

FIFTY YEARS OF PATRISTICS

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THIS REPORT can only be of a very subjective nature. For instance, the patristic data of innumerable past publications or hundreds of forgotten meetings, if compiled by some electronic machine, would be mute about their significance. To recapitulate patristics since 1940, one must have participated in one of the most spectacular achievements of 20th-century Christian theology. Clearly, therefore, the authors, books, articles, and events recalled in this essay imply no deliberate evaluation of any sort; they derive only from my momentary attention to the matter. Written anew after a week or month, these same pages could be filled with as many different names and titles. "These dissertations, publications, collections of essays, and articles are more numerous than ever. It is like a tide coming in again and again. There is even something startling in such a symptom of our culture. The specialized expert him/herself becomes unable to watch over the field," lamented T. Van Bavel in 1963, when limiting his survey exclusively to the field of Augustinian studies.¹ For one single decade his bibliography counted 5502 entries. Granted that a third of them were cross references, the total amount of new literature on Augustine was still ranging over 2000 titles between 1950 and 1960. On the broadest level of patristics at large, the publications would then be ten times more numerous.

"Mesure et démesure de la patristique" was the theme of the inaugural lecture delivered by André Mandouze, September 21, 1959, at the Third International Conference on Patristic Studies, held at Christ Church, Oxford.² Mandouze emphasized the multiple meanings of "patristics," a collective term including, as he saw it, a huge variety of disciplines, e.g. philology, theology, biblical studies, Semitic languages, history, law, philosophy, spirituality, hagiography, Gnostic studies. He stressed the rapid progress in current patristic research within the international community of scholars—a community comprised of both men and women, many of a young age, from all sorts of religious traditions. Mandouze's caveat still makes sense today: "Patristics will hardly die

¹ T. Van Bevel, *Répertoire bibliographique de saint Augustin 1950–1960* (Instrumenta patristica 3; Steenbrugge: M. Nijhoff, 1963); the series now counts 17 volumes.

² *Studia patristica* (henceforth SP) 3/1, ed. F. L. Cross, *Texte und Untersuchungen* 78 (Berlin: Akademie, 1961) 3–19.

out in the coming future for lack of patristic scholars. One may only wonder if, in the present situation, the latter's plethoric number does not just more than anything else threaten patristics in its very essence."³ The identity of that "essence" was somehow blurred in 1959 by what the Belgian Jesuit J. de Ghellinck, quoted by Mandouze, had diagnosed more than a decade earlier as a "crise de croissance" afflicting the traditional study of the Fathers.⁴

My intention is not to invent some microwave procedure which would allow me to serve, as on a plate, a quantitative summary of the inflationary literary production in patristics since 1940. I wish rather to share with the reader a moment of quiet meditation before saying good-bye to the historic achievements of patristics during the half century behind us. What happened during these 50 years in the boundaries of our discipline, conditioned as it was by the hazards of the times, will probably never happen again. History remains unpredictable, even in a field like ours, which is more inclined than others to stress the vital continuity and the permanent values of old traditions.

First, it seems opportune to trace a few conclusions about the all-encompassing transformation of the Western world, which determined decisive patristic changes. Second, a clear statement should be made concerning the development of patristic studies during the period under scrutiny. The academic structures and the inner unity and diversity of the main trends, as well as their specific orientations since 1940, deserve to be grasped without too many omissions and distortions. Third, as a final attempt to validate such a risky survey, it is impossible to ignore the ultimate question: What is patristic research all about near the end of a millennium characterized from its very start by a scholarly study of the so-called Fathers of the Church? A millenaristic note would be true to one of the noted ideological features that shaped the patristic period.

A SPECIAL SALUTE TO TS

As a further introductory step, a special salute to the present journal seems appropriate. *Theological Studies* reflects, at least for a European eye, the main characteristics of the American scene. Still fiercely confessional 50 years ago, when it was practically limited to Jesuit writers and

³ Ibid. 10.

⁴ J. de Ghellinck, *Patristique et moyen âge 2* (Brussels/Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1946) viii. His two volumes (1946-47) discuss the whole period of modern patristics before 1940. Around the same time another detailed survey of patristic studies was offered by H. Karpp, "Altchristliche Literaturgeschichte," *Theologische Rundschau*, 1942, 199-236; 1943, 1-13, 81-104. Karpp's work was continued in *TRu* 1988 by K.-V. Selge, "Die Kirchengeschichte in Sammelwerken und Gesamtdarstellungen," and in *TRu* 1956-57 and 1960 by G. May, "Lateinische Patristik: Hilfsmittel, Handbücher, Literatur—und Auslegungsgeschichte."

addressed a strictly Roman Catholic constituency, *TS* gradually opened its boundaries and diversified its contributors. It adopted the more secular and ecumenical style of thought proper to the post-Vatican II era. Patristic contributions in *TS* illustrate very well, I suggest, the paradoxical status of patrology as such in the United States.

In the first instance, a tradition of solid scholarship, not exempt from clear-cut apologetic afterthoughts and hardly different from contemporary Continental scholarship, perpetuated itself through the years. I mention but a few relevant examples: C. McAuliffe, "The Mind of Saint Pacianus on the Efficacy of the Episcopal Absolution," 1941; G. Ellard, "How Fifth-Century Rome Administered Sacraments," 1948; D. J. Unger, "St. Irenaeus and the Roman Primacy," 1952; J. F. McCue, "The Roman Primacy in the Second Century and the Problem of the Development of Dogma," 1964; P. Granfield, "Episcopal Elections in Cyprian," 1976; D. Callam, "Clerical Continence in the Fourth Century: Three Papal Decretals," 1980; E. J. Kilmartin, S.J., "John Chrysostom's Influence on Gabriel Qatraya's Theology of Eucharistic Consecration," 1981.

With these sorts of essays patristics keeps a rather low profile as an ancillary discipline apparently confiscated by clerics and serving only for the defense and illustration of the hierarchical and sacramental institutions of Roman Catholicism. It should be noted immediately that these essays are by no means exclusive or prevalent. They may nevertheless signal the persistence of some old-fashioned notion of confessional patristics, still witnessing here a biased propensity to study the Christian traditions without any reference to their scriptural foundations. The opposite bias, on the Protestant side, reveals an attempt to elaborate vast programs of biblical studies with a complete lack of interest for the traditional reception of Scripture in the Church.⁶

Thus the American patristic scene, sketched almost in caricature, still seems overlaid by confessional ideologies which remain more alive in

⁶ *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* started in 1947 with a programmatic article by H. H. Rowley which included a stern statement about allegory: "That the allegorical principle long held the field in Christian circles is undeniably true, and so far as the Song of Songs is concerned it persisted until modern times. But this does not justify its extravagance or entitle us to substitute fancy and ingenuity for rational exegesis" (5). That was the last word in *Interpretation* until 1989 about the actual reception of Scripture in the Church at large. Without any reference to the tradition lying behind our present theories on how to use the Bible, hermeneutical methods and approaches were discussed, such as structuralism, narrative theology, literary analysis, and, more recently, feminism. "A bi-weekly journal of Christian opinion" like *Christianity and Crisis* shows a complete lack of interest in the Christian past as such and the relevance of the Bible therein, whereas the deepest "crisis" of Christianity seems to focus precisely on the ideological knots which bound its past and its Bible.

the academia of this country than in Europe. To speak even more bluntly: because of inveterate habits marked by confessional prejudice, American patristics seems to lack a specific theological agenda. Without a renewed hermeneutic of traditional values, built up today by the interconfessional collaboration of critics, the study of the Fathers in the U.S. fails to realize its full *raison d'être*.

