

# Building the *Corpus Christianorum*: A Short History of the First 75 Years

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## 1 A Difficult Beginning (1947–1955)<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1 Introduction

During the 1940s and 1950s things were definitely changing in theology and in European society at large. The pernicious ideology of National Socialism had been defeated in an exhausting and disruptive struggle, only to be replaced by a Cold War and the equally antireligious doctrine of Communism. At the same time progressive forces within Catholic theology longed to liberate themselves from the dominating neo-scholastic orientation and its defensive stance towards non-Catholic faiths. They wanted to ‘return to the sources’ as well as practice openness to the contemporary world. Because their theology had grown out of a dialogue with their own social and cultural environments, the Church Fathers were considered to be excellent guides for such an enterprise. It is no coincidence, then, that more than one important enterprise in patristic studies was launched in this period, *Corpus Christianorum* being one of these.

In 1948 the first issue of *Sacris Erudiri: Jaarboek voor Godsdienstwetenschap* (Yearbook for Religious Studies) was published. The closing article, entitled “A proposed new edition of early Christian texts,”<sup>2</sup> emphasised the need to create a new series offering reliable editions of Christian source texts. The article was signed by the “*Établissements Brepols*, Turnhout (Antwerp)” and the “*Monachi S. Petri*, Steenbrugge (Bruges),” but the drafter of the text was in fact Jan-Eligius Dekkers, OSB (1915–1998), a visionary young monk of St. Peter’s Abbey.<sup>3</sup> According to the authors, it was often hard and time-consuming to

1 The first part of the present chapter is an abridged and updated version of Mathijs Lamberigts, “*Corpus Christianorum* (1947–1955): The Laborious Journey from Dream to Reality,” *Sacris Erudiri* 38 (1998–1999): 47–73.

2 “A Proposed New Edition of Early Christian Texts,” *Sacris Erudiri* 1 (1948): 405–414.

3 Being basically an autodidact, Dom Dekkers would become professor of liturgy at the Catholic University of Leuven in 1968. In 1976 he was awarded an honorary doctorate by that same university. Dekkers was convinced of the need for interaction between academic institutions and theological libraries. In this regard it should be noted that he was among

find a good critical edition of the texts of the Fathers. It was also observed that a series such as the renowned *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (*CSEL*) was confronted with a delay in the publication of new volumes,<sup>4</sup> while some of the publications in this series hardly deserved the qualification 'best critical edition'.<sup>5</sup>

In line with the method followed by Jacques-Paul Migne and Jean-Baptiste-François Pitra in the mid-19th century, the proposed new series would offer all early Christian texts according to the best existing editions. Eligius Dekkers proposed to start with the publication of a *Manuductio ad litteraturam patristicam* (Manual to patristic literature), a survey of the best available editions of written documents from Christian antiquity up to the beginning of the Carolingian era. The survey would include those critical studies that suggested necessary emendations of existing texts. On the other hand the actual edition volumes would offer only short introductions, commentaries and notes, since: "It is just these additions that are the soonest out of date."<sup>6</sup> In 1948, Dekkers thus was thinking of what he called a 'new Migne', to which essential information with regard to author and text would be added in a short Latin introduction as well as a select bibliography. Finally, existing indices, meant to increase the practical usefulness of the editions, would conclude a volume. If need be, new indices would be created.

For practical reasons, *Corpus Christianorum* would start with a *Series Latina*, later to be followed by a *Series Graeca* and possibly even an Oriental series. The ambition was clear: offering students, private scholars, starting libraries but also established institutions or libraries destroyed during World War II, a complete and uniform series of Patristic texts, practically arranged, consisting of the best available critical editions. The organisers had a strict working plan: in a period of ten years, 120 octavo volumes would be published. The project was promising and daring indeed!

