BAPTISM IN THE EARLY CHURCH
BAPTISM IN THE EARLY CHURCH

History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries

Everett Ferguson
To the three special persons
who married into our family
and made it better.
Contents

Preface xix
Acknowledgments xxii

1. Introduction: Survey of Literature 1
   Comprehensive Surveys 1
   Studies with Liturgy as the Theme 5
   Topical Studies 11
   Collections of Sources 20

Part One — Antecedents to Christian Baptism

2. Washings for Purification in Greco-Roman Paganism 25
   General Usage for Purification 25
   Washings in the Mystery Religions 28
   Bathing Practices 34
   A Special Case from Mythology 36

3. Words from the Bapt- Root in Classical and Hellenistic Greek 38
   βάπτω, βαπτός 38
      Literal Usage 38
      Metaphorical Usage (Secondary Meanings) 42
      Jewish Usage 46
   βαπτίζω, βαπτισμός 47
      Literal Usage 48
      Metaphorical Usage 52
Contents

Usage in Pagan Religious and Magical Contexts 55
Jewish Usage 56
Conclusion 59

4. Jewish Washings, Baptismal Movements, and Proselyte Baptism 60
The Background in the Jewish Scriptures 61
Ceremonial Cleansing 61
Events Seen as Prefiguring Baptism 62
Mishnah and \textit{Mikvaot} 63
Other References to Jewish Washings 65
Essenes and Dead Sea Scrolls 68
Baptismal Movements 71
Proselyte Baptism 76

5. John the Baptizer 83
John in Relation to Jewish Immersions 84
New Testament Texts about John’s Baptism 89
The Meaning of John’s Baptism 93
The Manner of John’s Baptism 95

Part Two — Baptism in the New Testament

6. Baptism of Jesus—I 99
New Testament Texts 99
Early Noncanonical Accounts of the Baptism of Jesus 104

7. Baptism of Jesus—II 113
Later Christian Interpretation of the Baptism of Jesus: Texts 113
Later Christian Interpretation of the Baptism of Jesus: Art 123

8. Other References to Baptism in the Gospels 132
Matthew 132
Mark 138
Luke 141
John 142

9. Baptism in the Pauline Epistles 146
Galatians 147
1 and 2 Corinthians 149
Romans 155
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colossians</td>
<td></td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephesians</td>
<td></td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titus</td>
<td></td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 10. The Acts of the Apostles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse Ranges</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acts 1–2</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 8:4-25</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 8:26-40</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 10:1–11:18</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 16:12-15</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 16:16–34</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 18:8</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 18:24–19:7</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptism in(to) the Name of Jesus</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Holy Spirit and Baptism</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary on Baptism in Acts</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 11. Baptism in the Rest of the New Testament and Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hebrews</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Peter 3:21</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 John</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelation</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of New Testament Information on Baptism</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Part Three — The Second Century

### 12. Apostolic Fathers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Didache</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Clement</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Clement</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignatius</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistle of Barnabas</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hermas</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. Christian Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha 221
   Some Pseudepigrapha 221
   Odes of Solomon 222
   Apocalypse of Peter 225
   Epistle of the Apostles and Baptism of the Righteous Dead 225
   Acts of Peter 228
   Acts of Paul 229
   Acts of John 232
   Acts of Andrew 232
   Other Later Apocryphal Acts 234
   Physiologus 236

14. Apologists 237
   Justin Martyr 237
   Melito of Sardis 245
   Tatian 246
   Theophilus of Antioch 246

15. The Pseudo-Clementines and Jewish Christianity 248
   Washings for Purification 249
   Initiatory Baptism 251
   Baptismal Doctrine 255
   Epiphanius on the Ebionites 263
   Observations 264

16. Jewish and Christian Baptisms 266
   Justin Martyr 267
   Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 840 269
   Pseudo-Cyprian, Against the Jews 271
   Tertullian, An Answer to the Jews 272
   Cyprian, Testimonies against the Jews 272
   Didascalia 273
   Epiphanius on the Samaritans and Others 274
   Conclusion 275

17. Marcionites, Those Called Gnostics, and Related Groups 276
   Marcionites 276
   Valentinians 278
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Irenaeus</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Clement of Alexandria</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Terminology and the Meaning of Baptism</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jesus’ Baptism</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faith and Repentance</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ceremony of Baptism</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jewish and Pagan Antecedents</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clement and Those Called Gnostics</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Baptism of the Apostles</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postbaptismal Sin</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concluding Comments</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part Four — The Third Century to Nicaea (325)**

| 20.     | Writings Attributed to Hippolytus | 325  |
|         | Commentary on Daniel | 326  |
|         | On Christ and Antichrist | 326  |
|         | Against Noetus | 326  |
|         | Apostolic Tradition | 327  |
|         | On the Holy Theophany | 333  |

| 21.     | Carthage: Tertullian | 336  |
|         | Antecedents to Christian Baptism | 336  |
|         | Faith and Repentance | 338  |
|         | Ceremony of Baptism | 340  |
|         | Doctrine of Baptism | 346  |

| 22.     | Carthage: Cyprian | 351  |
|         | Ceremony of Baptism | 351  |
|         | Sickbed Baptism | 355  |
|         | Doctrine of Baptism | 357  |

| 23.     | Origin and Early Development of Infant Baptism | 362  |
|         | Tertullian | 363  |
|         | The Apostolic Tradition | 366  |
|         | Origen | 367  |
The Controversy over “Rebaptism” in the Third Century

Early Statements
Novatian
Stephen of Rome
Anonymous, On Rebaptism
Cyprian
Judgements of the Eighty-seven Bishops
Firmilian
Dionysius of Alexandria
Later Developments

Origen
Old Testament Foreshadowings of Baptism
The Baptisms of John the Baptist and Jesus
The Eschatological Baptism of Fire
Theology of Baptism
Martyrdom
Catechumenate and Prerequisites for Baptism
Liturgy

Syria in the Third Century
Acts of Thomas
Acts of Xanthippe and Polyxena
Didascalia
The Baptistery at Dura Europus
The Mime/Martyr Gelasinus

Sources at the Turn to the Fourth Century
Porphyry
Lactantius
Methodius
Eusebius of Caesarea
Council of Nicaea, 325

Conclusion
Part Five — The Fourth Century

28. Egypt in the Fourth Century
   Athanasius
   Some Later Athanasian Spuria
   Serapion
   Canons of Hippolytus
   Didymus the Blind (?), On the Trinity
   Papyrus Prayers

29. Jerusalem in the Fourth Century
   Cyril of Jerusalem
   Procedures and Ceremony
     Final Instruction and Preparation for Baptism
     Pre-Immersion Rites
     The Baptism Proper
     Postbaptismal Rites
     Meaning and Effects of Baptism
   Egeria

30. Writers in Syriac in the Fourth Century: Aphrahat

31. Writers in Syriac in the Fourth Century: Ephraem the Syrian
   Typology of Baptism
   Baptism of Christ
   Faith and Repentance
   Ceremony of Baptism
   Meaning of Baptism
   Hymns on Epiphany Attributed to Ephraem

32. The School of Antioch: Theodore of Mopsuestia
   The Process of Initiation
   The Doctrine of Baptism

33. The School of Antioch: John Chrysostom—I
   Nontechnical Word Usage
   Administration of Baptism

34. The School of Antioch: John Chrysostom—II
   Christ’s Baptism
   Images of Baptism
Grace, Faith, and Repentance 550
Doctrinal Meaning of Baptism 552
  Death, Burial, and Resurrection 552
  New Creation 553
  Regeneration 555
  Forgiveness of Sins 556
  Holy Spirit and Baptism 559
  Seal and Circumcision 559
  Enlightenment 560
  Clothing with Christ 561
Moral Consequences and Faithfulness 562
35. Miscellaneous Sources: Church Orders and “Eunomian” Baptism 564
  Apostolic Constitutions 564
  Baptismal Ceremony 565
  Doctrine of Baptism 570
  The Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed 573
  Council of Laodicea and the Origin of a Postbaptismal Anointing in the East 574
  Eunomian Baptism 575
  Asterius the Homilist 577
  Opus Imperfectum in Matthaeum 579
  Testament of the Lord 579
36. Cappadocia: Basil the Great 582
  Nontechnical Word Usage 583
  Baptismal Ceremony 583
  Baptismal Theology 585
37. Cappadocia: Gregory of Nazianzus 592
  Baptismal Ceremony 593
  Baptismal Theology 596
38. Cappadocia: Gregory of Nyssa 603
  Baptismal Ceremony 603
  Baptismal Theology 608
39. The Delay of Baptism: Sickbed Baptism, Believers’ Baptism, and Infant Baptism 617
   - Sickbed Baptism 618
     - Basil the Great 618
     - Gregory of Nazianzus 620
     - Gregory of Nyssa 621
     - John Chrysostom 622
     - Marcianus the Ascetic 624
     - Epiphanius of Salamis 625
     - A Report by Socrates 625
     - Inscriptions 626
     - Sponsors and Instruction 626
   - Believers’ Baptism in Christian Families 626
   - Infant Baptism: The Fourth Century and Beyond 627

