

research on Justin presented in Chapter III, we strangely find the doctoral conclusions (p. 561-570) which do not directly concern the monograph. The Author has simply largely copied the conclusions of his doctorate and the final four pages of the Conclusion present only a very general summary of his research on Justin (570-573). We must say that there is simply no real Conclusion to the monograph from which the reader could have known the outcome of the research. The Author has forgotten that reading a book often begins with the Conclusion and if this strikes the reader in some way or arouses his interest, he is going to read the entire book.

Despite these small shortcomings which do not detract from the precious value of the book, the monograph is a very valid contribution to studies on Justin, it does honor to the Author, and for the next decades it will undoubtedly remain the absolutely obligatory point of reference for scholars of Christian theology of the 2nd century.

**William Varner, *The Apostolic Fathers. An Introduction and Translation*, T&T Clark, London 2023, pp. 242**

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William Varner, as he himself highlights in *Preface*, started his contact with the texts of the Apostolic Fathers as philologist using them as exercise material for translation from Greek into English. These texts interested him so much that he decided to deal with them in more detail and prepare a new English translation with introductions.

So we find at the beginning a General Introduction to the Apostolic Fathers, in which the Author presents a very synthetic history of discovering these works and their value, especially in the context of his evangelical tradition, in which, as he himself states, sometimes there is a belief that “evangelical friends they often seem to believe that church history stopped around 96 CE (the traditional date of the *Apocalypse*) and then resumed in 1517 (Luther) or maybe around 1540 (Calvin) (p. 3)”. In my opinion, the Introduction is too short and does not cover many points important for understanding the Apostolic Fathers, which have become the subject of numerous studies in recent decades. Then we find synthetic Introductions and new translations following texts: *The Didache* or *Teaching of the Two-*

*Ive Apostles, The Shepherd of Hermas, The Letter of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, 2 Letter of Clement, The Letters of Ignatius, The Letter to the Philippians of Polycarp, The Martyrdom of Polycarp, Epistle of Barnabas, Letter to Diognetus and Fragments of Papias.* I omit the evaluation of the translation of individual texts, because a very detailed analysis would have to be carried out, and there is not the space in a review. Since the Author is a classical philologist, it can be assumed that the translation is basically correct. The introductions, although synthetic for understandable reasons, are a good introduction to the reading of individual works. Therefore, the Author can be congratulated on both the translation effort and the good synthetic presentation of the research results of recent years, although unfortunately, they are limited only to studies in English. There is a complete lack of synthesis of research results published in other languages like French, German and Italian. In the further part of my review, I will focus only on the doubtful elements contained in the introductions to the individual works of the Apostolic Fathers.

In Introduction to the *Didache*, the Author does not summarize the entire great discussion on the dating of the text, nor does he refer to J.P. Audet's arguments for dating the text to the years 50-70 CE or W. Rordorf's extensive research. He follows Lightfoot and argues for the text to be dated after 70 of the 1st century. There is no reference to studies other than English-language studies at all, and yet many interesting *Didache* analyses have appeared in French, German or Italian languages. Recent researches have shown that the work lacks a unity of style and must be assumed to be a compilation of several earlier writings. It cannot be ruled out that the famous *Two Ways* were previously an independent text, which was later incorporated into the final version of the text. The final redaction of the *Didache* probably took place sometime in the late 1st century, but it also includes material from before 70 CE. The Author reconstructs The History of the *Didache* well, which he later refers to as the "first Christian Handbook", which is nothing new, as this term has long been used by scholars. I have serious doubts about the Author's translation of the term *episkopos* not by "bishop", but by "overseer". Literally translated, the term means "overseer", but since it is the historical context that determines the ultimate understanding of the terms, this translation appears to be wrong. The *Letters* of Ignatius of Antioch, written 20-30 years later, reflect the situation of the church in Syria, similarly to the *Didache*, where the term already had a very specific meaning of "bishop" as a superior who was in charge of the community.

In the Introduction to the *Shepherd of Hermas*, the Author supports the earlier dating of the text to the 1st century and even for about 70 CE, which would have confirm “underdeveloped theology”, the teachers denying the possibility of post-baptismal repentance probably based their teaching on Heb 6:4-6, “Hermas” as Origen observed is mentioned in Rom. 16:14 and “Clement” mentioned in *Vis.* 2, 4 is Clement of Rome. However, he does not present any argument to support his position, just reporting them without necessary proof.

In the Introduction to the *Letter of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians* the Author questions the traditional date of the text in the years 95-96 CE based on the mention of Eusebius, and the phrase “the sudden misfortunes and setbacks” is referred to the persecution of the Domitian without any argument. According to the Author, the mention in the present tense of the sacrifices made in the Jerusalem Temple proves that it still existed. Further, that the Church is ruled by presbyters with no reference at all to the mon-episcopacy described by Ignatius in 110 CE also argues for an earlier date. The date would be nearer the time that such a type of Church government existed, namely when the Pauline epistles were written prior to 70 CE. Even more doubtful are the Author’s statements regarding the meaning of *1 Clement* in relation to Rome. Of course, this text cannot be treated as evidence of the primacy of the bishop or of the church in Rome in the form in which it occurs in the fourth century and later. However, the author’s assertion that in Rome, as in many other places, there was no monarchical episcopate is just not true. It is worth quoting a longer excerpt by the Author: “It is acknowledged by all that no monarchical episcopate existed in Rome at that time. As in other churches, these were undoubtedly a collegial leadership of what would be called “presbyters” or “overseers” [sic?]. Even the word “bishop” should be avoided because of its monarchical or mon-episcopal nuances although that does appear in the slightly later writings of Ignatius. The list of successive bishops found in Irenaeus, for example, appear to be a creation of the late second century, not existing in the previous century (p. 90)”. The Author made clear the purpose of his Introduction, that he wanted to show at all costs that the Church in Rome at the end of the first century was headed by a college of presbyters or bishops and not by one bishop, because that is the Roman Catholic interpretation. However, the Author is not exact in referring data from the text. First of all, it is not true that everyone accepts what he presents as “It is acknowledged by all”. That’s simply not true. Extensive research, which the Author probably does not know, has shown that, firstly, the terms “presbyter” and “episkopos”

