

Brown notes that it is likely that the walls of Acrocorinth were repaired as well, though limited archaeological work to date makes it difficult to say so with certainty. Two appendices follow: the first details the epigraphic and literary evidence available for the study of Corinth, while the second provides an overview of archaeological work carried out since the late nineteenth century.

This book will be essential reading for anyone interested in late Roman Corinth, late antique Greece, or late ancient urbanism. While Brown should be commended for assembling and synthesizing the material presented here, her approach is limiting in certain respects. The (successful) effort to be comprehensive means that insufficient space is devoted to fleshing out arguments among scholars (past and present) concerning the buildings under discussion. While Brown makes every effort to present these arguments, she does so rather quickly and tersely. Some readers—those perhaps less familiar with the history of Corinth and its monuments than the present reviewer—may get overwhelmed by this dense presentation of the material. Some may also disagree with Brown’s lament on the demise of the civic culture of the ancient city. Her statement that “Christian civic events were more limiting to creativity and human expression” (163) in relation to those offered previously seems misplaced. Still, *Corinth in Late Antiquity* is an impressive accomplishment and a welcome addition to the scholarship on the history of the city.

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***How the Church Fathers Read the Bible: A Short Introduction.* By Gerald Bray. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2022. 194 pp. \$24.99 hardcover; \$16.99 digital.**

Historians are well-acquainted with the difficulties inherent in summarizing the relevant complexities and nuances of any period of time in the space of a few hundred pages. And yet we are also familiar with the need for such introductory summaries for those interacting with an era for the first time. The strengths and weaknesses of Gerald Bray’s most recent offering flow from this ever-present tension between precision and accessibility.

The subtitle, form, and style of this book reveal the intended audience: students and other newcomers to the hermeneutics of the church fathers. Several other hints throughout the text, such as comparing Tertullian’s view of baptism to that of “modern Baptists” (165) and the presuppositions behind Bray’s valuations of patristic interpretations (for example, “we must . . . find a more solid scriptural basis on which to ground our teaching” [103]), show that this book is more specifically written for students from evangelical traditions. It is thus more akin to Christopher Hall’s *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998) than Frances Young’s *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

The book consists of six chapters, a general index, and a scripture index. There are no unnecessary distractions for the novice: no introduction, no bibliography, and an

economical use of footnotes. The first chapter, comprising one-fourth of the entire book, begins with a helpful survey of patristic studies. It defines key terms and introduces readers to the concept of Christian tradition and Reformation challenges to it, the influence of Jerome's Vulgate, the rise and impact of historical-critical method, and the tradition's distinction between orthodoxy and heresy (1–9). In the remainder of the chapter, Bray skillfully introduces several topics related to the development of biblical interpretation in this era: the term Bible, problems of language, the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Old Testament, the *Vetus Latina* as “academic construct” (25), and important authors in the Greek, Latin, and Syriac traditions. The first chapter, as the three that follow it, closes with a summary of the survey's findings.

The next three chapters form a unit through which Bray presents the development of patristic biblical interpretation. The second chapter compares and contrasts second-century patristic authors, especially the apologists, with the hermeneutics and worldviews of the Jewish and pagan traditions. The third chapter then surveys the development of the four senses of scriptural interpretation and their content, with attention to Philo, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen. The fourth chapter, “The Search for Consensus,” frames patristic biblical interpretation as working through a “reluctance to rely on allegorical interpretation” (109) in the fourth century, presenting Theodore of Mopsuestia as paragon of reluctance, and Gregory of Nyssa and Cyril of Alexandria, among others, as those who wished to use it in a moderated manner. The chapter then turns to the Latin tradition, especially Augustine and Tyconius. The narrative presented across these chapters gives attention to the influence of the philosophical tradition on patristic reading practices but, curiously, that of the rhetorical tradition remains in the shadows.