40. Milan: Ambrose 634
   - Baptismal Ceremony 635
   - Baptismal Typology 641
   - Baptismal Theology 642

41. Other North Italians 648
   - Zeno of Verona 648
   - Maximus of Turin 651
   - Chromatius of Aquileia 656
     - His Writings 656
     - Archaeological Evidence 660

42. Spain 663
   - Council of Elvira 663
   - Gregory of Elvira 665
   - Pacian of Barcelona 666
   - Some Later Developments in Spain 668

43. Some Other Latin Authors 671
   - Hilary of Poitiers 671
   - Optatus of Milevis 674
   - Jerome 677
   - Paulinus of Nola 683
Part Six — The Fifth Century

44. Egypt: Cyril of Alexandria and the Coptic Rite 687
   Cyril of Alexandria 687
   A Prebaptismal Anointing Formula 693
   Der Balyzeh Papyrus 693
   An Epiphany Hymn 694
   The Coptic Rite 695

45. Writers and Writings in Syriac and Armenian 700
   Syriac Acts of John 700
   Narsai 702
   The Teaching of Saint Gregory 708
   Armenian Ritual of Baptism 712
   Later Syrian Baptismal Liturgies 713

46. Greek-Speaking Syria 715
   Theodoret 715
   Mark the Deacon, Life of Porphyry 719
   Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite 720

47. Baptism in the Messalian Controversy 724
   Messalianism 724
   Pseudo-Macarius: A Moderate Voice 728
   Diadochus of Photice: A Later Moderate Voice 732
   Hieronymus (Jerome) of Jerusalem: A Messalian Voice? 735
   Mark the Monk: An Anti-Messalian Voice 738

48. Asia Minor and Constantinople 745
   Theodotus of Ancyra 745
   Pseudo-Gregory Thaumaturgus, On the Holy Theophany 747
   Socrates on Paul the Novatian 748
   Proclus 748
   Barberini Euchologion 752

49. Ravenna and Rome 756
   Peter Chrysologus of Ravenna 756
   Baptisteries of Ravenna 758
   Siricius of Rome 760
   Innocent I and Gelasius 760
Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leo I</td>
<td>761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John the Deacon</td>
<td>766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gelasian Sacramentary</td>
<td>768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lateran Baptistery in Rome</td>
<td>769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Gaul and North Africa: Gennadius of Marseilles, Some African Councils, and Quodvultdeus of Carthage</td>
<td>770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gennadius of Marseilles</td>
<td>770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some African Councils</td>
<td>770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quodvultdeus</td>
<td>771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augustine’s Own Experience with Baptism</td>
<td>776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptismal Ceremony in Hippo</td>
<td>778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augustine’s Traditional Baptismal Theology</td>
<td>790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. North Africa: Augustine of Hippo — II</td>
<td>795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Donatists and the Indelible Character of Baptism</td>
<td>795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pelagianism, Infant Baptism, and Original Sin</td>
<td>803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part Seven — Baptisteries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. Baptismal Fonts: East</td>
<td>819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Baptismal Fonts</td>
<td>819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Jordan and Jordan</td>
<td>823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria and Lebanon</td>
<td>824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt and Libya</td>
<td>825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balkans</td>
<td>833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. Baptismal Fonts: West</td>
<td>836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>845</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Austria, Lichtenstein, Germany, and England 846
Spain 847
Evaluation of the Evidence of Baptismal Fonts 849

55. Conclusions 853
Origin of Baptism 853
Doctrine of Baptism 853
Baptismal Ceremony/Liturgy 855
Origin and Progress of Infant Baptism 856
Mode of Baptism: Immersion with Exceptions 857

Index of Biblical Passages 861
Index of Greek and Roman Authors and Writings 873
Index of Jewish Authors and Writings 880
Index of Non-Canonical Christian Authors and Writings 884
Index of Modern Authors 934
Index of Subjects 946
Preface

I have attempted to be as complete as possible on the first three centuries but have been content to be progressively less so on the fourth and fifth centuries (where the sources are more abundant) yet still to be full enough for the work to be representative comprehensive. My training is in the literary sources, but I have tried to become knowledgeable on the art and archaeological sources.

The subject of baptism has been the source of debates between denominations but has also been of concern in ecumenical endeavors. My own intention is to be historically objective. Readers will judge my degree of success. In spite of the theological disagreements of the past and learned differences still in the present, I find wide agreement in regard to the historical facts from scholars representing a wide spectrum of backgrounds. I may have pushed the areas of consensus further than many might. Nonetheless, disputes mostly arise on the interpretation of the facts. Putting different specialties and periods together in a synthesis may be the basis for further conversation.

The introduction surveys scholarly works that have a broad scope and are not often noted in my particular topics; their contents, however, do set the issues for my fresh examination. The reader not interested in the history of scholarship on baptism may choose to skip it and go directly to the meat of my own work. Some readers may want to use the treatment of particular periods, persons, writings, or topics for reference purposes.

Unacknowledged translations are my own.

Thanks are due to many without whom the book could not have been written. I must mention especially my wife, who has provided compatibility and intellectual stimulation as well as making my work possible and pleasant through the years. I have learned much from association with colleagues through their writings and in conversation. The notes do not begin to acknowledge this indebtedness. A special word of appreciation is due to the libraries at Harvard University (Widener and Andover-Harvard) and Abilene Christian University, particularly the interlibrary
loan services of the latter. The publisher’s readers — Robin Jensen, Maxwell Johnson, and David Wright — while not always agreeing with the author, have improved his work in various ways.

Everett Ferguson
Acknowledgments

The author and publisher hereby gratefully acknowledge permission to reprint the following:

Quotations from various volumes of the Church Fathers series Used with Permission: The Catholic University of America Press. Washington, DC.


Quotations from E. C. Whitaker, Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy, Liturgical Press.


Excerpts from the following, all published by Paulist Press, Inc., New York/Mahwah, NJ. Reprinted by permission of Paulist Press, Inc. www.paulistpress.com:


Quodvultdeus of Carthage: The Creedal Homilies, translation and commentary by Thomas Macy Finn. Copyright © 2004 by Thomas Macy Finn.

Origen: Treatise on the Passover, Dialogue with Heraclides, translated and annotated by Robert J. Daly, SJ. Copyright © 1992 by the New England Province of the Society of Jesus.
xxii | Acknowledgments

The Sermons of St. Maximus of Turin, translated and annotated by Boniface Ramsey, OP. Copyright © 1989 by Boniface Ramsey, OP.

St. John Chrysostom: Baptismal Instructions, translated and annotated by Paul W. Harkins, PhD, LL.D. Copyright © 1963 by Rev. Johannes Quasten and Rev. Walter Burghardt, SJ.

St. Irenaeus: Proof of the Apostolic Preaching, translated and annotated by Joseph P. Smith, SJ. Copyright © 1952 by Johannes Quasten and Joseph C. Plampe.

St. Augustine: Faith, Hope, and Charity, translated and annotated by Louis A. Arand, SS, STD. Copyright © 1974 by Johannes Quasten and Joseph C. Plampe.

1. Introduction: Survey of Literature

Specialized studies of topics and ancient authors will be noted at their appropriate place. This survey is limited to some of the major studies that are broader in scope.

Comprehensive Surveys

Two older works from Great Britain set the context of discussion in the English-speaking world. William Wall, *History of Infant Baptism*, was first published in 1705 (second edition 1707, third in 1720). It was reissued with supplementary writings in four volumes by Oxford University Press, 1834-1836, and in two volumes in 1862. This large work set forth the viewpoint that was standard among advocates of infant baptism before modern studies began to chip away at details and suggest a different way of putting the evidence together. Darwell Stone, *Holy Baptism* (London: Longmans, Green, 1917 [after earlier editions]), defended baptismal regeneration, which, to be more precise, should be described as regeneration in baptism.


Two comprehensive works in French canvass in a wide historical frame the issues that are still discussed. Jules Corblett, *Histoire dogmatique, liturgique, et archéologique du sacrament de baptême* (Paris, 1881), 2 volumes, organizes the material topically, then treats its development historically with a very complete listing of references from the church fathers on all subjects with an effort to include the evidence of baptisteries and art as well as the literary texts. As an example of the thoroughness attempted, Corblett treats the following figures of baptism: Jewish aspersions, circumcision, the deluge, waters of creation, rivers of paradise, blood and
water from the side of Christ, water in general, washing of Naaman, axe of Elijah, bronze laver at the temple, sea of glass in Revelation, water struck from the rock by Moses, Israel crossing the Red Sea and the Jordan, Jesus healing the blind man at the pool of Siloam, Jesus healing the paralytic at Bithesda, purification of lepers, serpent of brass set up by Moses in the wilderness, the tomb of the Savior (Book I, chap. 5). Iconography offers partially overlapping figures of baptism: lamb, ark of Noah, man born blind, the bath of the infant Jesus, jar of water, deer, dolphin, stars, rivers, Jordan, Moses striking the rock, passage of the Red Sea, healing of paralytic, fish, and fisherman (Book XVIII, chap. 1).