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the founding fathers of the 'Vereniging van Religieus-wetenschappelijke Bibliothecarissen' (Association of Academic-Religious Librarians), a Flemish society established in 1965 to promote the organisation and development of library facilities at the religious-academic level. – With regard to Dom Dekkers, see M. Lamberigts, "In Memoriam Dom Eligius Dekkers (1915–1998)," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 75 (1999): 251–254.

4 "A Proposed New Edition," 406.

5 Cf. "A Proposed New Edition," 408–411 and the examples given there. The case of Tertullian especially was presented in high detail.

6 "A Proposed New Edition," 412.



FIGURE 18.1 Portrait of Dom Eligius Dekkers  
CC ARCHIVES, TURNHOUT

### 1.2 *A Careful Preparation*

It goes without saying that one can only announce such an ambitious plan after consultation with other players in the domain of critical text editions. Indeed, Dom Dekkers had contacted the head of the 'Kirchenväter-Kommission', Prof. Dr. Richard Meister, responsible for the Vienna-based *CSEL* and vice-president of the 'Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften'. The latter answered on 3 December 1947, stating that there were no objections against the new project and granting permission to use *CSEL* editions for it. Such permission would be granted on a case by case basis and the role of *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* should be mentioned explicitly.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Letter of Meister to Dekkers, 3 December 1947, *CC Archives*, Steenbrugge, currently kept at *CC headquarters* in Turnhout.

Meanwhile, Dekkers had conducted negotiations with the Belgian publishing house Brepols, known to him from their world-wide liturgical publications, negotiations which would result in an agreement reached during a meeting in Turnhout on 14 August 1947. It was decided to prepare a document in both French and English, announcing the new project. If reactions were favourable, a start would be made with the publication of the abovementioned *Manuductio ad litteraturam patristicam*. The announcement would consist of a complete list of the Church Father texts to be included in *Corpus Christianorum* and an indication of the editions that would be used. The text presenting the project in English and in French was ready at the end of 1947 and was presented to the academic community via various channels in March 1948.<sup>8</sup>

### 1.3 *The First Reactions*

The first reactions<sup>9</sup> – about hundred people replied – were mostly positive. On the negative side, Professor Erik Peterson (Rome) was of the opinion that the publication of Latin texts without a translation would not be of much use, “given that scholars these days do not know Latin well enough.”<sup>10</sup> Cardinal Giovanni Mercati, librarian of the Vatican library, was in favour of the project, although it would need many competent collaborators. The cardinal also uttered some doubts about the long-term feasibility. Moreover, he was of the opinion that not all libraries and researchers would have the financial means to purchase these editions. But in general, Mercati considered the enterprise to be very useful.<sup>11</sup> The reaction of the renowned scholar Joseph de Ghellinck, SJ was more hesitating, but in the end he suggested to just start with this huge enterprise, hoping that the project would become a great success and ending his discussion with a series of useful suggestions.

Migne’s edition, which had been a great impulse for patristic research, certainly had its limits too. Could one not say the same of this ‘new Migne’? The Dutch patristic scholar Jan Hendrik Waszink rightly asked what the relation would be between the new series and the work done by the *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*. Would the new Migne simply offer a copy of existing *CSEL* editions? And what would be the scientific value of the intended speedy publication of a complete patristic library? Waszink suggested that one should rather concentrate on a limited set of authors for whom a critical

8 For the details, see Lamberigts, “Corpus Christianorum (1947–1955),” 49–51.

9 Lamberigts, “Corpus Christianorum (1947–1955),” 51–55 offers a detailed survey of these reactions.

10 Letter of Dekkers to Brepols, 23 July 1948 (our translation).

11 Letter of Mercati to Dekkers, 25 June 1948.

edition was considered to be an urgent desideratum. He concluded: “the time is not yet ripe” and “the time of harvest has not yet come.”<sup>12</sup> But Dekkers dared to dream big without losing his sense of reality. He knew very well that an economic revival would be needed to make the enterprise a success. However, most of the reactions were positive and Dekkers had no illusions about the fact that within a hundred years, there would probably be a need to start with a new series, replacing his own ‘new Migne’.<sup>13</sup>

Dekkers’ ambitions were high and modest at the same time. He was thinking of reprinting the Latin Church Fathers, while adding that for some authors a new edition might be needed. He was planning 120 volumes, each containing about 600 pages. Each volume would be printed in 2,000 copies. Brepols would be responsible for the commercial side of the project (price setting, marketing, distribution...), Dekkers for its intellectual direction.

