geographical context of Christianity's expansion reflects strides made in early Christian studies in recent decades. Jefford traces the distinct contours of Christianity in places such as Alexandria, Palestine, Antioch, Asia Minor, Corinth, and Rome.

Some scholars will contest Jefford's historical assessment of certain NT texts. He holds a relatively low view of the historical reliability of John's Gospel and Acts, and he operates under the assumption that Colossians, Ephesians, 2 Thessalonians, and the Pastoral Epistles were written after Paul's lifetime. The resulting historical reconstruction of early Christianity inevitably shapes Jefford's interpretation of individual texts in the NT and AF.

By adopting a sociohistorical perspective, Jefford positions himself as an impartial observer of early Christianity. One significant drawback to this somewhat detached approach is that it risks trivializing the rich theology and practice of the early church. For example, Jefford attributes the incorporation of apocalyptic themes in Christian literature to the simple desire of motivating people to pursue ethical behavior.

Jefford's more recent work is the stronger of the two. *An Essential Guide* too often presents general ideas without specific citations from the AF or reference to secondary literature. *The Apostolic Fathers and the New Testament,* in contrast, is marked by consistent interaction with primary and secondary sources. The later work also has the advantage of greater space in which to develop its material. Although both books are designed for a reader interested in early Christianity in general or the AF corpus in particular, *The Apostolic Fathers and the New Testament* is more successful in helping readers engage substantially with these topics.

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Charles E. Hill. *From the Lost Teaching of Polycarp: Identifying Irenaeus' Apostolic Presbyter and the Author of ad Diognetum.* WUNT 186. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006. 207 pp. $89.50.

Considering the importance of Polycarp of Smyrna in the first half of the second century, it is rather disappointing that we do not have access to more of his teaching and writing. We only have a single short letter (or letters if a composite document) written by him to the church in Philippi. We also have one letter written *to* him by Ignatius, the account of his martyrdom, and a few occasional comments made about him in the writings of various ecclesiastical writers after his time. In brief, although we know that he was an important leader, our knowledge of what he thought and believed is somewhat sparse. That is, until now. Charles Hill says that there is more we can know about Polycarp the man and that more of his teaching than we thought is recoverable.

In the first part of this two-part book, Charles Hill argues that some of the oral teachings of Polycarp have been preserved by Irenaeus in his book *Against Heresies (AH).* He begins in ch. 1 by arguing that Irenaeus's anonymous apostolic presbyter of *AH* 4.27-32 (cf. 1.23-27) is none other than Polycarp of Smyrna. This identification is the linchpin of his thesis. He argues that the Armenian version of *AH* demonstrates that Irenaeus's "presbyters" of 4.32.1 is actually a single presbyter, and that 4.17.1-32.1 should be understood as Irenaeus laying down the oral teaching of this presbyter. Hill then draws numerous correspondences between what

Irenaeus says about this presbyter and other comments Irenaeus makes about Polycarp elsewhere in his writings.

In ch. 2, building upon the assumption that he has demonstrated that Polycarp is in view in these passages, Hill "recovers" Polycarp's lost teaching as it has been found in fragmentary form in Irenaeus. In ch. 3, Hill discusses various implications of viewing Polycarp as Irenaeus's apostolic elder, including the suggestions (among others) that Irenaeus had closer and more regular contact with Polycarp than has often been supposed, that Polycarp should indeed be viewed as a true antiheresiologist, and that Polycarp employed a typological exegesis when he read the First Testament.

The second half of the book is a separate argument and needs to be weighed on its own merits. Hill argues that Polycarp is the author of *ad Diognetum*, the document that has come to be called (but wrongly since it is not a letter) the *Letter to Diognetus*. In ch. 4, Hill argues that *ad Diognetum* is the transcription of an oral address that was made before an official who was interested in hearing the claims about Christianity. In ch. 5, he argues that *ad Diognetum* fits well in an Asian context, during a period of less persecution of Christians in the empire (such as the early years of Marcus Aurelius, 135-165), and that Polycarp, in light of his key leadership role, would have been a natural person to deliver such a protreptic speech. He also points out that there was in Smyrna a certain high official named Diognetus (either the grandfather or the grandson mentioned in a little known inscription), who could fit easily into Polycarp's later years. Hill's identification from this inscription of Diognetus as the possible hearer of the address, is, as far as I know, a new suggestion for the identification of the recipient. His main argument in favor of Polycarp as speaker is the comparison with other references to Polycarp in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, in Irenaeus, in Hippolytus, and in Polycarp's own letter(s) to the Philippians that seem to correspond in some way with what is found in *ad Diognetum*. It should be noted that the comparison with Polycarp's own letter may be the most difficult point for acceptance of Hill's argument since the overall character of *ad Diognetum* is rather different from Polycarp's only extant writing. Hill would reply to such a challenge—and perhaps rightly so—that the genre and occasion of *ad Diognetum* as an oral defense before an interested but yet unbelieving official is quite different from the genre and occasion of a letter to a Christian congregation that had requested Polycarp write to them about righteousness.