On the mode of baptism (Book IV, chap. 2) Corblett states that *mergere, mergitare, in aquas mitiere* guarantee immersion in the first centuries but not later, for *baptizare = plonger* became figurative. Baptisteries and iconography lead to the conclusion that in the West baptism was ordinarily a partial immersion completed by effusion of water over the head in the same epoch as the writers speak of a total immersion. This viewpoint has had a wide currency. He summarizes (pp. 248-249) that in the East a total submersion was usual; but in the West in the fourth-eighth centuries there was partial immersion in baptisteries with the addition of infusion, in the eighth-eleventh centuries a vertical (based on the shape of the fonts) and complete immersion of children in vats (is the eleventh-century picture of an immersion of an upright body and a bishop pouring out of a small cup over the head not a combination of immersion and infusion but an immersion followed by the post-baptismal anointing?), in the eleventh-thirteenth centuries horizontal and complete immersion of children in vats, in the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries both complete immersion and partial immersion with infusion but rarely infusion alone (in the fourteenth century the first incontestable example of aspersion — p. 264), in the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries rarely complete immersion, and in the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries infusion reigned. That vertical fonts preceded horizontal fonts for infant baptism would argue that the immersion of adults too was first in the upright position, but that raises the problem of the relatively shallow fonts unless the candidate was in a kneeling or crouching position, for which he says no text leads us to suppose.

On the subjects of baptism (Book VII) Corbett states that except when there was danger of death children were baptized only at the age of two or three, when they could answer for themselves, then at one year of age in vertical vats, and only in the eleventh century did the custom of baptizing the newborn within a few days prevail. Volume 2, Book XIV, gives a comprehensive synthesis of preliminaries to baptism, the baptism itself, and subsequent ceremonies.

Eighty years later came another comprehensive work by T. Maertens, *Histoire et pastorale du rituel du catéchumenat et du baptême*, Paroisse et liturgie collection de pastorale liturgique 56 (Bruges: Biblica, 1962). This generally excellent work follows a historical order beginning with Old Testament ablutions, proselyte baptism, the Essenes, and John’s baptism (pp. 26-30) as a prelude to the definitive ablution in the Spirit. He has a Roman Catholic framework of interpretation and follows primarily
the Western development through the Middle Ages with comments pertaining to
the pastoral situation of his day. He represents a heavy dependence on the *Apostolic
Tradition* ascribed to Hippolytus for Roman practice beginning in the late second
century.

There are problematic elements in the presentation. Maertens argues for pouring
of water on the head as a primitive practice (p. 38) and that the connection of
Christian ablution with the death and resurrection of Christ did not mean it was
done by immersion (p. 47). He also reads a considerable baptismal ritual into New
Testament texts (pp. 47-54).

On the positive side Maertens correctly notes that the word and faith were inti-
mately connected with New Testament baptism (pp. 43-46). In the early centuries
the action of God, liberty of the candidate, and participation of the community were
held together in the baptismal ceremonies, but in the Middle Ages with the practice
of infant baptism the free choice by the candidate was suppressed and the commu-
nity elements either disappeared or were reinterpreted so that these two aspects were
absorbed in ritualism (pp. 185-194).

Maertens makes several significant points. Because of the decadence of the
catechumenate, Augustine had to place last the moral instruction that came first in
the *Apostolic Tradition* (pp. 115-118). The delivery and recitation of the Creed added
a declarative formula to the earlier practice of an interrogatory confession at baptism,
but this indicative confession was now more of an examination of the faith taught
(pp. 131ff.). In early times the emphasis was on the psychological choice between two
Masters (renunciation of the devil and adherence to Christ), but by the fifth century
the scrutinies placed the emphasis on the theological truth that Satan is not driven
out apart from the coming of the Lord (pp. 146ff.). With the emphasis given in the
fourth century to baptism as death in a tomb, water became less a symbol of life and
more of death, and so an even greater interest was given to the blessing of the water.
In the early practice the name of Jesus was proclaimed and professed and baptism
was in his name; with the benediction of the water one now also invoked his name
(pp. 158-166). Infant baptism, instead of producing a new ritual, “infantilized” the
ritual of adults.

Lothar Heiser, *Die Taufe in der orthodoxen Kirche: Geschichte, Spendung, und
Symbolik nach der Lehre der Väter* (Trier: Paulinus, 1987), concentrates on the Greek
Fathers up to the establishment of the present Orthodox rite, essentially complete in
the sixth century and preserved unchanged since then. He covers the evidence of pic-
tures and baptisteries (with good color plates) as well as the principal patristic texts.
He emphasizes the patristic interpretation of the baptism of Jesus as the pattern for
Christian baptism, of baptism as part of the renewal of humanity according to the
pattern of paradise at creation, and of the biblical images of baptism. The differences
between the Latin and Byzantine churches in the administration of baptism became
acute in the competition for the allegiance of the Bulgars in the ninth century.

Two recent works in English give briefer but comprehensive surveys. Maxwell E.
Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (College-
ville: Liturgical, 1999), offers a textbook on the history of the rites of initiation. His approach is textual, historical, and theological (p. xiii) with an ecumenical perspective. He quotes extensively from the relevant texts and notes the current status of scholarship on controverted points.

Johnson begins with the New Testament origins, affirming that Christian practice reflects considerable variety. Chapter 2 discusses Christian initiation in the pre-Nicene period, distinguishing eastern and western practices. In the East the sequence was anointing, baptism, and eucharist; Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan and John 3:5 were central. In the West the sequence was baptism, anointing, handlaying, and eucharist; in Rome there was an added anointing after the handlaying. In the West the primary metaphor for baptism was provided by Romans 6. In the East the prebaptismal rites were oriented to reception of the Holy Spirit, but in the West to the expulsion of evil spirits.

Chapters 3 and 4 discuss initiation in the Christian East and the Christian West respectively. A lengthy catechumenate was more a concern of the fourth century than of the third. In contrast to earlier Syriac tradition the prebaptismal rites were transformed from a pneumatic to an exorcistic emphasis. He says that the gift of the Spirit migrated from prebaptismal anointing (Syria) to the baptismal act (Chrysostom) to postbaptismal anointing. Such a neat progression may be questioned; a preferable view would be that the gift of the Spirit was associated with the rite as a whole and different authors identified it with different moments for various reasons. Western sources began to speak of the bishop “completing,” “perfecting,” or “confirming” baptism performed by presbyters or deacons, but this was a matter of pastoral oversight and not a sacramental ministry. Augustine was responsible for a loss of sacramental and liturgical richness in favor of a concern for sacramental validity.

Chapter 5 discusses baptismal preparation and the origin of the forty days of Lent. Chapters 6 on initiation in the Middle Ages, 7 on the Protestant and Catholic reforms of the sixteenth century, 8 on initiation in the churches today, and 9 on the implications of a baptismal spirituality for the present move beyond the chronological limits of this study.

Bryan D. Spinks, Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism: From the New Testament to the Council of Trent (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), offers a brief but thorough survey (a second volume will cover Reformation and Modern Rituals and Theologies of Baptism). On the early sources he gives more on the theology (e.g., on Augustine), but he also gives variant views on disputed questions of ritual practice; on the later sources, where liturgies are preserved, the proportions are reversed. Spinks quotes translations that occur in collections (especially Whitaker and Finn — below) and seldom gives the original source references, with the result that the reader who wants to pursue a document further must have the collection he cites. A further limitation for the general reader, for whom the work seems intended, is that there is no list of abbreviations used.

Following a chapter on the New Testament foundations, Spinks organizes the
material geographically within a chronological framework. He prefers variety over efforts at harmonization of liturgical practices. The different ritual patterns generated different theological emphases in the various authors, who did not start with a general theology of baptism. Spinks does not discuss the origin of infant baptism, first mentioning it incidentally in regard to Augustine, but then giving attention to it in later developments, as in the East Syrian defense of infant baptism on the grounds of the largess of God’s mercy (p. 74). In the West after Augustine baptism “came to be a baptism from something (original sin) more than a baptism into something (the eschatological community of God)” (p. 67). Instead of focusing only on Western developments, Spinks gives full attention also to East and West Syrian developments and to the Armenian, Coptic, and Ethiopic rites as well as the Byzantine liturgy in the sixth century and after.

Spinks concludes that “all rites look back to the [baptism of Jesus in the] Jordan, and ritualize baptism in the conviction that what happened there once, still happens now in every baptism” (p. 157). The essential elements were “dipping (Christological), naming (trinitarian), and gestures to symbolize the descent of the Spirit (pneumatological) and adoption into an eschatological community (ecclesiological)” (p. 157).

Studies with Liturgy as the Theme

Two works in German, one by a Roman Catholic and the other by a Protestant (Lutheran), have set the framework for study of the liturgy of baptism: Alois Stenzel, S.J., Die Taufe: Eine Genetische Erklärung der Taufliturgie (Innsbruck: Felizian Rauch, 1958); and Georg Kretschmar, Die Geschichte des Taufgottesdienstes in der alter Kirche, in Leiturgia, Vol. 5, pp. 31-35 (1964-1966).