More on this issue later. I must immediately correct what may sound too negative in my earlier remarks by adding a few titles from *TS* that exemplify other forms of historical criticism proper to patristics: W. Parsons, "The Influence of Romans XIII on Christian Political Thought" [from the Apostolic Fathers to Hincmar], 1940–41; H. A. Musurillo, "The Need of a New Edition of *Hermas*," 1951; G. A. McCool, "The Ambrosian Origin of St. Augustine's Theology of the Image of God in Man," 1959; R. L. Wilken, "Melito, the Jewish Community at Sardis, and the Sacrifice of Isaac," 1976; A. Grillmeier, "Jesus Christ the *Kyriakos Anthrōpos*," 1977; J. T. Lienhard, "The 'Arian' Controversy: Some Categories Reconsidered," 1987. Such essays offer a common basis beyond confessional boundaries for patristic research in Europe and in America as well.

From another perspective, however, the paradoxical status of patrology in the U.S. becomes clear for the reader of *TS* thanks to the remarkable effort of its present editor. As early as 1950, W. J. Burghardt opened the first issue of *TS* with an article entitled "Did Saint Ignatius of Antioch Know the Fourth Gospel?" Primarily, the essay reviewed some main trends of Ignatian studies. But it is not until 1950 that Burghardt appears as a perspicuous observer of the lively development of patristics in Europe. His collection of critical bulletins, under the rubric "Current Theology," constitutes the best source of information on European patristics available in this country. Substantial notes "On Early Christian Exegesis" and on "Current Patristic Projects" in 1950, as well as the series entitled "The Literature of Christian Antiquity" in 1956, 1960, 1963, 1972, 1976, 1980, and 1984, offer all together a richly documented entry into the major scientific activities characteristic of European scholarship during the past 40 years. J. C. Murray made a thoughtful statement in 1948 when he announced the launching of *Sources chrétiennes*: "Among the several currents that are stirring the theological world today perhaps the most interesting, in itself and in its implications, is the movement toward a fuller and more vital contact with patristic thought" (250). The first 19 volumes of the new series were then carefully described. In 1951, J. L. McKenzie, "A Chapter in the History of Spiritual Exegesis: De Lubac's *Histoire et esprit*," and in 1961, H. Musurillo, "Shadow and Reality: Thoughts on the Problem of Typology," moved in this same direction of a highly responsible reception and assimilation of

European scholarship in America.

The gap seems obvious between such a considered openness to Continental patristics and a relative lack of patristic creativity in the U.S. itself. A strong perception of the promises linked with the study of the Fathers, such as the possibility of reaching a better Christian self-understanding, did not lead in this country to new patristic openings inside the major theological institutions. Nor did the investment secured by buying the recent European collections of patristic sources entail a broader study of the Fathers, e.g. on a college level. In fact, the academic category "Early Church" remained unchanged in its narrowness, bound with the study of the New Testament. It is the lasting merit of *TS*, and of one or two other journals like *TS*, to have informed their readership about the patristic renewal in Europe since the 40s.

Such individual initiatives alone could not convert the American scene to the basic motivations that led to such a renewal in Europe. If my analysis is correct, *TS* invites us to evaluate more precisely the differentiated status of patrology in this country and in Europe. A patristic Cinderella-complex on this side of the Atlantic would be trivial and unproductive. It is true that the popularity of medieval studies in academic circles all over North America is impressive on the threshold of the 90s, particularly when compared to the rarity of centers of patristic research. Nevertheless, a creative reaction to European patristics seems possible and appropriate. A comprehensive statement explicating the historical and social background against which European patristics flourished since 1940 may prove enlightening in the search for this genuinely American response.

WAR AND PEACE: TRANSFORMATION OF THE WESTERN WORLD

World War II, closing the dark years of Nazism with a tragic climax, brought Christian believers and post-Christian nonbelievers together all over Europe in a common spiritual resistance against the madness of a homicidal tyranny. Protestant and Roman Catholic communities alike were shaken by their militant engagements. Many new initiatives, including those in patristic scholarship, blossomed out of a new Christian awareness of the Church's social and intellectual responsibilities in that tormented world of the early 40s.

The accelerated changes of mentality induced by exceptional circumstances deeply modified, e.g., the spiritual attitudes of people belonging to my generation, then in their late teens. Salvation of the world, aimed for in Christian terms, was more closely understood as the basic recognition and the collective sharing of the most fundamental human values, such as freedom, peace, and religion—values destroyed by Nazi propa-

ganda. The men and women who dedicated themselves to serving the Church after the end of WW II were much too aware of their new spiritual openness to repeat passively the prewar models. In Roman Catholic institutions theology could no longer be categorized by so-called neo-scholastic principles. Contrary to what happened in this country, the neo-Thomistic school of thought was unable to impose itself on a broader scale in Europe during the years following the war. Maintained only by authoritarian decision inside the classrooms and in specialized journals, it did not impregnate the young generation. The final collapse of that artificial system (a *perennis* but untimely *philosophia*) during the first session of Vatican II was anticipated since the early 40s by the success of more historical forms of theology, in biblical sciences as well as in systematics.

Patristics benefited from such a deep-reaching evolution. The most spectacular illustration of what was to become a complete rebirth of patristics during the second half of the century was probably the creation of the series *Sources chrétiennes*, with its first two volumes published during the winter of 1942-43. Already conceived before the war, with several volumes ready for publication, the collection sought in the first instance a general academic public. Born in the religious and theological circles of Lyons, it was a grand project of Christian apologetics, typical of the cultural dynamics that animated French Catholicism at mid-century. Henri Marrou was to insist on the secular relevance of the project: "*Sources chrétiennes* . . . does not refer only to internal or religious problems of the Christian world; it is also a valuable contribution to the progress and the vitality of classical humanism."⁶ Marrou had been a member of the founding committee, with V. Fontoynt, S.J., the real father of the project, and with H. de Lubac, P. Chaillet, J. Daniélou, all three Jesuits. S. Fumet and G. Bardy, the latter one of the most active French patrologists at the time, also participated. In 1944 another Jesuit, C. Mondésert, joined the team, to become until recently the manager of a very successful enterprise. After 20 years about a hundred volumes were available. Today the series counts 355 volumes and continues to produce an average of 12 volumes each year.