The final two chapters build upon the first four in different ways. The penultimate chapter, “Case Studies,” presents several biblical texts accompanied by the interpretations of a wide selection of authors: Gn 1.26–27, 1 Sam 28.13–14, Ps 22.1–8, Sg 2.1–4, Is 7.14 and 9.6, Mt 4.1–11, Jn 3.3–8, Rom 5.12–14, Heb 11.1–3, Rev 20.1–6. The final chapter, “Seven Theses on How the Church Fathers Read the Bible,” concludes the study by offering seven theses for the reader's consideration. The chapter's title is a bit misleading, at least with respect to the fifth and sixth theses, which concern how contemporary readers should treat the biblical interpretations of the church fathers.

As an accessible survey of many important aspects of early Christian scriptural interpretation for evangelical students, the book is a success. Throughout the text readers are exposed to a variety of different interpretations of biblical passages by a plenitude of patristic authors. However, beyond the presentation of the four senses of interpretation, there is little exploration of patristic hermeneutics proper.

This is exemplified in the ongoing mention—and critique—of allegorical interpretation. Although referenced at several points, a nuanced description of allegory, including its relationship to other nonliteral interpretive methods, is not given. Readers are first introduced to allegory with a qualified definition: “Allegory [. . .] generally assumes that the written account was never meant to be read literally as a historical narrative but was always intended to be read in a metaphorical sense” (60). Many patristic authors, however, did not understand allegory as displacing literal interpretations. Elsewhere, Bray himself shows that this was the case with Clement of Alexandria (91). Furthermore, with the exception of “typological interpretation” (60), allegorical interpretation is presented as a category containing most of the nonliteral methods of interpretation: “spiritual interpretation” (75), “figurative” interpretation (90), and “parables” (91).

Bray's presentation of "figurative" and "allegorical" (90) methods of interpretation as synonymous is particularly problematic in the case of Augustine. As Michael Cameron has shown in *Christ Meets Me Everywhere: Augustine's Early Figurative Exegesis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), Augustine's hermeneutic allowed for "things" (*res*) in the scripture's historical narrative to also function as "signs" (*signa*) for other things. Augustine referred to these things that were simultaneously signs as "figures" (*figurae*). His version of figurative interpretation, therefore, often required rather than displaced the historical reading and saw much of the scripture as multivalent.

Students will find this book an accessible introduction to many difficult aspects of early Christianity. Scholars seeking an introduction to patristic hermeneutics should consult the aforementioned Young, Charles Kannengiesser's *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis* (Boston: Brill, 2004), which Bray briefly engages (7, 32n25), John O'Keefe and R. R. Reno's *Sanctified Vision: An Introduction to Early Christian Interpretation of the Bible* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), and Paul Blowers's and Peter Martens's *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2019).

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The Wandering Holy Man: The Life of Barsauma, Christian Asceticism, and Religious Conflict in Late Antique Palestine.
 Edited by Johannes Hahn and Volker Menze. Transformation
 of the Classical Heritage 60. Oakland, CA: University of California
 Press, 2020. x + 307 pp. \$95.00 cloth.

This welcome volume makes available for the first time in any published form the full text of "one of the longest and most extensive hagiographies from antiquity" (1), the *Life* of the Syriac-speaking northern Mesopotamian ascetic and abbot Barsauma. Barsauma (c. 384–456) has long been familiar to students of church history thanks to a memorable episode in the *acta* of the Council of Chalcedon, where the assembled bishops denounced him as a rabblouser and murderer; he also appears as the sole monastic signatory to the *acta* of Ephesus II. His subsequent negative reputation in the Chalcedonian tradition is mirrored by recognition as a saint in the anti-Chalcedonian, and his eponymous monastery (near modern Malatya, Turkey) enjoyed later prominence as the residence of the Syrian Orthodox patriarchs in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries.

The *Life*, which the tentative consensus of this volume dates to the mid- to late fifth century, has been known since François Nau's early-twentieth-century publication of excerpts from three incomplete British Library manuscripts. This volume includes the first published translation of the complete text, by Andrew Palmer (187–271); he translates the earliest complete manuscript, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchal Collection (Damascus) 12/17 of 1185/6. Despite its unusual length, the text is in many respects