Stenzel’s introduction identifies his interest as liturgy, not theology or parallels from the history of religions, and primarily the Latin development leading to the medieval Roman liturgy. The New Testament writings show little of a ritual of baptism. Infant baptism is not demonstrable from the New Testament, but it is not against the practice (p. 17). The sequence was proclamation, faith, and baptism. Nothing supports the idea that faith made baptism unnecessary; repentance also was necessary. Confession of the Lord Jesus and baptism in his name was the core rite; the “word” accompanying the water in Ephesians 5:26 may be a prayer, an epiclesis, or a “formula,” but there was an accompanying word (pp. 18-19). A full immersion is not excluded, but Stenzel brings up many “hinderances” to assuming such (pp. 20-22), yet he finds no evidence for a baptizand standing in the font when sprinkling or pouring was employed (pp. 108-110). A confession of faith was employed at baptism,

1. Georg Kretschmar, “Recent Research on Christian Initiation,” Studia Liturgica 12 (1977): 87-106 concludes that it is hard to speak of a single original and normative form of baptism; unity is provided by Christ’s saving work.
but what form it took and what words were spoken by the administrator are contro-
versial, for the New Testament gives no clearly recognizable trinitarian confessional
formula (pp. 23-29, 36).

Stenzel seeks the first indications in the second century of elements that became
common later. Ideas associated with baptism began to be translated into ritual ex-
pression (p. 44). Justin knew no organized, normative ritual, no institutional cate-
chumenate, no *disciplina arcana*, no anointing, but recognized no difference between
his homeland and Rome (pp. 47-50).

Stenzel takes the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus as representing the practice
at Rome; as the first constructed baptismal ritual it is the point of departure for his
discussion of each item in the baptismal liturgy. Although it was a private and not an
official work, it represents what was already traditional and so must reflect practices
of c. 170 (p. 55). The catechumenate meant that instruction was now official and not
just private. In contrast to earlier times, the *Apostolic Tradition* put a strong emphasis
on preparation for baptism and a ritual strengthening of demonological moments
(pp. 56-69). Although Tertullian gives no prayers and mentions no baptismal exor-
cism, which became integral to the baptismal liturgy for Cyprian, he has many
agreements with the ritual in Hippolytus (pp. 70-75). Tertullian emphasizes the ideas
of covenant and vow. The baptismal ceremony in the early third century shows the
essential role of faith and its confession (p. 76, n. 70).

The chapter on the development of individual rites in the East treats the follow-
ing: (1) The baptismal confession belongs to the core rite next to the baptismal act.
Interpretations of baptism “in the name of Jesus” include a distinction from the
baptism of John, liturgical words by the administrator, and a profession of faith by
the one baptized. Neither liturgical documents nor the correspondence of Cyprian
confirms a baptism in the name of Jesus as church usage, but that such was known at
the time of the rebaptism controversy appears not unjustified. The Symbol was a
product of the insitutional catechumenate, but the eastern witnesses to baptismal
questions and answers are numerous (pp. 77-98). (2) The denial of Satan usually in-
cluded three elements and was part of the baptismal confession negatively formu-
lated (perhaps better described as a verbalized repentance). It was part of the origi-
nal distinction made between two lords. The form of words was originally assertive
but later was interrogatory in parallel with the interrogatory confession. A dramatiz-
ing occurred with the candidate taking an active role by turning west, stretching out
the hand, and breathing out or spitting. A prebaptismal anointing was introduced
between the time of Justin and Hippolytus and did not belong to the core rite (pp.
98-104). (3) The verbal adhesion to Christ is provable only in the East; the West was
more conservative in juxtaposing the renunciation and the baptismal confession.
This act created a new pairing of *apotaxis* and *syntaxis* (pp. 104-108). (4) The baptis-
mal act was not always an immersion. The number “three” was not required by the
New Testament; its fundamental symbolism was trinitarian, and the association
with Jesus’ three days in the grave was secondary (pp. 108-111). (5) The first express
witness for the present western formula “I baptize you . . .” is at the end of the eighth
century. The first eastern witnesses to a declarative baptismal formula (end of fourth and fifth centuries) have the passive form, “So and so is baptized.” The adoption of a declarative formula represents the tendency for formulas to take over the speech of Scripture. Many texts use the word “Symbol” to refer to the baptismal questions and answers (pp. 111-125). (6) The word σφραγίς, signum, in the rites after baptism at the beginning was not a technical term for confirmation (pp. 125-132). (7) Rites of the catechumenate (admission to it, classes of catechumens, the “rule of secrecy,” exorcisms, delivery of the creed) receive extensive treatment (pp. 132-164). The period of three years is an indication of the weight put on moral formation.

The treatment of individual rites in the West before Augustine mainly depends on Ambrose: effeta, renunciation and adhesion, with the consecration of the water between the renunciation and the baptismal confession, the baptismal act, foot washing (of limited spread and short duration), anointing after baptism (the West up to Innocent I knew no anointing at confirmation), the catechumenate (the West had a fixed Symbol delivered to candidates before the East did; Rome took over a delivery of the “Our Father” from Africa) (pp. 165-177).

A special concern of Stenzel is the rite of the scrutinies (Part III). He, like other students of the baptismal liturgy, gives much attention to the eighth-century Gelasian Sacramentary (pp. 207-234). (This is understandable because of the importance and influence of Rome, the absence of anything comparably early for Rome, and its inclusion of earlier material; but I omit it as outside my chronological boundaries.) Part IV continues with the development from baptismal rite to baptismal ordo in the Middle Ages.

Kretschmar consciously includes much of theology along with liturgy. In setting forth his methodology he notes that in the third century baptism (and not the Lord’s supper) was the central liturgical act of the church (p. 5). Limiting this summary to only his treatment of the first four centuries is sufficient to illustrate the richness of his contribution.

As to the setting for the early Christian practice, he concludes that rabbinic instructions and the practice of Jewish baptizing sects make it probable that Christian baptism was an immersion (p. 9). We know of no single action in early Christian baptismal rites that must have been taken over from Hellenistic mystery cults (p. 53). In contrast to Qumran and John the Baptist, the church not only understood baptism as an eschatological cleansing rite and as reception into the eschatological community but found its special meaning in relation to the person and history of Jesus (p. 16). He throughout finds an interchange between eschatology and Christology in the baptismal understanding of the early church (e.g., pp. 113, 143).

The relation to Jesus as resurrected Lord was expressed by the phrase “in the name of.” It meant one was now “transferred to Christ” or assigned to him (see James 2:7 — chap. 10), but this theological expression gave no direction for how this was done in the liturgy. The relation to Christ may have been spoken by the administrator in prayer before, during, or after the baptism, or in a word accompanying the act, or in a confession by the one baptized (p. 18). The meaning “calling on the name
of Jesus” may be correct throughout, and the same would apply to the “name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” (p. 32).

The book of Acts knows three forms of the relation of Holy Spirit to baptism: received after baptism, received before baptism, or not connected with baptism (pp. 19-25). His suggestion of the possible liturgical sequence of anointing, baptism, and eucharist in the New Testament is doubtful (see comments on 1 John 5:8 in chap. 10). Anointing is used for the theological meaning of baptism in 2 Corinthians 1:21 and 1 John 2:24, 27 but not in reference to a ritual action (p. 27). In some Gnostic circles oil displaced water baptism. The widespread use of oil in the orthodox baptismal ritual at the end of the second century puts its origin not later than the middle of the century (p. 30).

“Seal” was the commonest baptismal designation in the second century. Some texts show the seal clearly as a mark of ownership and protection. For Christian usage in relation to baptism there are two lines of thought — an eschatological and a juristic. There is a close relation of seal and name in the second and third centuries so that “seal” and “baptismal formula” are close together. Indeed “seal” is no separate baptismal rite but an interpretation of the baptismal bath (pp. 36-41).

Another understanding of baptism was as a vow and legal act, expressed liturgically in the renunciation of Satan (p. 42). The designation of baptism as a bath or washing (λουτρόν) was consistent with and perhaps contributed to widespread use of affusion in the third and fourth centuries (this study will express reservations about the extent of affusion). Since running water in the early spring of the year was cold, rubbing the whole body with oil before baptism was understandable. The church’s allowance of warm water was against Jewish or Jewish-Christian-Gnostic sects (as the Elkesaites) who expressly advocated cold water (pp. 45-48). Affusion had in its favor that it was “water from above,” but in comparison with bathing customs Christian baptism in its essence was not a washing and was a purification bath only in the same sense as one may say it is an anointing, sealing, or priestly consecration. Baptism was no symbolic action, but individual rites were throughout given symbolic meanings (p. 48).

The word and faith were closely connected with baptism, which was the goal of the mission preaching (p. 49). The unity of baptism lay not in the rite, or even in the common theological formulations, but in the saving work of Christ, which provided the ground for the “once for all” nature of baptism (pp. 55-56).

The development of the catechumenate (pp. 63-80) involved a kind of delay of baptism. A precondition of organizing the catechumenate was a decline in the eschatological understanding of baptism. Repentance was expressed in acts of penance. Although the catechumens were brought into some relation with the church, they were distinct from the fideles. They were not yet “pure” enough to go to baptism. The renunciation and the exorcisms were the active and passive sides of freeing from the power of demons.

In the fourth century there was the custom of enrolling a child as a catechumen and administering baptism later. Kretschmar thinks both infant and adult baptism
existed side by side (p. 85). The practice of others answering for infants shows that
the Credo was not a vow of individuals but the confession and pledge of the church
(p. 100).