In combining critical editions of the original texts with their translations, supplemented by substantial introductions and annotations, the series stands unequalled, one of the most significant patristic achievements of the century. It symbolizes well the very nature of European patristics since WW II: a secular as well as a religious undertaking, focusing on cultural values which seem to be vital for a European self-

⁶ *Le monde*, April 6-7, 1958.

understanding. With the support of outstanding classicists and historians, the collection was seen as providing a privileged access to Europe's birthplace in the civilization of the Late Roman Empire. Young scholars secured their Ph.D.s (or the French equivalents) in classics or in history departments by writing an introduction or preparing a critical edition for SC; many such projects are still envisaged today.

Thus patristics established itself on a broader level of historical culture, outside the clerical ghetto, and pursued a humanistic message fervently true to Christian foundations, but also interesting for post-Christian or non-Christian intellectuals. The model of SC, quickly imitated in the major countries of Europe, became one of the structuring forces that provide today's Western Christianity with a means to recover its past traditions.

Among other projects grown out of WW II, the *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* deserves special mention. F. J. Dölger, who died in 1940, had conceived it at least since 1935, in line with his own work as a historian of religion. His concern was to clarify the continuity and discontinuity between pre-Christian and Christian antiquity. His research extended beyond the literary heritage and into daily realities and all forms of human expression. The first fascicles came out between 1941 and 1943, the seventh of them destroyed at the printer's workshop by the fire which devastated the whole city of Leipzig in 1944. The burned fascicle was entirely recomposed and published in January 1945. Unfortunately, over 500 manuscripts prepared for the following fascicles, many with no other copy, disappeared in the Rhineland in March 1945. The ill-fated work started anew in 1950 and with strong determination reached a top level of erudition, exhibiting an uncommon sense for cultural synthesis. The artisan of the collective work, T. Klauser, was replaced, only in 1972, by E. Dassmann. The RAC is now one of the indispensable tools of patristic research.

WW II effected a severe cut in the generations of patristic scholars. The *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* (ZNTW) opened in 1949 with a long editorial: "Den Toten," "To the Dead." But generally speaking, the loss was less dramatic than during WW I. It is rather amazing to observe with what enthusiastic inspiration old patristic publications found a new vitality after 1945; and everywhere—in the U.K. and on the Continent—new initiatives burst out of universities and monasteries. The international community of patristic scholars adjusted to the conditions created by the so-called "cold war" and the long-lasting confrontation between superpowers. Western Europe became a small world, with new transportation facilities and with a passionate will to overcome the hatred of an absurd wartime. Ecumen-

ism was in the air, pervading all Christian traditions and challenging the bunker mentality of Pius XII's administration. With Eastern Europe, however, no easy communication was possible. In the 60s one had to wait a year—in the best of cases—to have a microfilm mailed from Moscow.

During that period 1945–65, the most fateful changes in Europe with respect to patristics and to Christian theology as such were linked with the materialistic drift away from ecclesiastical institutions within European society at large. It was a quiet “conflict,” a silent deserting which emptied the ranks of ministers and clerics and brought the statistical rate of churchgoers to alarmingly low levels. In Catholic France the secularizing shifts entailed the closing of many seminaries, convents, and other religious institutions. A well-informed historian of French Catholicism told me in the late 70s that more ecclesiastical libraries had vanished in France since Vatican II than during the French Revolution. The renunciation of the Roman liturgy in Latin around 1962 added a symbolic episode to a more global loss of educational and linguistic ties with classical antiquity. Pastoral urgencies, added to a clerical type of anti-intellectualism, inhibited the younger clergy's reading of the Fathers. Patristics emigrated, as a scholarly discipline, from the theologates to the state universities. The funding of patristic publications would still be secured by clerical authorities, mainly in religious orders; but a promising new generation of ecclesiastical scholars eager to work in patristics soon became impossible to imagine. It seems all the more remarkable, then, that the patristic renewal continued to swell. It was a cultural phenomenon, independent of the modified situation inside the Church.

DEVELOPMENT OF PATRISTIC STUDIES

Patristic studies reach their essential goal in offering an access to ancient Christian literature. They claim also to obtain a critical interpretation of the huge documentary evidence available about the institutional and private forms of life in early Christian communities. Together with archeologists and historians of art, patristic scholars try to reconstruct the cultural landscape of vanished traditions. Working with the historians of ancient philosophy, they recapture the categories of thought at work in the minds of early generations of theologians, who articulated the Christian message for the first time out of its Jewish homeland. With the historians of religions they aim at analyzing the social history and the symbolic language of early Christianity, which was only one of the many religious traditions alive in the imperial Roman world. Patristics is intrinsically pluridisciplinary: the same scholar must assume at once the roles of a philologist, classicist, literary critic, historian, theologian, philosopher, etc.; he or she must learn how to establish a critical edition

or to decipher an inscription on a gravestone, but also how to penetrate the deeper soul of ancient piety or to evaluate allegorical exegesis. The prodigious flowering of patristic literature between 1940–90 illustrates the polymorphous richness and diversity of such studies.

Manuscripts, Editions, Translations, Instrumenta

The past 50 years show a distinctive pattern in the treatment of manuscripts, editions, and translations. The late 19th century and the early 20th were times of intense philological work. In Great Britain, Germany, and France, but also in Italy and in other countries, scholars were busy with their many acquisitions of new manuscripts and with the inventory of existing manuscript collections. At an accelerated pace new identifications were announced and new first editions secured. By contrast, such initiatives have decelerated in the period from 1940 on. Its own merit lies more in careful revisions of the work done by former generations and in complementary inquiries.⁷ Sensational discoveries are not completely excluded: the Gnostic library of Nag Hammadi; Melito of Sardis' hymnic sermon, identified on a papyrus possessed by the University of Michigan; Origen's *Peri pascha*, acquired in Cairo; John Chrysostom's eight baptismal catecheses, discovered in the library of Stavronikita on Mount Athos by A. Wenger in 1955; and others besides. But cataloging and editorial work prevailed. More precisely, for the first time new institutions were created to promote the study of ancient manuscripts. The use of microfilm opened a new era in this regard. At the British Library, the Vaticana, the Library of Congress, the Bibliothèque Nationale, microfilming manuscripts became routine.

A very special case in the area of discovery and scientific recovery of Greek patristic manuscripts is offered by Marcel Richard's career. He had prepared his doctorate in Rome (1930–34), where R. Devreesse⁸ introduced him to the collections of the Vatican Library. Wounded on the battlefield and made prisoner in 1940 at Dunkirk, he escaped and found a job at the recently opened Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes in Paris. In 1948 he published his famous *Répertoire des bibliothèques et des catalogues de manuscrits grecs* 1,⁹ which he extended in 1958 and completed again by a *Supplément* 1 (1958–63) published in

⁷ Typical of such revisions is A. Hamman's *Supplementum* (5 vols.; Paris: Garnier, 1958–74), updating J.-P. Migne's *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina* (1844) with new attributions and newly discovered texts. At an earlier date, P. Glorieux, *Pour revaloriser Migne* (= *Mélanges de science religieuse* 9 [1952] *Cahier supplémentaire*), had collected a long list of revised attributions, with bibliographical references. Note also Migne's *Series latina* on microfiche, since 1972, at Inter Documentation, Zug, Switzerland.