An important point of discussion was the royalties issue, which would be discussed in a meeting in Turnhout on 11 October 1949.<sup>14</sup> Brepols wanted to allow the abbey only 10 copies of every published volume, while Dekkers was asking a fair fee for all the work done. In any case, the abbey’s expenses should be covered. The publisher gave in and the abbey was to receive 10% of the gross retail price of each copy sold. On 25 January 1950, the then abbot of St. Peter’s Abbey signed the contract with Brepols.<sup>15</sup>

#### 1.4 *The First Milestone: The Clavis Patrum Latinorum*<sup>16</sup>

Dekkers worked diligently on the preparation of his *Manuductio*, a time-consuming work.<sup>17</sup> He emphasised that there was need for a ‘nomenclature’ of every ancient Christian text, offering a survey of the best available editions. It should also indicate corrections or emendations proposed in specialised literature. Dekkers stressed the importance of adding newly discovered manuscripts or manuscripts not used by the original editor, for he was convinced that this would be of great service to future text editors. Dekkers thus was looking for surveys that also focused on textual criticism, and this concern would

12 Jan Hendrik Waszink, “Current Topics: A New Migne?,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 3 (1949): 186–187. For other, more positive reactions, see José Madoz, “Un nuevo ‘Migne’ a la vista,” *Estudios Eclesiásticos* 23 (1949): 377–379; Walter J. Burghardt, “Current Theology: Current Patristic Projects,” *Theological Studies* 11 (1950): 259–274, esp. 259–261.

13 Letter of Dekkers to Mercati, 7 July 1948.

14 Cf. letter of Dekkers to E. Van Baelen, head of the publishing house, 3 October 1949.

15 Cf. letter of Dekkers to Jan Van Gestel, general director of Brepols, 26 January 1950.

16 For the details, see Lamberigts, “Corpus Christianorum (1947–1955),” 55–62.

17 The publication of the *Manuductio* was already announced as going to the press in Eligius Dekkers, “Le ‘Nouveau Migne’,” *Scriptorium* 4 (1950): 274–279, at 275, but this would prove to be too optimistic.

make of the *Manuductio* a real *clavis* or 'key' to the world of the critical edition, showing the progress made since the time of Migne.<sup>18</sup>

To serve Dekkers' purposes, the existing monastic library at Steenbrugge developed into a true scholarly research library. Dom Dekkers started collecting old editions, mainly from the 16th and 17th centuries, and purchased thousands of manuscript reproductions on microfilm and photo from remote libraries and hard-to-access holdings. In addition, he corresponded with all leading scholars in the field, who would send him offprints of their latest works. Finally, the edition of an annual *Sacris Erudiri* volume allowed the Steenbrugge library to establish hundreds of exchange agreements with religious and academic journals worldwide. The new, accessible edition of the Fathers surfed the wave of the spiritual and economic post-War revival, and the resulting edition volumes would serve to stock the shelves of new institutions as well as libraries that had been destroyed during the war.