In keeping with the prevailing view at the time he wrote, Kretschmar gives
much attention to the rite in the *Apostolic Tradition*, to which we give some references in Chapter 19. Where there was the use of pure running water, a consecration
of the water was unnecessary. Although Tertullian had a prayer over the water, his
baptismal theology emphasized the oath (answers to questions) and not the water as
purifying the soul (in distinction from the flesh — *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*
48.11).

By the baptismal questions and answers in Hippolytus and Tertullian faith and
baptism were inseparably bound together (p. 96). The renunciation of Satan and the
baptismal questions are bound together for Tertullian. The three-member renuncia-
tion always has Satan at the head as the opponent of Christ; then may come pomp,
works, worship, angels, or world (p. 97). Hippolytus gives a declaratory renuncia-
tion. Kretschmar’s interpretation that in the *Apostolic Tradition* baptism is no more
the boundary between the church and the world but is set within the church (p. 99)
seems to go against the whole tenor of the instructions.

In the rebaptism crisis of the third century (pp. 107-108) Cyprian and associates
in effect had the church legitimating faith and baptism rather than growing out of
them.

Kretschmar develops the distinctive practices of the Syrian and Greek East, es-
pecially the anointing of the whole body that preceded baptism with no post-
baptismal rite except the eucharist (pp. 116-133). According to the *Acts of Thomas*
and Ephraem the Syrian, the anointing and the Spirit are close together. The anointing is
the seal in other Syriac sources; it was the line between the church and non-church.

The baptismal questions were unknown in Syria, but the administrator pro-
nounced one of the divine names with each of the three dippings (p. 123). A full im-
ersion, he says, appears not to have been performed in Syria according to the evi-
dence of archaeology (p. 123). The concepts of consecration developed in relation to
blessing the elements of the Lord’s supper were transferred to the oil and to the wa-
ter; in reverse the three-member baptismal formula was the model for consecration
of oil and of bread (p. 124).

How widespread was the Syrian sequence of only one anointing, and that before
baptism and the use of the declarative baptismal formula? He argues for this se-
quence in Cappadocia and Egypt (pp. 133-136), but the interrogations are attested, al-
though sometimes with a declarative creed as well.

Victor Saxer, *Les rites de l’initiation chrétienne du IIe au VIe siècle: Esquisse*
*historique et signification d’après leur principaux témoins* (Spoleto: Centro italiano di
studi sull’alto medioevo, 1988), may be treated under the rubric of liturgy. Saxer is
interested in initiation as a whole, not just its separate parts, and notes its two as-
pects — moral and ritual. He gives more attention to the rites associated with the
catechumenate and the preparation for baptism, less on baptism proper and the
postbaptismal rites. He treats the significance of the different rites (especially the preparatory rites) but has little on the doctrinal meaning of baptism.

Part One on the patristic origins in the second century discusses the *Didache*, *Barnabas*, Hermas, Justin, and Clement of Alexandria. The blessing of the water and the use of oil of anointing appear to have been innovations of Gnostic origin (p. 102). The most common theme in regard to baptism in the second century was remission of sins. Baptism was preceded by repentance and was a new birth, associated with Israel’s exodus from Egypt. “Seal” was used of baptism itself as the mark of Christ and sign of new spirit. Baptism was the rite of initiation. Preparatory and complementary rites emerged by the end of the second century.

Part Two is the heart of the book, the golden age of Christian initiation from the third to the fifth century. Works are grouped chronologically and geographically with separate chapters on the *Apostolic Tradition* (definitely Roman and likely by Hippolytus — p. 662), Tertullian and the *Passion of Perpetua*, Cyprian, Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem, Egeria, the Syrian liturgy, John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, the three great Cappadocians, Proclus of Constantinople, Ambrose, Chromatius and Rufinus of Aquileia, Nicetas of Remesiana, Augustine, and Quodvultdeus. The rites in the third century must be distinguished from those of the fourth and fifth centuries. There are significant lacunae in our sources for Egypt, Rome, and Spain (pp. 417-419). The classic forms of Christian initiation were a dramatization of the catechesis given to new converts and were the result of the interaction of ritual elaboration, theological reflection, and the large number of new converts (p. 662).

The Third Part concerns the period of changes in the sixth century. The sources are again treated chronologically by regions: Dionysius the Areopagite, Severus of Antioch, Egyptian sources of the fourth to sixth century, Gaul from the baptism of Clovis to the death of Gregory of Tours, Spain from fourth to sixth century, Rome to the end of the sixth century (with special attention to John the Deacon and the *Gelasian Sacramentary*, whose baptismal ritual is in direct continuity with baptismal usages of the golden age; the subjects of its rites were no more adults newly converted from paganism but infants born to Christian families — pp. 598, 602, 605). Hence, there was not a real catechumenate in the sixth century (p. 626), and its rites became ritualized and their accompanying formulas acquired more and more an apotropaic and prophylactic character (p. 633). The educational and moral aspects were directed to the godparents. The same ritual scheme for the nucleus of the baptismal rite may be discerned in all regions, but each region had its own variations (p. 642). The detachment of confirmation as a separate rite was made at different moments in different places in this period (p. 643). The usage in Gaul, Spain, and Milan was for one chrismation on the forehead by the celebrant of baptism, with the bishop conferring the Holy Spirit by imposition of hand; the Roman practice, which came to prevail, was for a double chrismation, the second on the forehead by the bishop was accompanied by his imposition of hand to confer the Holy Spirit (p. 646).

Saxer’s method is to let each document speak for itself. He frequently cautions
against filling in silence in a source with information in other sources, so he leaves many questions in liturgical history open. The interpretation of the rites of initiation was less changed than the rites themselves. The interpretation of baptism was oriented to John 3:5 and Romans 6:3-11. The latter interpretation came from the baptismal rite of an immersion as total as the death of Christ and from the theology of the redemptive death of Christ (p. 659).

Topical Studies

Per Lundberg, *La typologie baptismale dans l’ancienne église* (Uppsala: Lorentz, 1942), begins his study with the baptismal liturgies of the ancient church. The frequency with which Psalm 74:13 is placed in rapport with the baptism of Jesus and Christian baptism proves the early church interpreted Jesus’ baptism as a *descensus ad inferos* in which he crushed Satan (the dragon). The prayers for the blessing of the water contained as biblical types of transformation the sweetening of the bitter waters of Mara, Elisha making the water of Jericho wholesome, Jesus turning the water to wine at Cana, and the baptism of Jesus. Types of deliverance were the flood in the days of Noah, Israel crossing the Red Sea, Moses drawing water from the rock, and the contest of Elijah with prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel. Other motifs in the liturgies (confirmed by patristic references) taken from the Bible reinforce the themes of deliverance from the kingdom of death and baptism as a *descensus*.

In ancient Near Eastern mythology the sea was the domicile of monsters and its demonic character was personified as a dragon or a serpent. In the early church the realm under the earth was the home of the dead and also of demonic powers. These views provided the cosmological bases for the deluge as a baptismal paradigm (ark is the church), crossing the Red Sea as a type of baptism, and associating the Jordan with the sea of death.

The cross constituted the very center of baptism. The baptism of Jesus and his cross are closely connected. They are linked by the theme of the *descensus*, and the connection is illustrated by the patristic interpretation of baptismal types as equally figures of the cross. Patristic authors give many types of the wood. The “importance of the cross for the primitive Christian notion of baptism has not been sufficiently observed.” It is by baptism that the cross becomes effective (p. 200).

Lundberg uses the *descensus* theme to interpret several New Testament passages. For instance, the ease with which 1 Peter 3 moves from the *descensus* of Jesus to baptism illustrates how firmly connected in the tradition were the two ideas. On Romans 6 he states that Paul’s thought focuses on the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ; the mention of burial is taken from a tradition in the church that Paul has received, according to which baptism produces the death, burial, and *descensus* of the baptized. In baptism the death of Christ is actualized sacramentally.

Othmar Heggelbacher, *Die christliche Taufe als Rechtsakt nach dem Zeugnis der frühen Christenheit* (Freiburg, Switzerland: Universitäts Verlag, 1953), after a histori-
eral overview of the question, devotes the main body of his study to “Christian Baptism as a Legally Significant Sacramental Act.” Topics covered initially include norms for the water employed in baptism (pp. 34-38), norms for the words accompanying the baptismal act (pp. 38-44), requirements for the administrator and sponsors (pp. 44-55), requirements for the recipient (intentio, instructio, attritio). Baptism meant belonging to a community (pp. 72-74) and was the rite of initiation into the church (pp. 79-90). Its necessity was considered binding (pp. 77-78). Especially notable was the understanding of baptism as an oath to God, a contract (Tertullian) (pp. 90-99), and a seal (pp. 101-104). Baptism established the church’s personality (pp. 99-105) and was named in the third question of the Symbol from about 200 (p. 104). Duties flowed from baptism — the lex fidei (pp. 105-110) and the lex disciplinae (submission to church law, pp. 110-112) — but rights accompanied these laws (pp. 127-165). Heggelbacher’s final unit places church membership in its heilgeschichtlichen context (pp. 166-180).