⁸ See his *Introduction à l'étude des manuscrits grecs* (Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1954).

⁹ Paris: C.N.R.S., 1948.

1964. With a fascicle distributed by C.N.R.S. in 1952, the *Inventaire des manuscrits grecs de British Museum I, Found Sloane, Additional, Egerton, Cotonian et Stowe*, it is Richard's only book to emerge from the 94 articles of his bibliography. The author himself, shortly before his death in 1976, reviewed the collection of these articles in a fascinating report about his scientific journey.¹⁰ M. Geerard, the editor of the three-volume collection, noted that Richard's "explorations have been of such fruitful success that, thanks to him, the number of Greek manuscripts known has climbed from around 35,000 to as many as almost 55,000!"

Between 1952 and 1970 Richard went on a dozen missions, sponsored yearly by the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. He describes in his exhilarating reports how personally meaningful it was to actually reach the manuscripts he wanted to see, e.g. on Mount Athos, and then to have the privilege of taking pictures of them.¹¹ His generosity has become proverbial. Since the 60s his name has been repeated more often than any other in the acknowledgments of authors editing Greek texts or in studies on the transmission of manuscripts. 30 years ago, in 1959, Richard was still poorly installed, with his thousands of microfilms, in an old house in the rue Vieille-du-Temple. Today, however, his former Section grecque at the Institut d'Histoire et de Recherche des Textes is located in an elegant building on the avenue d'Iéna, securing world-wide information about microfilmed patristic texts and sending copies of these texts to scholars all over the planet. In the same institute the Section latine possesses an even broader amount of similar materials, both sections contributing since 1970 to the *Revue d'histoire des textes*,¹² a journal of the most exquisite erudition.

One last memory imposes itself: the gentle welcoming encountered in the library of the Patristic Institute at Vlatadon Monastery above the city of Thessaloniki. Here during the 60s the precious collections of manuscripts hidden in the male wilderness of Mount Athos were micro-filmed with German funding under the direction of W. Schneemelcher.

It seems scandalous, then, that the field of patristics near the end of the century confronts the following paradox: never have the treasures of ancient manuscripts been better known or made more available to the academic public, and never has their study been more handicapped by a lack of motivation and a deficiency in the needed skills of classical languages.

Editions and translations of patristic literature can best be found in

¹⁰ M. Richard, *Opera minora* 1 (Turnhout/Leuven: Brepols/University Press, 1976) 9-22.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 3:73-80.

¹² Paris: C.N.R.S.

patrologies, e.g. that of Johannes Quasten in three volumes.¹³ In a way which seems typical for the period under consideration, Quasten's *Patrology* conforms to a more educational pattern. It quotes the main authors and avoids esoteric abbreviations, in order to prove helpful to teachers and students. The same readable style has been kept in the more recent addition to Quasten's work, published originally in Italian as *Patrologia 3* (Latin writers from Nicaea to Chalcedon) by A. di Berardino and a team of scholars at the Istituto Patristico Augustinianum in Rome.¹⁴ A reprint of O. Bardenhewer's *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur* in 1962¹⁵ was based on the second edition of 1913; this reliance on earlier editions demonstrates to a great extent how current patristics remains indebted to 19th-century scholarship. At long last a new attempt to communicate the essential substance of modern patrologies to the Greek-speaking world was brilliantly realized by S. Papadopoulos in his *Patrologia 1*.¹⁶

Two American series, strictly contemporaneous, illustrate eloquently the universal effort during the second half of this century to offer patristic sources to the ordinary reader. The shifts in the understanding of such an enterprise were candidly confessed by L. Schopp, original editor of *The Fathers of the Church*,¹⁷ who in Vol. 1 limited himself to claiming: "The translations, although done by American Catholic scholars, are destined neither for scholars only, nor exclusively for Catholics, but for the entire English-speaking world"; and by editorial director B. M. Peebles in 1969: "Whatever could have been said at the time for a restriction observed in the earlier volumes, it should now be stated that for some years the series has been enriched by the collaboration of scholars who were neither American nor Roman Catholic." The confessional background, more important for patristics in the U.S., reveals itself again.

The other series, *Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation*, created in 1946 by J. Quasten and J. C. Plumpe, then at the Catholic University of America, promised to give due consideration to Christian Oriental sources, in addition to the Greek and Latin. The new series was announced by its first two editors with triumphalistic

¹³ 3 vols.; Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1950, 1953, 1960. For updated information see, e.g., the French version (tr. J. Laporte; Paris: Cerf, 1955, 1957, 1963) and the Spanish (tr. I. Oñatibia; 3rd ed.; Madrid: B.A.C., 1978, 1977 [Vol. 1 of the Spanish edition comprises the first two volumes of the English original]).

¹⁴ Turin/Rome: Marietti, 1978. See the versions in Spanish (tr. J. M. Guirau; Madrid: B.A.C., 1981) and English (tr. P. Solari; Westminster, Md.: Christian Classics, 1986).

¹⁵ 5 vols.; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

¹⁶ Athens: no publisher given, 1977.

¹⁷ Now published in Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1946-.

overtones. In 1974, W. J. Burghardt and T. C. Lawler joined the editorial board. Four of the most recent volumes (43, 44, 46, 47) offer *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage*, translated and annotated by G. W. Clarke (Australian National University),¹⁸ a masterpiece of a (more or less) continuous commentary which confirms the scientific standards reached by ACW.

The *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum*¹⁹ comprised 66 volumes by the year 1940. Among the 28 added to it since that date, the most surprising is doubtlessly Vol. 88, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini opera: Epistolae ex duobus codicibus nuper in lucem prolatae* (1981). Its editor, Johannes Divjak, identified these letters (28 of which are written by Augustine, the remaining three to him) in two French libraries, the Parisian Bibliothèque Nationale and the Bibliothèque Municipale of Marseille, where they had escaped the attention of all the local Augustinian scholars. The series *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte*, at the Akademie-Verlag of the University of Berlin, has succeeded, despite severe restrictions, in adding about 20 imposing volumes to its collection of patristic sources since 1953. The monumental *Corpus christianorum*, advertised as "a new Migne" by Brepols in Turnhout (Belgium), was launched in sequence. The Series latina, anticipated in 1951 by E. Dekkers' *Clavis patrum latinorum*, started in 1953, with 176 volumes published to date. The Series graeca, complemented since 1974 by M. Geerard's remarkable *Clavis patrum graecorum* (five volumes published, a sixth in preparation), had been prepared by M. Richard before his death; it counts 20 volumes issued since 1977. The *Series apocryphorum Novi Testamenti*, born in 1983 at the initiative of F. Bovon and a Swiss group of patristic scholars, includes an ambitious six volumes.