In ch. 6, Hill draws out the implications of identifying Polycarp as the speaker of *ad Diognetum*, including the suggestion that Polycarp should now be viewed as a strong orator and apologist. He also sketches out a suggested outline for what seems to be an anticipated future project (see p. 172 n. 8), that this identification may strengthen the case for an historical connection between Polycarp and John the son of Zebedee, a connection presently disputed by many scholars.

As the merits of each of these two theses are weighed, it will be discovered in each case that Hill's arguments stand or fall upon the strength of the literary connections he draws between various documents. Both among patristic scholars and NT scholars alike, there is presently a rather wide spectrum of opinions as to how likely one is to find allusions to earlier literature in a given document. Hill (cf. Richard Hays in NT studies) reads documents *richly* and sees them filled with a multitude of echoes of earlier documents. His other recent monograph, *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* (Oxford, 2004) offers an example of such "rich" readings. A recent

example of someone at the other end of the spectrum is Michael W. Holmes, "Polycarp's *Letter to the Philippians* and the Writings That Later Formed the New Testament," pp. 187-227 in *The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* (ed. Andrew F. Gregory and Christopher M. Tuckett; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). Holmes, like the Oxford Committee a century earlier, adopts a rather rigorous approach and comes up with a *thin* list of documents that Polycarp might have used in his letter to the Philippians. How *richly* should we read such documents; that is, how likely is it that a particular literary parallel is in fact a true literary dependency? This is a crucial methodological issue in evaluating a work such as the one under review. Scholars who are more tentative about such possible parallels may want to challenge at least some of Hill's literary correspondences. Those who tend to read more richly will be easily persuaded, I think, by the arguments of Part 1 and open to consider the arguments of Part 2.

I, for one, think that Hill has convincingly made his case that Irenaeus's apostolic presbyter is Polycarp, and that some of Polycarp's oral teaching has been embedded in Irenaeus. I found the connections with *ad Diogentum* interesting, and even plausible, but am not yet fully persuaded. Still, this book is worth its weight in gold (which is what a scholarly monograph costs these days), since it models for us a carefully executed study on two narrow topics that both open up many potential avenues for future study.

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Everett Ferguson. *Church History Volume 1: From Christ to Pre-Reformation.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005. 544 pp. $29.99.

Emeritus Professor of Bible at Abilene Christian University and renowned Patristic and NT background historian, Everett Ferguson authors the first installment of Zondervan's two-volume *Church History* set. Beginning with a terse overview of the three cultures that set the stage for early Christianity—Jewish, Greek, and Roman—Ferguson moves through the historical and theological development of the church from Apostolic to Medieval times in twenty-four chapters. The *terminus a quo* is the advent of Jesus' ministry; the *terminus ad quem* is the political weakening of the papacy under Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303). Here is a sweeping, yet sensitive survey of the first thirteen centuries of the church.

The material is organized like snapshots which zoom in on different aspects of an era rather than along a rigid chronological sequence. So, for example, ch. 5 explores second century heresies (e.g., Gnosticism) while the following chapter outlines the strategies (e.g., apostolic succession) developed to counter those heresies. Ferguson's presentation is simple and didactic, often codifying the subject matter into numbered points. Tables are used to highlight documents, events, or figures in terms of date and geographic location. Pictures of historical artifacts frequently appear throughout while key documents such as the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed are provided in full, giving the reader quick access to important data. Six maps aid geographic knowledge. The wide two-inch margins—great for annotation—occasionally contain notable statements drawn from theological works. Each chapter ends with suggestions for further reading which