P. T. Camelot, *La spiritualité du baptême: Baptises dans l’eau et l’Esprit* (Paris: Cerf, 1963; 2nd ed., 1993), gives a topical treatment of the Fathers’ praise of baptism. In part 1, baptism is the sacrament of faith with separate chapters on baptism as profession of faith (pp. 25ff. — page numbers are to the 2nd ed.), as an engagement by faith (pp. 45ff.), baptism and the church (pp. 61ff.), and baptism as “illumination” (pp. 85ff.). Part 2 has separate chapters on baptism as death to sin (pp. 111ff.) and as resurrection to new life (pp. 136ff.), with an excursus on baptism and the return to paradise (pp. 165ff.). Part 3 is on baptism and the Holy Spirit — baptized in the Holy Spirit (pp. 169ff.), the unction and seal (pp. 191ff.), baptism and confirmation (pp. 225ff.), with an excursus on the pouring out of the Spirit (pp. 242ff.). The final chapter (pp. 245-266) is on the baptism of Christ and the baptism of the Christian (see my chap. 6 for a summary).

The relation of baptism to what the Roman Catholic church later distinguished as the separate sacrament of confirmation has much exercised Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican students of the sacraments. A Roman Catholic view, especially in finding anticipations of the later recognition of confirmation as an independent sacrament, is Burkhard Neunheuser, *Baptism and Confirmation* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1964), translation of *Taufe und Firmung*, Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte, IV.2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1964). Since Neunheuser gives much attention to baptism up to the modern period, his work is an earlier counterpart to the work by Heiser (above) from the Greek Orthodox perspective.
Neunheuser begins with separate chapters on the scriptural doctrine of baptism and then of confirmation. Baptism was a full submersion (pp. 5-7). He considers the baptism in obedience to Matthew 28:19 to be the baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire prophesied by John the Baptist (p. 8), an unlikely interpretation. He understands baptism “in the name of Jesus” to be baptism in obedience to Jesus in the manner prescribed by him. Neither it nor Matthew 28:19 was a “formula”; the latter was an epiclesis, meaning that the Godhead was present in effective power and the baptized entrusted oneself to them (pp. 14-15). Repentance, faith, and the immersion bath are an undivided unity (p. 20). Ephesians 5:26 makes not just the individual but the church the subject of baptism (p. 22). Who baptizes is irrelevant (1 Cor. 1:13-17), because the efficacy is in the divine name. The interpretation of 1 Peter 3:20-21 is that baptism is a request, and a request granted (pp. 33-35). Baptism in the New Testament is always in proximity to repentance and a confession of faith, so it is always adult baptism, but tradition shows that nothing in the New Testament proves infant baptism is contrary to Scripture (p. 38).

Neunheuser finds the laying on of hands for imparting the Holy Spirit after the water bath in Acts 8:4-20; 10:1-7; and Hebrews 6:1-6. The baptismal bath in the name of Jesus is the first imparting of the Spirit; a complementary imparting of the Spirit by the laying on of hands together with the bath makes up the full initiation into the Christian life (pp. 46, 18-19). “Seal” in Paul is the immersion and the laying on of hands (p. 50); Paul uses “anointing” figuratively (pp. 50-51).

With reference to the noncanonical sources, Neunheuser sees the catechizing and fasting in the Didache as a development of the summons to repent; it is the only evidence before the mid-third century of baptism by infusion (p. 54). Justin, Tertullian, and the Apostolic Tradition provide testimony to the ritual of baptism (pp. 55-60). Theological reflection is found as well in Barnabas, Hermas, and Clement of Alexandria. Faith and regeneration are central ideas; human cooperation is required, but the divine action is the decisive element (pp. 65-66). Three dangers cause Origen to emphasize the moral side of baptism: a magical conception of the mysteries, the Gnostic tendency to turn grace into a natural and cosmological process, and the abuse in the church of performing baptism without understanding its significance (p. 67). The innate blemish Origen mentions in justification of infant baptism is not deduced from the sin of Adam (pp. 70-71). The second century adds illumination and the seal (as spiritual circumcision) to the concepts of baptism (pp. 80-81). The complementary stages by which the Spirit is imparted were not yet distinguished conceptually; there was a rich symbolism associated with anointing, which was probably literally done in this period. Tertullian, On Baptism, brings the theological statements into a single picture but without appeal to original sin (pp. 84-91).

Sacramentum and μυστήριον were first used for Christian ceremonies at the end of the second century; a technical consolidation of their usage occurred in the third century (pp. 93-99). The controversy over heretic baptism provides a rich picture of baptismal theology in the third century (pp. 104-106). The mystery of initiation was made up of the water bath in the name of the Trinity and the concluding “anointing
with chrism or the laying on of hands for the imparting of the Spirit” (p. 106); Neunheuser leaves an ambiguity in regard to the latter two rites.

The sacramental life of the church developed into a more splendid liturgy in the fourth and fifth centuries (p. 107). Optatus in opposing the Donatists distinguished heretic and schismatic baptism, but his view of heretic baptism was contrary to the teaching of the church (p. 110 — read Roman Catholic church). In comparison to his full description of the mystery of baptism, Ambrose speaks rather briefly about the spiritual seal, but his “seal of the Spirit” is asserted to be clearly distinguished from the water bath in the Spirit (p. 114). Apart from the Donatist and Pelagian controversies on the subject of baptism Augustine moves entirely in a traditional framework (p. 115). He uses *sacramentum* in a broad sense, but he is also familiar with a narrow sense, especially for baptism and the eucharist (p. 116). Sacraments are *signa* that are what they signify; the power of the sacraments depends on the *significatio*, which occurs through the *verbum* (p. 117). Against the Donatists Augustine asserts that a sacrament can be validly performed but without efficacy for salvation (p. 119), and baptism can be stolen from its rightful owner without thereby losing its value (p. 121). Against the Pelagians he fully presented his conception of infant baptism (pp. 124-127). Augustine could not assume that the sign has any actual power to effect grace (in the sense claimed by Scholastic theology); baptism remains merely the prerequisite for grace (p. 127). In North Africa, in contrast to eastern liturgies, the anointing immediately after the bath is followed by giving a white garment and only then the laying on of hands (p. 128). Hence, for Augustine the anointing belonged to the structure of baptism in the strict sense and is the beginning of the giving of the Holy Spirit, and the laying on of hands is a clearly separate rite (p. 130). In Augustine’s time what a later age distinguished as two sacraments (baptism and confirmation) constituted one act of initiation (pp. 131-132). Leo and Pacian assign the giving of the Holy Spirit to the anointing (pp. 132-133). The order of rites is that customary at Rome and North Africa since antiquity — water bath, anointing, laying on of hands, and *consignatio* without anointing (p. 134).

Different customs prevailed in the East in regard to rebaptism, but in general the East required rebaptism of genuine heretics, defined as those who did not accept the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity (pp. 135-138). Cyril of Jerusalem provides the basic picture for eastern baptismal practice (pp. 138-146). The historical reality of Christ’s death and resurrection is the original in which the believer shares through the sacramental image (p. 141). It is not clear from Cyril whether the power of baptism comes from naming the three divine names, from a separate consecration of the water, or from Christ’s baptism (p. 143). No less important than the water was the chrism: as the water was the antitype of Christ’s passion, the myrrh was the antitype of the Holy Spirit (pp. 143-144). The whole action is called “baptism” or “seal,” but the anointing with chrism was something quite independent (p. 145). The necessity of baptism for salvation was the tradition of the primitive church (p. 145). Cyril does not seem to recognize infant baptism or a baptism of desire (p. 146).

The other Greek Fathers coined long lists of names for baptism (p. 146). The im-
parting of the Spirit was the conclusion and completion of baptism (p. 148). The principal contribution of the Greek Fathers is bringing out two themes to interpret the essence of baptism — baptism in Jesus’ death (pp. 148-149) and filling the water with sanctifying power (pp. 149-151). (The exposition of their thought in this book will conclude that the essence of baptism for them lay elsewhere.) Theodore of Mopsuestia has an anointing before but not after the baptism; “signing” is “what we today call confirmation” (p. 158).

Neunheuser concludes the patristic period by looking at the rite of the Byzantine church, Pseudo-Dionysius, and John of Damascus for the East and the Sacramentarium Gelasianum, Ordo Romanus (XI), Gregory the Great, and Isidore of Seville for the West. In the East the intimate unity of the bath and the anointing is shown by the fact that the baptismal service concluded only after the latter (p. 164). The two Roman rites provide information on the period of transition from adult to infant baptism (p. 164). The link between baptism and confirmation was so close that Pseudo-Dionysius has no separate chapter on “confirmation” but merely on “consecration of the myrrh,” which had a transcending importance in its own right (pp. 171-172). Gregory the Great recognized single or triple immersion (p. 177). Isidore had chapters on baptism itself, on chrism, and on the imposition of hands or confirmation (pp. 178-180).

Neunheuser continues with chapters on baptism and confirmation in the Carolingian period and early Scholasticism, in high and late Scholasticism, in the Council of Trent and the modern period, and the full recognition of confirmation as an independent sacrament.