Another Belgian achievement in the grand style of text editions is the *Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium*, founded in 1903 and resurrected by R. Draguet in 1948, after having ceased publication during WW II. Its sections of texts and translations are respectively for Ethiopian, Arabic, Armenian, Coptic, Georgian, and Syriac languages. Since 1981 over 20 new texts have been published in the CSCO. The series underlines another feature characteristic of patristic studies which has been popularized since 1940: systematic research in Oriental languages. The *Patrologia orientalis*, founded in 1897, with reprints by Brepols in 1947 of its earliest issues, was the work of R. Graffin, replaced after WW II by his nephew F. Graffin. 19 monumental volumes were produced, bringing the total to 44. Conceived in a pleasing format and in separate fascicles (over 200), these critical editions, translations, and learned

¹⁸ New York: Newman, 1984, 1986, 1989.

¹⁹ Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1866-.

introductions are a tremendous help for penetrating the liturgical, political, and theological traditions of Oriental churches.

Other patristic collections, including original texts and/or translations, launched since 1940 are the following (with no claim to being exhaustive): *Schriften der Kirchenväter*;²⁰ *Textus patristici et liturgici* (ca. 20 vols.);²¹ *Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur*;²² *Patristische Texte und Studien* (30 vols.);²³ *Philosophia patrum* (9 vols.);²⁴ *Variorum Reprints* (20 recent patristic titles);²⁵ *Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi* (14 vols.);²⁶ *Patrimoine arabe chrétien* (9 vols.);²⁷ *Sources of Early Christian Thought* (ca. 10 vols.);²⁸ *Cahiers d'orientalisme* (17 vols.);²⁹ *Patristic Monograph Series* (13 vols.).³⁰

Brief mention must suffice for the many patristic texts published and translated in broader series of classical literature, such as the Loeb Classical Library, the Collection Budé, or the lively series *The Classics of Western Spirituality*, directed by K. A. Lynch since 1978 (58 vols.).³¹ Also falling within this category is *Hermeneia*,³² within which W. R. Schoedel's recent *Ignatius of Antioch* looks so attractive.

In addition to such very lively editorial activity, patristic scholars produced during the past 50 years a number of fundamental tool-texts. I have mentioned the *Claves* of Dekkers and Geerard; I should add H. Kraft's fine *Clavis patrum apostolicorum*.³³ Several lexicons and dictionaries have also marked the scene, e.g. Guido Müller's *Lexicon Athanasianum*³⁴ and Gösta Claesson's *Index Tertullianus*.³⁵ A complete index for Gregory of Nyssa's works is available in Münster/Westphalen, and one for Apollinarius has recently been computerized under the direction of R. Hübner in Eichstätt.

Among the dictionaries let me mention first the *Dictionnaire de spiri-*

²⁰ Munich: Kösel.

²¹ Regensburg: Pustet.

²² Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann.

²³ Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter.

²⁴ Leiden: Brill.

²⁵ London: Variorum Reprints.

²⁶ Quebec: Laval University.

²⁷ Lebanon: Khaslik.

²⁸ Philadelphia: Fortress.

²⁹ Geneva: Patrick Cramer.

³⁰ Cambridge, Mass.: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation.

³¹ New York: Paulist.

³² Philadelphia: Fortress.

³³ Munich: Kösel, 1963.

³⁴ Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1952.

³⁵ Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1975.

tualité.³⁶ After a first volume antecedent to WW II, the real start of *DS* and its remarkable growth belong to the period under consideration. Its patristic contributions are in many ways unique, usually based on detailed bibliographies. More immediately illustrative of the vitality of current patristics are Albert Blaise, *Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs chrétiens*;³⁷ the *Dizionario patristico e di antichità cristiane*, edited by Angelo di Berardino;³⁸ and the gigantic Augustinus-Lexikon, in preparation at Würzburg under C. Mayer.³⁹

Among many other computerized projects announced these days, there are the publications of the Centre de Traitement Electronique des Documents, directed by P. Tombeur at the Catholic University of Louvain (Louvain-la-Neuve). In the framework of a *Thesaurus patrum latinorum* still in preparation (over 30 fascicles published), the *Thesaurus s. Gregorii magni* on microcards has been published.⁴⁰ In the preface Tombeur informs us that "with a few rare exceptions all the volumes of the Corpus christianorum, series latina, have already been computerized" (vii). Another promising enterprise is the Banque d'informations bibliographiques patristiques, under the direction of Michel Roberge at Laval University in Quebec. It is hoped that this bibliographical databank will be operational in the near future through computer networks all over the world.

The afore-mentioned regular reports by W. J. Burghardt in *TS* offer a complete survey of such *instrumenta studiorum* and of many others which have been advertised at the patristic conference held every four years in Oxford since 1951. These reports should free me from an endless and tedious listing of publications. I shall nevertheless pay explicit tribute to a few works, either because they are outstanding or more simply because they call for such attention from the shelves of my study. G. W. H. Lampe's *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, published in fascicles before being printed as a hard-bound volume,⁴¹ was first entertained as a project in 1906 and was completed later under the editorship of F. L. Cross. Initially conceived as a companion to Liddell-Scott-James, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, it developed into a fabulous encyclopedia, covering all forms of Christian linguistic usages in the Greek-speaking world to the time of Maximus Confessor. It is a lexical *summa* that will remain unchallenged in print for many generations.

Noteworthy also is the Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire,

³⁶ Paris: Beauchesne, 1932-.

³⁷ Turnhout: Brepols, 1954.

³⁸ 2 vols.; Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1983.

³⁹ See Vol. 1, fasc. 1-2, "Aaron-Anima, animus" (Basel/Stuttgart: Schwab, 1986).

⁴⁰ Turnhout: Brepols, 1986.

⁴¹ Oxford: Clarendon, 1961.

begun in 1982 with a volume by André Mandouze, *Prosopographie de l'Afrique chrétienne (303-533)*. The whole enterprise completes and parallels A. H. M. Jones, *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*.⁴² The fruit of long-lasting teamwork at the Sorbonne under the direction of H. Marrou (d. 1978) and brought to its completion thanks to Mandouze's determination, the PAC treats all the known data on 2565 individuals. Other volumes are in preparation for Spain, Italy, Gaul, etc. The *Biblia patristica*⁴³ has received a well-deserved warm welcome in the scholarly community. Founded at the Faculté de Théologie Protestante of the University of Strasbourg, the work was one of the earliest results of computerized research in the field. It offers a complete index of biblical citations and allusions in patristic literature. With four volumes published (and a supplementary volume on Philo), the expansive analysis now reaches into the main Greek production of the fourth century.

Before describing other forms of patristic activities, I should at least mention a few of the many bibliographies and bibliographical bulletins produced since 1940 in addition to the older but always indispensable J. Marouzeau: *L'Année philologique*; the *Bibliographia patristica*; the *Bulletin augustinien*; the *Bulletin of Ancient and Medieval Christian Literature*; and many other bulletins in journals like *Recherches de science religieuse*, *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, *TS*, and *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*.