were used interchangeably in the 1st and 2nd centuries, and yet Irenaeus, when presenting a list of the bishops of Rome, calls them all “presbyteroi”. Secondly, the term “prebyters” was understood in two ways, in the general sense as “elders” or in the specific sense as assistants to the bishop and the second degree of the hierarchical priesthood. When Irenaeus wrote about the bishops of Rome as “presbyteroi”, he meant always “elders”, the superiors of the Church, not the assistants of the bishops. His text is no evidence that the Church in Rome was ruled by presbyters. Further, even if the list of bishops of Rome given to us by Irenaeus was written in the 2nd century, it is not a creation out of air, but it must have been based on earlier information from the 1st century for the very simple reason that he himself would not know who was the earlier bishop of Rome. It is interesting that when Irenaeus presents the list of the bishops of Rome, he presents the single bishops guiding the Church of Rome and never the college of presbyters who would potentially have guided it. The Author wrongly questions the authority of the Roman Church. When analyzing Clement’s *Letter* in this regard, we must remember that the Corinthians themselves asked the Church of Rome to intervene, and Clement responds on behalf of the Roman Church. Why did they not turn to the Apostle John, who was probably still living in Ephesus at the end of the first century? There they had direct access to Apostolic authority, not to their successors. They turned to Rome, because there was already an established belief that the authority of Peter the Apostle is the greatest in the Church and after him it passed to each bishop of Rome and this Church can interfere in the internal affairs of another church, in this case in Corinth. The Author went too far in his anti-Roman attitude typical of Protestant researchers, unfortunately without presenting any substantive arguments. Of course, I am far from ascribing more to this text in terms of the authority of the Church in Rome than it contains, as Catholic scholars have sometimes done, but on the other hand I am also opposed to belittling its value in this respect. One gets the impression that the Author first made the Protestant assumption that there was no monoepiscopacy in the 1st and 2nd centuries (because it was too Roman Catholic) and then the 1 Epistle of Clement and other texts of Apostolic Fathers were bent to that assumption. However, this has nothing to do with scientific research, and is rather an ideology. No matter if this is the theological ideology.

In the presentation of Ignatius’ *Letters* in the part “Ignatius and the Bishop” we can find even stranger statement: “It is still too early in Church history for the *episkopos* to be viewed as the metropolitan spiritual leader of a diocese with priests under him in the individual local churches”. Right

in Ignatius' *Letters* we find clear confirmation for the existence of a monarchical bishop as a spiritual leader of the local Church with priests under his guidance. The Author clearly once again went too far in his anti-Catholic crusade to weaken the testimony from the end of the 1st and the beginning of the 2nd century about the monarchical episcopate, i. e. the one that later developed in the Roman Catholic Church.

The introductions are ideologically anti-Catholic understandings of these texts referring to monarchic episcopacy. Probably Protestant researchers don't like it very much, but one simply can't ideologically bend them to one's own church tradition, because it's not science, but ideology. The introductions to the single books are a good example of an ideological protestant approach to the texts of Apostolic Fathers.

**Jan Chryzostom, *Homilie do Listu Św. Pawła do Kolosan*, przekład z języka greckiego opatrzoney wprowadzeniem i notami: ks. Antoni Paciorek, Biblia Ojców 7, Edycja Świętego Pawła, Częstochowa 2023, ss. 253**

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Całość tomu składa się z dwóch części, szeroko rozwiniętego wprowadzenia (s. 4-25) i polskiego tłumaczenia *Homilii* (s. 26-153). We wprowadzeniu w punkcie pierwszym autor prezentuje postać św. Jana Chryzostoma (†407), jednego z największych pisarzy starochrześcijańskich. Ponieważ w poprzednich tomach tego autora spotykamy się z tym właśnie Ojcem Kościoła, ks. prof. Antoni Paciorek we wprowadzeniu nie powtarza już podstawowych informacji o Janie Chryzostomie, tj. kiedy i gdzie się urodził itp. W tym tomie prezentuje fragment życia i działalności Jana, pisząc o jego wykształceniu. Osadza osobę Złotoustego w konkretnych realiach, czyli w IV wieku w Antiochii w Syrii zaliczanej do najbogatszych i najznamienitszych miast *Imperium Romanum*. Jan zwany Chryzostodem urodził się w rodzinie chrześcijańskiej. Wychowała go matka Antuza, jego ojciec bowiem, Sekundus, zmarł wkrótce po narodzinach Jana.

Ks. prof. A. Paciorek zapoznaje czytelnika o etapach kształcenia Jana, omawiając przy okazji proces edukacji w tamtym czasie. W procesie formacji genialnego Jana ważną rolę odegrał retor, poganin Libanios, który