Ernst Dassmann, Sundervergebung durch Taufe, Busse, und Märtyrerverbitten in den Zeugnissen frühchristlicher Frommigkeit und Kunst (Münster: Aschendorff, 1973), despite its preliminary nature, became a classic work. The aim of the study was to explain whether and how forgiveness of sins left traces in the pre-Constantinian iconographical witnesses. He finds sin and forgiveness to have been at the heart of Christian piety in the period 250-350 and the key to the interpretation of the earliest Christian art. Many patristic texts are cited on each point along with reference to the pictorial motifs (illustrated by fifty-one plates).

With reference specifically to the iconological aspect (chap. 2) Dassmann sees the baptism of Jesus as the pattern of Christian baptism (pp. 99-103). Martyrdom was a second baptism for forgiveness (pp. 153-162). Chapter 3 is his exegesis of the pictorial motifs presented in early Christian art as found in the literature of the second and third centuries. Old Testament motifs are Abraham and Isaac (pp. 184-196), water from the rock by Moses (pp. 196-208), Noah (pp. 208-222), Jonah (pp. 222-232), the fall (seldom mentioned in the earliest literature — pp. 232-258), Daniel and the three youths (pp. 258-270), Susannah (pp. 270-273), Job (pp. 273-279), and the ascension of Elijah (pp. 279-282). The New Testament scenes that are introduced in the earliest Christian art have also in the literature the most marked exegesis. These include the resurrection of Lazarus (pp. 283-287), the Samaritan woman at the well (pp. 289-298), miracles of healing — lame, blind, woman with
issue of blood (pp. 298-313) — miracle of wine at Cana (pp. 313-316), and adoration of the magi (p. 316). Dassmann gives special attention to the picture of the Shepherd in literature.

Dassmann’s chapter 4 gives an iconographic evaluation. Pages 348 to 352 introduce the specific theme of baptism. In addition to direct pictures of baptism, indirect baptismal pictures and baptismal compositions include especially a fisherman. Biblical motifs of forgiveness are the Shepherd, the Jonah cycle (pp. 385-397), the fall (pp. 397-405), the resurrection of Lazarus (pp. 405-411), and Noah (pp. 411-419). Dassmann’s conclusion warns against imposing a dogmatic meaning on the art or overvaluing the case he has made. He notes that it is often difficult to distinguish baptismal and penitential forgiveness (pp. 448-449).

August Jilek, *Initiationsfeier und Amt: Ein Beitrag zur Struktur und Theologie der ämter und des Taufgottesdienstes in der frühen Kirche* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1979), deals only with the *Apostolic Tradition*, Tertullian, and Cyprian. The special concern is the function of the officers in baptism, but Jilek covers much more, especially about the offices and about the baptismal liturgy. Notable is the treatment of the church as the bearer of baptismal authority according to Cyprian (pp. 254-265). For Cyprian water and the laying on of hands are central actions of the ceremony of baptism, corresponding to the forgiveness of sins and gift of the Spirit. By sharply separating these two, Jilek makes the debatable (or at least overly precise) claim that Cyprian’s statements about receiving the Spirit by baptism (*Letters* 63.8; 74.5) are not an expression of the means but the origin of the gift of the Spirit (p. 266 — see my comments on these texts in chap. 21).

Henry Ansgar Kelly, *The Devil at Baptism: Ritual, Theology, and Drama* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985) examines initiation rites in their conceptual and dramatic aspects as they pertain to the devil and demons. The struggle with Satan was ritualized and liturgized (pp. 11-12). The baptismal service at first was simple and had no reference to evil spirits, but at the beginning of the third century it was transformed into an elaborate ritual (p. 10).

Part one of Kelly’s book presents the background on evil spirits and conversion in the New Testament (chap. 1), Jewish precedents (chap. 2), sin demons and their removal in the early church (chap. 3), and antidemonic initiation rites in Gnostic groups (chap. 4). Many of the antidemonic rituals that came into Christian communities are first attested among Egyptian Gnostics (p. 17).

Part two takes up early mainstream developments, beginning with the *Apostolic Tradition* (chap. 5). Two activities were important in freeing the candidates from demons — exorcism and renunciation (chap. 6); and later postbaptismal rituals were given an apotropaic interpretation to prevent the return of demons. These three elements of rescue, reversal of allegiance, and armament against renewed attack are noted in the sources for Africa and Europe from Tertullian to John the Deacon (chap. 7). In the East there was a nonexorcistic tradition, beginning with the Pseudo-Clementines, in which “baptism itself was thought to effect the expulsion of the unclean spirits” (p. 124), and continuing to Pseudo-Dionysius (chap. 8). In documents
derived from the *Apostolic Tradition* and other sources exorcisms are present (chap. 9). Narsai stressed the prophylactic aspects of the signing and anointing (p. 153).

Part three discusses the formation of modern rituals: Byzantine and West Syrian (chap. 10), Armenia and Egypt (chap. 11), the Roman-Frankish liturgy (chap. 12), Milanese, Gallican, and Spanish rites (chap. 13), and Western reforms in the sixteenth and twentieth centuries.

Peter Cramer, *Baptism and Change in the Early Middle Ages c. 200-c. 1150* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), discusses the social context of liturgy and the (pre-)history of the meaning of sacraments. He begins with Hippolytus of Rome (pp. 9-45), for whom baptism is a crisis, a decisive choice that involves a rejection of pagan society. For Tertullian and Ambrose (pp. 46-86) conversion was not a state of being but of becoming, a transition or translation. In the Bible, according to Tertullian, there is an “ideal water,” a *genus* of which the difference of species is irrelevant (p. 60). *Sacramentum* in Tertullian combines the juridical sense of oath and the Greek sense of “mystery” (p. 63). Whereas Tertullian appeals to the mind, Ambrose does to the emotions (p. 64); for Ambrose (as for Cyril of Jerusalem) the actions come before theology (p. 69). The discussion of the *Passion of Perpetua* explores the psychological connection of baptism, martyrdom, and dream (pp. 73-86).

Cramer sees Augustine as concerned with the relation of baptism to the subsequent Christian life (pp. 87-129). Yet the combined effect of the doctrine of original sin and the practice of infant baptism appeared to make the candidate an involuntary being and made baptism an exorcism, a rite that lost its ethical color (pp. 113-114). The necessity of infant baptism rather than its possibility or desirability was the most obvious legacy of Augustine to the Middle Ages (p. 125). Yet this was not his last word. His *Letter 98* to Boniface shows baptism as a matter of the authenticity of the will and not of the logic of dogma, for the sacrament of faith (baptism) is faith. In what follows Augustine we see how the notion of a social will (expressed in infant baptism) became not only the society of the Spirit but the political society of this world (p. 129).

Cramer’s following chapters consider “From Augustine to the Carolingians” (pp. 130-178), “The Diminishing of Baptism” (pp. 179-220), and “The Twelfth Century” (pp. 221-266). For Cramer infant baptism focused the tension between sacrament as an objective functional act and sacrament as an act of will with ethical demands. Although the priest became the broker of ritual power (p. 142), in another dimension the community saw itself in its children, and the child was led through the forms of an adult experience (pp. 173-178). The separation of confirmation from baptism arose from the practical situation in which bishops could not get out into the countryside to baptize all who need it, so he confirmed or finished off the baptism given by a deacon or priest. Alongside the objectification of the sacraments, the wealth of literature about them in the Carolingian age stressed the moral more than the sacramental aspects.

“baptism in the Holy Spirit” primarily in the modern Pentecostal sense and is concerned to show an expectation to receive charisms in connection with Christian initiation. The authors use “prophetic charisms” to include tongues and healing in addition to prophecy and in contrast to nonmiraculous charisms. They treat every bestowal of the Spirit as “baptism in the Holy Spirit,” a usage that ignores distinctions in terminology in the biblical texts and abolishes the imagery of immersion in the phrase. They seek a middle way blending later Catholic sacramentalism with Pentecostal charismatic interpretation. The last chapter shows that the examination of the history serves a modern doctrinal and pastoral viewpoint.

George Montague writes part one on the New Testament evidence. Although carefully differentiating the viewpoints of different authors, he offers these conclusions on the New Testament evidence (pp. 76-80): the rite of initiation always involves water baptism in the name of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit; the manner in which the baptismal union with Jesus was imaged varied in different authors; many texts assume an experiential dimension to initiation; there was an expectation of a charismatic expression on the part of the receiver but no evidence that any one gift was always expected, and some gifts might manifest themselves later; the initial gift of the Spirit was meant to grow; one should expect the experience of the Spirit; and charisms are of great variety and are for building up the church and for evangelization.

Kilian McDonnell writes part two on the early postbiblical evidence, which treats Tertullian, Hilary of Poitiers, Cyril of Jerusalem, the Apostolic Constitutions, John Chrysostom, Philoxenus, and later Syrians (concluding with Joseph Hazzayah in the eighth century). Tertullian concludes his account of baptism with the candidates praying in church for the charisms (Baptism 20). Hilary had much to say about experience of the charisms at initiation; for him the charisms of first rank are wisdom, knowledge, and faith, but there are miraculous charisms such as prophecy. Cyril of Jerusalem considered miraculous charisms to be possible for the church and urged candidates to prepare themselves to receive the heavenly charisms, but he never recommended the faithful to be open to tongues (foreign languages for him). The compiler of the Apostolic Constitutions placed restraints on prophets and concentrated the charisms in the bishop. John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia considered the charisms to belong to the apostolic age and not to be possible for the life of their church. With Philoxenus and other Syrians, when infant baptism had become the norm, the charisms were a second baptism given to those who became perfect in the practice of asceticism.