Conferences and Colloquia

To show how productive patristic scholars have been since 1940, I prefer not to attempt an impossible accumulation of books, articles, and dissertations. Rather, let us engage in a more serene contemplation of the Oxford conferences. They are the brain and the heart of the worldwide patristic community. Every four years since 1951 the International Conference on Patristic Studies has attracted people from the six continents and given them an opportunity to meet one another. F. L. Cross had a dream soon after WW II: calling for study of the Fathers, he would bring together scholars from East and West and from all Christian denominations, to share their expertise and projects. Some German participants in the first gathering still remember the emotional experience of being graciously hosted by their enemies of a few years before. Cross's initiative was an immediate success. The atmosphere of the old colleges, the proximity of the Bodleian Library, the exciting book sales provided for a long time by Blackwell's, and not least the charming ease with which the British hosts adjusted to those many hundreds of foreign-

⁴² 2 vols.; Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University, 1971, 1980.

⁴³ Paris: C.N.R.S., 1975-.

ers offered a unique opportunity to create the spirit of a global family.

From the second conference onward, each meeting has been followed by a massive publication of papers. The late Dr. Cross noted well the value of these papers in the foreword to the first two volumes of *Studia patristica*: "They certainly bear witness both to the vitality of Patristic Studies to-day in many lands and to their variety, range and far-reaching ramifications."⁴⁴ Until Vol. 16, published only in 1985, SP was part of the prestigious series *Texte und Untersuchungen*.⁴⁵ Material difficulties made it imperative to find other publishers from Vol. 17 on, but the title SP could be preserved.⁴⁶ The 116 papers of the first two volumes were divided into sections with Latin titles: *Editiones, Critica, Philologica, Biblica, Iudaica, Historica, Liturgica, Iuridica, Theologica, Philosophica, Monastica, Ascetica*.

The structure of the meetings and of the subsequent publications was so well planned before 1951 that it remains unchanged down to the present. After Cross died in December 1968, his former assistant, Miss E. A. Livingstone, replaced him as the convoker of the conference and the editor of SP. Such stability contributed more than anything else to shaping up the discipline of patristics in its social and intellectual dimensions during the second half of the century. Four volumes of SP were filled with the increasing number of papers from the third gathering in 1959. Only a few changes intervened in the rubrics of those volumes (SP 3-6): *Iudaica* was dropped, *Patres Apostolici* and *Augustiniana* were added. In SP 7-9, issued in 1966 after the fourth conference of 1963, three new rubrics appeared: *Classica, Ethica, Post-Patristica*. The number of papers continued to increase in 1971. A committee of 26 distinguished scholars was supposed to assist Miss Livingstone in the preparation of SP 12-14. She succeeded so efficiently in her new functions that only 20 members were still part of the redaction committee at the next conference. No mention of such assistance is made in later years.

It may be interesting to follow the changes of rubrics from one gathering to another, because they highlight major trends and concentrations of patristic work during the period in question. Thus the papers of 1971, published only in 1975, were classified under the Latin titles already mentioned (*Classica* being enlarged to *Classica et Hellenica*), plus a series of new titles: *Tertullian, Origenism, Gnostica, Cappadocian Fathers*.

⁴⁴ *Studia patristica* 1 (Berlin: Akademie, 1957) v.

⁴⁵ The introduction of SP, essentially international and close to the living tradition of oral debates, into the formerly confessional and mainly national Berliner TU series may be seen as characteristic of the *Zeitgeist* in patristics during the period under survey.

⁴⁶ SP 17 (three parts; Oxford: Pergamon, 1982); SP 18 (four parts; Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian, 1986-89).

Only two volumes of SP followed the meeting of September 1975. They were distributed as late as 1983 and 1985 due to the dramatic situation in which the Akademie-Verlag was struggling for survival in East Berlin. Many participants of 1975 found other publishers. The new rubrics of the 1975 papers, replacing some from 1971, were *Orientalia*, *E Saeculo Secundo*, *Origen*, *Athanasius*, *Chrysostom*. In 1982 the papers of 1979 were published by reproducing the authors' typescripts at Pergamon Press in Oxford itself. Only one rubric was new: *Tertullian to Nicaea in the West*. Thanks to these divisions, it is easy to follow the stream of papers and interests through the decades. They allow us as well to identify the major topics, addressed by major papers and discussed in the afternoon major-themes sessions. It is rather surprising that a collective task of such proportions as the Oxford conferences can boast a consistent achievement through four decades. Even if the institution now reaches a critical age, its continuous prosperity argues well for its future.

The significance of the Oxford conferences for the development of patristic studies since WW II can hardly be overstated. The acts of these gatherings currently fill 23 volumes. A clear look at their contents would probably lead to interesting conclusions about the work achieved by scholars in the field. I must limit myself to a few scattered observations.

If one follows, e.g., the whole series of SP papers collected under the rubric *Biblica*, the scarcity of text-critical contributions is noticeable (four in 1955 and 1959, only two or three the other times; none in 1975, only one in the three parts of Vol. 17, from 1979). Nevertheless, the need for a systematic exploration of the Bible text in the main patristic traditions had been emphasized by M. Spanneut as early as 1959: "Eustathius' [biblical] text confirms a truth of which current textual criticism becomes more and more aware: our manuscripts of the Bible are insufficient witnesses. Should one intend to establish the scriptural text of an era or a specific culture, one would have to call on the indirect transmission of the text, and often to give priority to it."⁴⁷ In fact, the research reported by Spanneut developed strongly in other places, e.g. the *Vetus Latina* Institute in Beuron, the Institute for the Study of the New Testament created by K. Aland in Münster, or the *Biblia patristica* project in Strasbourg. The Oxford gatherings served as a public forum where basic methodological needs of that sort could be shared by a large variety of scholars. The same is true of *Iudaica*, or Talmudic studies, as linked with the study of the Bible in the early Church. Papers on the Talmud and on rabbinic exegeses were hardly read after 1967. This contrasts with the earlier Oxford gatherings, shortly after WW II, which

⁴⁷ SP 4 (Oxford 1959, 1961) 189.

witnessed the collaboration of Jewish scholars with patrologists in a common study of the rabbinic and primitive traditions often so closely linked in space and time.

The bulk of *Biblica* in all the past Oxford gatherings was devoted to essays on the history of interpretation. The question of a biblical hermeneutic proper to the Fathers inspired a few lively exchanges in the sessions of 1955 and 1959. While the theoretical debate was limited almost completely to the Alexandrian School in the wake of H. de Lubac, dozens of papers described, from one gathering to another, how the Fathers used Scripture and how they understood it. Thus one finds papers on particular authors regarding their use of Scripture, and other papers on books or verses of the Septuagint as quoted by the Fathers. One single verse may be tracked through the writings of several centuries, or discussed only in one author. Biblical images, phrases, and doctrines are analyzed in the light of specific cultures, in Syria, Northern Africa, or Ireland.

