</i>
ZNW:	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

Chronological table of early Christian literature

Featuring key writers, works and events

Writers	Works	Events
Philo of Alexandria (fl. c. 30–45)		
Clement of Rome (fl. c. 95)	<i>The Shepherd of Hermas</i> (90–150)	Domitian's persecution? (95–96)
Ignatius of Antioch (fl. c. 100–115)	<i>Didache</i> (100–150)	Trajan's proscription of Christianity? (112)
	<i>Apocalypse of Peter</i> (c. 125–150)	
	Aristides of Athens, <i>Apology</i> (c. 120–138)	
	Papias, <i>Explanation of the Sayings of the Lord</i> (c. 130)	
	<i>Epistle of Barnabas</i> (130–131)	
Valentinus at Rome (c. 136–165)	Justin Martyr, <i>Dialogue with Trypho</i> (c. 138)	Bar Kochba's revolt (138)
Marcion at Rome (fl. 144–?)	Justin Martyr, <i>First and Second Apologies</i> (148–161)	
Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–215)	<i>Acts of John</i> (150–180)	
Bardaisan (154–c. 222)		
Tertullian (155–c. 220)		
Polycarp (d. 156)		Polycarp's martyrdom (156)
Justin Martyr (d. 165)	<i>The Acts</i> (= Martyrdom) of St Justin and his companions (165)	
	Melito, <i>Peri Pascha</i> (c. 167–168)	

Chronological table

(cont.)

Writers	Works	Events
Irenaeus (fl. c. 175–180)	Tatian, <i>Discourse to the Greeks</i> (c. 165–180) Athenagoras, <i>Supplication for the Christians</i> (c. 177) Theophilus of Antioch, <i>To Autolycus</i> (180)	
Origen (185–253)	<i>The Acts of the Martyrs of Scilli in Africa</i> (180) <i>Gospel of Peter</i> (before 190) <i>Acts of Paul and Thecla</i> (before 190) <i>Acts of Peter</i> (before 190) <i>Acts of Thomas</i> (c. 200–250)	The Martyrs of Scilli in Africa (17 July 180) Septimius Severus' persecution? (c. 202–212)
Cyprian (200/210–258)		The martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity (7 March 202)
Hippolytus (fl. 212–235) Callistus, pope of Rome (regn. 217–222)	Origen, <i>On first principles</i> (c. 220–230) Origen, <i>On prayer</i> (233–234) Origen, <i>Exhortation to martyrdom</i> (235) <i>Apocalypse of Paul</i> (c. 240–250) Origen, <i>Against Celsus</i> (246)	
Novatian (fl. 250–253)		The Decian persecution (250–253)
Antony the Great (250–356) Arius (256–336)		The Edict of Valerian (257–260)
Paul of Samosata (fl. c. 260–268)		Cyprian of Carthage's martyrdom (14 September 258)
Eusebius of Caesarea (263–339/340) Athanasius (295–373) Lactantius (fl. 303–317)		Diocletian's persecution (303–305)

(cont.)