McDonnell raises the question of a correlation between the paradigm shift from baptism as modelled on the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan to baptism as entering the death and resurrection of Jesus and a decline in expectation of receiving prophetic charisms at baptism. How the church ritualized the imparting of the Spirit in initiation varied, but the imparting of the Spirit is a constant (p. 317). There are multiple reasons for the breakup of the link between Christian initiation and the charisms: infant baptism becoming the norm; concern with Montanism (but his authors are
too late to support this connection); close of the canon leading to a dispensationalist view; solidification of hierarchical power (already in the Didache). Although recognizing the varied uses of the word *charisma*, the authors are too quick to see prophetic charisms in it, fail to fully acknowledge the tendency of preachers to collapse the difference between biblical text and their own situation, and give inadequate historical contextualizing to the texts examined.

Simon Légasse, *Naissance du baptême* (Paris: Cerf, 1993), after a chapter on the origin of a vocabulary, discusses the baptism by John, Jesus’ baptism, the baptizing activity of Jesus, the doubtful influence of the baptism of proselytes, and the meaning of the first Christian baptisms. Baptism “in the name of Jesus” was the absolute novelty by which Christian baptism radically broke with the baptism of John (p. 120). The unique Pauline formulation in Romans 6:3-4 is connected to early Christian tradition by the formula “into name of Christ,” which equals “into Christ,” and by the connection of baptism with the forgiveness of sins that came from the redemptive death of Christ at Calvary (pp. 127-132).

Legasse concludes that Christian baptism cannot be rooted historically in a word of institution by Jesus, in the baptism of Jesus by John, nor in proselyte baptism. However, Christian baptism reproduced the characteristics of John’s baptism — it was passive, nonrepeatable, and for forgiveness of sins. Jesus received John’s baptism and himself practiced baptism at the beginning of his ministry. These facts would predispose the early community to adopt the same rite of admission, but we must not mask the gaps in our knowledge between Jesus’ ministry and the first attestations of Christian baptism. Christian baptism differed from John’s in the realization that salvation had already commenced (p. 133).

Thomas M. Finn, *From Death to Rebirth: Ritual and Conversion in Antiquity* (New York: Paulist, 1997), might have been treated under liturgy, but it more properly belongs here as a topical study centered on the idea of conversion in its ritual aspects. The book builds on Finn’s earlier collection of sources (below). Finn begins with a linguistic study of the word “conversion” (chap. 1). Then he characterizes Greco-Roman paganism (chap. 2) before citing examples of conversion in the pagan mysteries and philosophy (chap. 3). Two chapters cover conversion in Judaism — in the second temple period (chap. 4) and in the rabbinic period (chap. 5). Conversion in Christianity is likewise studied chronologically — the first and second centuries (chap. 6) and the third century in various regions (chap. 7). For the fourth century the focus is on Jerusalem (chap. 8) and Milan (chap. 9). Among Finn’s conclusions is the importance of the images of death and rebirth and of enlightenment for the transformation involved in conversion (pp. 253-257).

Gerard-Henry Baudry, *Le baptême et ses symboles: Aux sources du salut* (Paris: Beauchesne, 2001), discusses the symbols of water, burial in a tomb with Christ, oil, light, the sun, white clothing, food, the two ways, and seal. His method is to describe the cultural and religious background which explains and justifies the use of each symbol. These symbols had biblical origins yet were accessible to converts from paganism. There was a tendency to find a symbolic significance for each necessary act
in the ceremony. Concrete acts in the ritual made metaphors of salvation actual and had a pedagogical purpose. The point of departure for symbols was theological reflection on the significance of Christian baptism.

Water in the ancient world was a symbol of life, a symbol of death, and a symbol of purification. Baptisteries sometimes took the form of a sarcophagus (as at Dura). Anointing with oil had royal, priestly, and prophetic significance; the diversity of practice (before baptism, after it, or both) forbids the thought of a uniform model. The primitive scheme of teaching marked a change from darkness to light. White clothing was interpreted by the Fathers as signifying the change from sin to innocence, from darkness to light, from slavery to Satan to liberation by Christ, from banishment from paradise to return to paradise, as the way to celestial beatitude, and assumption of the royal priesthood. The cup of pure water given at the first eucharist symbolized the eternal life given by Christ; the cup of milk and honey combined the themes of the food of the promised land, food of infants, and God or Christ as a mother nourishing her child. Salt purified and was used in exorcism. The theme of the two ways included the renunciation of Satan and the attachment to Christ. The seal (which in Greek and Latin meant both the object and its imprint) indicated ownership; it signified the confession of the Trinitarian faith and engagement to follow Christ, belonging to the people of God (a spiritual circumcision), and eschatological participation in the glory of the Resurrected One (who gave the firstfruits of the Spirit).


Collections of Sources


Church, starting with the Didache. The material is then arranged by geographical areas: Syria, the Assyrian Church of the East, Armenia, Syrian Orthodox Church, Maronite rite, Byzantine rite, Egypt, North Africa, Spain, Milan, Rome, Gallican documents, and concluding with the Sarum Rite from England. The volume thus has baptismal documents well into the Middle Ages going beyond the chronological limits of this book.

H. F. Stander and J. P. Louw, *Baptism in the Early Church* (Pretoria: Didaskalia, 1988), although more than a collection of texts, aims primarily “to make the ancient writings on [baptism] accessible to the English reader in an objective way” (preface) and so contains extensive quotations of the sources from the Apostolic Fathers through Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia with an added chapter on early Christian art. The authors have a special concern with infant baptism but also give attention to the mode of baptism, normally immersion but “the method of administering baptism was never an issue” (p. 168), as clinical or emergency baptism shows. The washing away of sins and regeneration were key concepts, but as an emphasis on what was done at baptism increased many other benefits were ascribed to it. Symbolic actions underscored theological aspects. “It is remarkable that the link between baptism and circumcision became relevant only when the issue of the age of the one to be baptized became crucial” (p. 168). The modern claim that adult baptism entailed a missionary situation cannot be sustained, for it continued long after Christianity was well established, and infant baptism is first attested after Christianity was widespread.

T. M. Finn compiled a useful collection in two volumes, *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate: West and East Syria and Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate: Italy, North Africa, and Egypt*, Message of the Fathers of the Church 5 and 6 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992). A feature of the collection is more attention to Syriac and eastern sources than is typical. Finn accompanies his selections with brief introductions and bibliographies. The quotations are arranged by geographical region and within each in chronological order: West (Greek-speaking) Syria (from the Didache to the Ordo of Constantinople and Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite); East Syria (from the Odes of Solomon to Jacob of Serugh [Syriac] and the Teaching of St. Gregory [Armenian]); Italy (from the Shepherd of Hermas to selections from the Gelasian and Gregorian Sacramentaries); North Africa (from Tertullian to Augustine); and Egypt (from the Excerpts of Theodotus and Clement of Alexandria to selections from the Coptic Rite).

André Hamman’s prolific literary output included *Le baptême d’après les Pères de l’Église* (Paris: Grasst, 1962), which appeared in an English translation by Thomas Halton, *Baptism: Ancient Liturgies and Patristic Texts* (Staten Island: Alba House, 1967), and now is in a new revised edition (Paris: Migne, 1995). His introduction briefly mentions the first witnesses to baptism and the explanations the Fathers gave to the names for baptism, its rites, and the biblical figures of baptism. The collection, instead of including many shorter texts, features whole or nearly whole texts of a few major writers. For the early Latin church there are Tertullian, *On Baptism*; Cyprian,

The series *Traditio Christiana*, #9, contains an important collection of pre-Nicene texts: André Benoît and Charles Munier, *Le baptême dans l’église ancienne/ Die Taufe in der Alten Kirche (Ier-IIIe siècles)* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1994). The format of the series prints Greek and Latin texts on the lefthand page and the French (or German, depending on the edition) translations on the righthand page. Texts not in Greek or Latin are given in English and French translations. The generally excellent sixty-five pages of introduction devotes thirty-three pages to the theology of baptism. The description of the baptismal rite in the *Apostolic Tradition* inexplicably says that the administrator pours a dash of water on the head of the one being baptized (p. xxx), contrary to the explicit wording of the Latin and French (p. 130). There are nineteen pages of bibliography, brief notes on the texts, and full indices. The 218 selections begin with background texts from Qumran and other Jewish sources and continue from the *Didache* through the Council of Nicaea (325) and selected early funerary inscriptions that mention baptism.

A briefer collection of key texts on the ceremony and doctrine of baptism, infant baptism, and immersion and its alternatives is found in Everett Ferguson, *Early Christians Speak*, 3rd edition (Abilene: ACU Press, 1999; 1st edition 1971), pp. 29-64. The texts quoted are mostly from the second and third centuries, but they are accompanied by commentary and notes.