The richness of the resulting picture is striking. On one side, the Bible as a normative and literary monument enriched decisively both the Latin and the Greek languages in the Church; a "Christian Latin" and a "Christian Greek" developed in various traditions, based essentially on the appropriation of the Septuagint or the *Vetus Latina*, and of what became the New Testament, from the second century on. On the other side, the complex process of self-identification, through which the Christian Church established itself as a unified body of believers, determined the canon of Scripture and fixed the basic rules of its interpretation. Without such canons and rules the Bible as we know it would never have been transmitted to us. Founding practices in Christian community life, e.g. baptism and Eucharist, opened a sacred space for experiencing the actual truth of the biblical message. In short, the patristic reception of Scripture implied a bifocal process. Scripture alone was deciding about its own reception as its source and its vital inspiration, whereas the recipient generations in the Church of the Fathers determined what true Scripture actually was and what it meant for them.

The philological tasks and the many historical inquiries linked with the study of that process, which entailed for the Christian mind a far-reaching transformation of the classical heritage, still attract patristic scholars into vast fields of research as yet undone. The Oxford papers show the many diverse challenges experts must face in order to reach a consistent image of the Christian tradition as a whole in its founding stage. They delineate prospective fields for patrologists of the next generation.

A majority of the patristic scholars who have assembled at Oxford

since 1951 (the tenth conference is scheduled for August 1991) are, in one way or another, theologians. They represent somehow the whole spectrum of Christian traditions in East and West. Cross's initial project was to infuse an ecumenical spirit into the planned gatherings. In any case, one common concern of all the participants has been a critical retrieving of the historic foundations of Christian faith. Consequently, the bulk of papers delivered pertain to theological data elucidating Christian identity during the first seven centuries of the common era. For it was when a formal communion was kept alive between the patriarchs of Rome and Constantinople that historic foundations were laid for Christianity.

In 1955 the rubric *Theologica* covered mainly a collection of essays on doctrinal themes studied in individual authors. A brilliant address by G. Florovsky on a broader topic was entitled "Eschatology in the Patristic Age." In 1959 the number of *Theologica* doubled, with significant concentration on hermeneutics, cosmology, anthropology, and Trinitarian theologies. A heavy concentration of papers was added under the rubric Augustine and Augustinism. There again the essays proceeded from a huge diversity of critical approaches, with many new insights, freed from former scholastic limitations. In general sessions of the conference or in the master-themes sessions it also becomes clear that the study of Gnosticism would compete with patristics.

In the gathering of 1963, but in others as well, the liturgical renewal in the Roman Catholic Church, which had just been solemnly approved by Vatican II, was announced in one paper. Another paper rested on some vague notion of ecumenical relations between Islam and Christianity. Several addresses called for improved methodologies, e.g. closer ties with Jewish studies, or a rigorous prosopography, or combined studies of literary sources and liturgical institutions. Literary genres, lost in very early times among Christian communities, were uncovered. Social history imposed itself with strong arguments about "the study of the old-Roman rite" or "the Irish penitentials." The council as the event of the day was echoed under several rubrics, as when a subtitle jumped "From Toledo IV to Vatican II" (which means from the seventh century to the 20th), or when the patristic evidence for the inspiration of councils was stressed.

The most spectacular increase of *Theologica* happened in 1971 (SP 13 [1975]), with an appropriate inaugural address by J. Daniélou, "Recherche et tradition chez les Pères," and with a broad display of historical theology under the rubrics *Critica*, *Philologica*, and *Biblica*. The history of Christian thought, winding through the centuries around its central Christological axis, was analyzed and integrated in authors like Irenaeus, Theophilus of Antioch, Melito, Methodius, Hilary, and Leo. Christian

anthropology was discussed in Lactantius and in Athanasius, and Nestorius was reconsidered.

My few impressionistic notations must suffice as a reminder of the intense activity by patristic experts in the Oxford conferences. But the years take their toll, even if, like books and good wines, scholars age well in an appropriate atmosphere. This seems the case in these Oxford gatherings, whose future seems now less determined by their senior organizers and participants than by the very seeds of patristic scholarship which they spread over Europe and America.

Two major societies were created, in analogy with and complementary to the Oxford gatherings. The first, mainly sponsored by French authorities, originated in 1965, the Association Internationale des Etudes Patristiques, which issues annually an informative bulletin on the professional activities of its 600 or so members. The other is the North American Patristic Society, founded in 1968 and counting today about 400 members, which meets in regular colloquia between the Oxford conferences and publishes the journal *Patristics*.

Inspired by the Oxford conferences, the half century under consideration became a time of regular colloquia. A Colloque International des Etudes Origéniennes started in Montserrat (Spain) in September 1973. It was held again in Bari (Italy) four years later, then in Manchester (U.K.) 1981, Innsbruck (Austria) 1985, and this year in Boston (U.S.A.), with the 1993 meeting announced for Paris. Its success has been confirmed by the regular publication of Origeniana volumes. A twin institution was the series of colloquia on Gregory of Nyssa, inaugurated in 1969 in Chevetogne (Belgium). It would be difficult to summarize all the colloquia held yearly at the dynamic Istituto Patristico Augustinianum, next to Saint Peter's Square in Rome. They explore contextual, biographical, cultural, and mainly theological areas in Augustinian studies.

The Oxford conferences became a seminal reference for such gatherings by the very fact of their international participation. People knowing each other better as specialized and complementary experts enjoyed meeting more often. A lively tradition has therefore developed since the 50s: to celebrate patristic anniversaries. An Augustinian colloquy of that sort happens almost every two years. More commonly it is centenaries that are now marked by such gatherings: Chalcedon in 1951, Athanasius in 1973, Ambrose in 1974, Basil in 1979, Constantinople I in 1980, Origen in 1985 (Innsbruck) and again in 1986 (Notre Dame, Indiana).

When the acts of these colloquia could not be published, the major papers fueled some of the many patristic journals. Let me complete my limited survey of patristic activities during the past 50 years with a few observations about journals. On the one hand, critical technicalia are

best communicated in short articles. On the other, third-hand papers chewing on second-hand literature, without a real experience of the sources, often find refuge in journals. The journals themselves usually have broad standards, which helps the readership to know what to expect from them. I have already given a sketchy description of *TS*'s patristic contributions. Some older journals of a more general nature have massively determined the course of patristics since 1940. Others, being newcomers, have focused exclusively on the study of the Fathers.

The *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique*, launched in 1899, published in 1940 a long dissertation by Bruno de Solages on "La genèse et l'orientation de la théologie de la guerre juste," out of its patristic background from Thomas Aquinas on. During WW II and its aftermath *BLE* never ceased offering numerous patristic contributions. Particularly precious has been H. Crouzel's "Chronique Origénienne." The *Journal of Theological Studies* was at its 41st volume in 1940. The editors of that issue collected 20 patristic "articles and notes and studies." There are nine entries of the same sort among 23 in 1988. *JTS* is a monument of erudition where learned men and women do not hesitate to contradict one another for the benefit of more scholarly evidence on debated issues. The *Recherches de science religieuse* has been, from the start of the century on, a stronghold of professional patristic research. Many articles published therein between 1940 and 1970 remain indispensable, e.g. Daniélou's famous critical bulletins. Since the 70s *RSR* has undergone a needed metamorphosis, focusing more on contemporary problems.

