

**Andrew F. Gregory and Christopher M. Tuckett, eds. *The New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers, Volume 1: The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. Pp. xiii + 375. ISBN: 978-0-19-926782-8. £67.00, cloth.**

1. The work reviewed here is the first of the two centenary volumes celebrating the volume *The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers*, published by “A Committee of the Oxford Society of Historical Theology” at Clarendon Press in 1905. The second one, however, is A.F. Gregory, C.M. Tuckett, eds., *Trajectories through the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). Most of the articles included in the two volumes were presented at “a conference held at Lincoln College, Oxford, in April 2004”. The reader is notified, however, that “all the contributions [...] have been through the process of peer review that is customary in academic publishing” (v), as the declared intention of the two volumes is that they “become a standard reference work” (vi) in the field of New Testament Patristics.

2. The volume is divided in two main parts, of which the first one groups together three contributions concerning textual issues in both corpora - AF and NT - from three different perspectives: a comparison of the dynamics of the two corpora’s textual traditions (B.D. Ehrman), an investigation of what the texts of the AF might tell us about the state of NT text in the second century (W.L. Peterson) and an evaluation of the presence and relevance of AF readings of NT in the critical apparatus of the latter (J.K. Elliot). As such, this part is a useful overview on both groups of texts, which form an interesting counterbalance for the second part of the book, dedicated mostly to evaluating the presence of NT text in a particular AF text: seven papers focus on a specific text from the AF corpus and its relation with the NT writings (C.M. Tuckett on the *Didache*, A.F. Gregory on *1 Clement*, P. Foster on Ignatius’ *Epistles*, M.W. Holmes on Polycarp’s *Letter*, J. Carleton-Paget on *Barnabas*, A.F. Gregory and C.M. Tuckett on *2 Clement*, and J. Verheyden on the *Shepherd of Hermas*), and they are preceded by an extended methodological inquiry on the part of the two editors.

3. Incidentally, the most striking difference from the 1905 volume is the concern for explicit methodological issues involved in each case of a text from the writings of the Apostolic Fathers (AF) in relation to the texts that later formed the New Testament (NT). The first paper of the second part of the volume, signed by Gregory and Tuckett, is thus a propaedeutical one: the article stresses the intention of the editors to reassess the problem concerning the relation of the texts “that later formed the New Testament” to those of the Apostolic Fathers starting, as much as possible, from a firmly established methodological basis. To start with, the editors aim to define a functional terminology where *reference*, *quotation* and *allusion* denote correspondingly: a general “apparent use of one text in another”, a “significant degree of verbal identity with the source cited” and finally an instance that contains “less verbal identity” (64). They put a somewhat smaller emphasis on more closely determining the differences between quotation and allusion, as either of the two, “if established, may each be sufficient to indicate the use of the New Testament, directly or indirectly, in the Apostolic Fathers” (65).

4. This chapter also evaluates the major strands of scholarship that fill out the time interval that separates the 1905 volume from the present one. A detailed analysis, developed on almost nine pages, dwells on the synoptic tradition (70-8) and entails comparing three previously formulated methodologies for ascertaining one text’s use in another, followed by a brief evaluation of the bearing of the results on several synoptic tradition theories. The first of these three has been formulated as a methodological principle by É. Massaux, in *Influence de l’Évangile de Saint Matthieu sur la littérature chrétienne avant Saint Irénée* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1986, réimpression anastatique, original 1950), and affirms that the influence of the NT text is

not to be confined only to strict literary contact between the alleged source and the later author but sought also in the simpler use of source text's vocabulary, themes and ideas (xviii). The second methodology is that of H. Köster, *Synoptische Überlieferung bei den Apostolischen Vätern*, TU 65 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1957), – reiterated in H. Koester, 'Written Gospels or Oral Tradition', *JBL* 113 (1994) 293-7, esp. 297 – which places the solution of the problem in redaction criticism, as his criterion states that a reading can only be considered a *certain* use of a prior text, if that reading contains an identifiable redactional peculiarity of the supposed source text, so that if strong verbal agreement can be found between the two texts, but no redactional element of the latter can be demonstrated, the question of dependence versus a common source cannot be determined. The third methodology considered is that of W.-D. Köhler, *Die Rezeption des Matthäusevangeliums in der Zeit vor Irenäus*, WUNT 2.24 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987); his methodological stance proposes a more cautious and detailed approach, yet, in the editors' view, it seems to reach similar results with Massaux's (74). This is important because all seven subsequent papers do relate, more or less, to components of this discussion.

**5.** The importance of Köster's criterion is here emphasized; accordingly, the authors warn against the "risk of reaching potentially maximalist results by an uncritical application of a methodology akin to what Neiryneck called Massaux's principle of simplicity" (74), yet they do not fail to recognize that the "use of such criterion may be thought to weight research towards a minimalist end" (75). There are, however, acknowledged limitations to Köster's criterion. The first of them comes precisely from the fact that it is minimalist, and is assumed as such: "Given that we know so little about early transmission of the gospels in general, and given that so much of early Christian literature has been lost, it may be the case that a small sample of quite secure evidence may be of more value than a larger sample of less secure evidence" (75). One other limit, also acknowledged, comes from the fact that is not at all obvious to identify what, in the text of any other gospel, is a redactional element, without a number of in-depth decisions, e.g., as to which synoptic theory one would adhere before attempting to establish redactional elements at all.

**6.** It should also be said that one other assumed presupposition is that "any discussion of the possible dependence of one writing on another implies some degree of confidence that we have at least sufficient access to the form in which those texts were originally written to make meaningful judgments about possible relationships between them" (62). This is precisely the starting point of this approach: in order to be able to find rigorous dependences, one needs to be confident about having – as working material – something very similar to the second century text of the NT, that is, the one that allegedly the AF might have used. All seven contributions analyzing the relationship between a specific AF and NT assume this.

**7.** Interestingly enough, a disputation of precisely this presupposition is included in W.L. Petersen's contribution from the first part of this volume, illustrating hence, among other things, the even balance of the volume as a whole. Petersen points out that, from the point of view of textual criticism, the Greek text of the NT our modern editions reconstruct is "the text of the great uncials (c. 350) and the text of the third century" (41). Furthermore, the texts that later will come to be named NT are, in the second century, most likely "not yet 'fixed'", rendering it rather impossible to state anything about the form of the NT texts of that period, and the Apostolic Fathers might just be witnesses to those circulated versions of the gospels that did not survive (43). Examples of this are the possible NT readings of the AF which differ from what we read today in the Greek NT editions but are similar to the readings of other non-canonical texts of that age (43). It is worth mentioning that the author suggests a different methodological stance, saying that the advance of scholarship on the matter should lead to a reformulation of the initial

inquiry, from “for which books of the New Testament is there evidence in the Apostolic Fathers?” to “what textual parallels are there for the recognizable passages in the Apostolic Fathers, and what these parallels tell us about the *textual complexion* of the documents [...] that were known to the Apostolic Fathers?” (45).

**8.** One can easily consent, due to the impressive display of scholarly debate included in the volume, that this work will indeed prove a reference tool for NT Patristics, as well as for subsequent methodological endeavours concerning the textual reception in Early Christianity.

Dan Batovici  
University of Bucharest

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