A familiar example of older journals is the *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde des Urchristentums*. In its first issue, in 1900, editor E. Preuschen observed: "If one surveys the scientific literature of recent years, one is struck by the strong increase of methodological questions"; then he opposed centuries of dogmatic idealism to the current situation created by historical research. After Preuschen's premature death in 1920, the journal benefited from the editorship of H. Lietzmann, with a significant change in the final part of its title: . . .und die Kunde der älteren Kirche. Historical improvements and a deeper sense for Christian foundations resulted in elimination of the category "Urchristentum," which had limited the horizons to the study of the second century. In other words, the notion "Early Church" (*ältere Kirche*) was introduced precisely as a mark of a broader patristic openness, whereas in the academic usage of this country that same notion continues to keep its more restricted connotations from before 1921. Edited in 1940 by H. Lietzmann and W. Eltester, the journal included 11 articles, eight of them focusing on patristics. Lietzmann died in June 1942; the 1941 issue came out only in autumn 1942, with a similar proportion of patristic

contributions, among them B. Steidle's "Neue Untersuchungen zu Origenes' Peri Archon." *ZNTW* is coedited today by a distinguished German patrologist. The same should be emphasized about two other venerable journals, the *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* (1905) and the *Zeitschrift für die Kirchengeschichte* (1876).

As for journals launched since 1940 in the area of patristics, I have space only to mention *Vigiliae christianae* (1947), *Revue des études augustinienes* (1955), *Sacris erudiri* (1957), *Augustinianum* (1961), *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* (1961), *Vetera christianorum* (1964), *Patristics* (1972), and *The Second Century* (1981).

PATRISTICS IN THE NEXT MILLENNIUM?

The last decade of the century may hold its own surprises for patristics in particular and for the Western world in general. Nevertheless, the delay of the next ten years seems negligible for someone bold enough to compare the status of patristic scholars at the start of the present millennium with their probable status in 2001. Around the year 1000, patristic sources constituted the only access to culture as such. In copying them and in learning them by heart in the monasteries of the Mediterranean world and of Northern Europe, young students and old masters were discovering a fragmentary but essential vision of classical and Christian antiquity. They were taught by these sources, and by them alone, the elementary grammar of educated language, the basic rules of logic, and also how to pray and to understand Scripture. The 11th-century lack of a historical sensitivity gave way to a univocal and uncritical way of absorbing the patristic heritage.

At least until Abelard, and for a long time after him, no one among those monastic and clerical generations of readers would have questioned the opinions, or "sentences," of the Fathers. They were not "patrologists" in the modern sense, but they immersed themselves in the patristic past. From Peter Lombard on, the *sententiae* became a matter of scholastic inquiries. All through the medieval era the Fathers prevailed with a canonical authority, even when thoroughly discussed in accordance with current church life, mainly in the classrooms of the newly founded colleges of arts and letters. Patristics as a proper discipline developed out of the Reformation period, when theological training began to establish itself as an academic business cut off from the church community at large. The last half century in patristic studies is the result of such a long-lasting evolution. It emerged from the whole scholarly tradition of what may be called classical Christianity. It was still quintessentially European in its motivation and in its achievements.

I have sketched a short outline of these achievements. I shall now

explicitate more critically the motivation. As I suggested earlier, the broader impulse at the core of patristics since 1940 was the spiritual and humanistic revival in Europe after WW II, conceived as a creative response to the destructive madness of the war. In its collective vitality it was a Christian response, neither confessional nor clerical. It brought believers of all Christian traditions together with contemporary unbelievers in a collaborative effort to reappropriate the riches of late antiquity through authentic scholarship. There Christianity established itself as a religion in the terms of ancient Mediterranean culture; there, too, European culture was born. The liturgical and biblical revivals before WW II had prepared the Roman Catholic renaissance which liberally pervaded Western Europe after the war, until it reached its climax and its end at Vatican II in the early 60s. The collapse of institutional and scholastic traditions in the Church challenged by Vatican II did not entail a slowdown in patristic research. For, from being a theological discipline dedicated to the Fathers as venerated only in the piety of the Church and used for its self-defense, patristics had become in the meantime a secular enterprise. Such a shift will never repeat itself in the same context, nor be inspired by the creative attitudes linked with that context. Thus we can say a firm good-bye to the spectacular development of patristics in Europe during the past 50 years. Something else lies ahead.

What lies ahead is the study of the Christian identity outside the boundaries of a Eurocentered classical Christianity. One of the less fortunate legacies of a Eurocentered Christianity in its latest stages, since the 18th-century Enlightenment, is a scientific exegesis of Scripture which continues to generate a double reaction of hierarchical and popular fundamentalism. A structural reformation of Christian doctrines that holds together Scripture and faith, divine incarnation and church, letter and spirit in the observance of Christian practices seems urgently needed as a preliminary to a renewed spiritual exegesis of the Bible. The controversy of the 50s about typology and allegory now seems like a baroque entertainment for old-fashioned clergymen; the real problems that remain unsolved call for more elementary answers about what faith in a written revelation of God actually means in our postmodern culture.

The pluralistic nature of culture, which surfaces all over the planet, beyond the times of a Eurocentered modernity, has been well described in Salman Rushdie's bluntly prophetic novel *The Satanic Verses*. In a perturbed world which understands itself more in reference to reincarnation myths than to established traditions grounded in sacred books, the basic Christian questions should be: What has the Bible, as appropriated by the Church, meant for the history and the social self-understanding of generations of believers? Which kinds of cultural and reli-

gious traditions were produced by Christians in reference to the Bible? Which tensions were constantly stressed and reabsorbed inside Christian communities between Scripture and dogma, exegesis and theology?

A "spiritual" interpretation of the Bible that would nourish vital dynamisms in postmodern Christianity should by no means be dreamed of as a return to the contemplative allegories of a thousand years ago. Spirituality after WW II, after Auschwitz and the nuclear terror, on a planet exposed today to fatal forms of pollution, imposes quite another sort of Bible reading. The true Christian spirituality of the future cannot avoid facing atheistic and materialistic convictions proper to postmodern times, nor can it escape today the pluricultural encounter, in any large city on earth, with Eastern gnostic ways of life. Christian identity is already engaged in a quest for a new cultural consensus, alien to the familiar comforts of Eurocentered ideologies. The confessional divisions between churches of the past, as well as the ecclesiastical categories of clergy/ministers and lay people as inherited from the classical tradition of Christianity, seem increasingly irrelevant in the context of the present world-wide quest.

On the contrary, the need to retrieve classical Christianity in its historical foundations becomes more and more insistent. The "Fathers" of past patristics are going to be recognized as the privileged witnesses of a cultural and religious tradition that needs to affirm itself in a world no longer linked at all with their world. They will teach the powerful perception in Christian terms of biblical truths out of the European continuities in religion and culture. As the only sources that allow us to understand what really happens to Christianity when it adjusts to a new cultural cosmos, the message of the "Fathers" will become meaningful in new ways.