For the preparation of his *clavis*, Dekkers worked closely together with the *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, especially with Professor Emil Gaar, who over the years had collected an impressive technical bibliography, developed in view of future *CSEL* editions. In the aftermath of World War II, however, there was no prospect of publication, and Gaar was willing to share his material with Dekkers. Although Dekkers had himself collected twice as many fiches in a shorter period of time, he was very much aware of the fact that there was much similarity and also complementarity in their approach.<sup>19</sup> The collaboration between the two scholars in this period was cordial and efficient, Gaar doing his utmost best to share all his collected data with Dekkers. As a result, the names of both Dekkers and Gaar would appear on the front page of what would eventually become the *Clavis Patrum Latinorum*. Because of the impressive size of the documentation collected, the detailed content had to be shortened. Dekkers had the lead. He had also collected the money for the enterprise, among others due to a subsidy by the 'Bank van Roeselare', whose director, Jozef Camerlynck, was very sympathetic to Dekkers' work.<sup>20</sup> Dekkers and Gaar appreciated each other's scholarly work, but Gaar recognised that the greatest effort had been made by Dekkers, and for this reason refused to be put on the same level as Dekkers on the title page: a simple "praeparante et adiuvante Aemilio Gaar" would be sufficient.

18 Dekkers, "Le 'Nouveau Migne,'" 275.

19 Cf. letter of Dekkers to Leo Santifaller, 14 June 1948, letter to which Gaar is referring in his own letter of 4 July 1948.

20 Cf. "Clavis Patrum Latinorum: Praefatio," *Sacris Erudiri* 3 (1951): XIII.

Dekkers himself was aware of the importance of the work done and asked Cardinal Mercati the permission to dedicate the volume to him. Mercati suggested to dedicate the *Clavis* to Pope Pius XII instead, but Dekkers considered this too much and he insisted on a dedication to Mercati, who accepted in the end: “Non recuso honorem.”<sup>21</sup> In September 1951, the *Clavis Patrum Latinorum* rolled off the presses as volume 3 of *Sacris Erudiri*.

The *Clavis* was welcomed positively in the academic community. Renowned scholars such as Balthasar Fischer spoke of an “excellent and reliable working tool,”<sup>22</sup> Almut Mutzenbecher referred to it as a “reference work,”<sup>23</sup> while Wilhelm Schneemelcher had no doubt “that we have been given a really great tool for working on Latin early Christian literature, the indispensability of which anyone who works in Patristics will quickly understand.”<sup>24</sup>

The *Clavis* would be reprinted and augmented several times and up until today it remains an indispensable instrument in patristic research.

### 1.5 *The Laborious Journey to the First Text Editions*<sup>25</sup>

The printing of text-critical editions is an art in its own right. In order to gain some experience, Brepols had in February 1950 started the typesetting of some pages taken from Migne’s *Patrologia Latina*. In the meantime Dekkers himself contacted potential collaborators and on 25 November 1950 he was able to hand over a list of people who had expressed their willingness to contribute to the future *Corpus Christianorum*. He also mentioned a very detailed list of texts that should be included. However, his work on the *Clavis*, the absence of any concrete material, and the finding that the first estimate had been an underestimate – the previous estimate of about 120 volumes was too low and one expected now at least 175 volumes –, all these elements resulted in the postponement of the actual publication of a first volume.

At the same time, the international interest in the project was encouraging. Professor Manuel Díaz y Díaz (Santiago de Compostela) informed Dekkers that the Spanish ‘Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas’ was willing to subsidise the edition of the works of the Spanish Church Fathers. The list of collaborators, too, was growing and in June 1953 Dekkers informed Brepols that 55 collaborators had guaranteed their collaboration, 17 of whom had made explicit promises. Moreover, these scholars did not only come from Europe

21 Letter of Mercati to Dekkers, 24 August 1950.

22 *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 77 (1952): 287–289, at 287 (our translation).

23 *Deutsche Literaturzeitung* 74 (1953): 411–413, at 413 (our translation).

24 *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 64 (1952–1953): 338–340, at 340 (our translation).

25 For the details, see Lamberigts, “Corpus Christianorum (1947–1955),” 62–65.

but also from the United States. From the point of view of Brepols, the fact that more than 200 customers had registered for the first fascicle, even though it had not yet been published, was an encouraging sign: there actually appeared to be a market for this project!

Dekkers and Brepols prepared a prospectus in French, English, German and Italian. They announced that 175 volumes would be published, each consisting of 600 to 800 pages. Every year, about ten volumes would appear. A *Conspectus totius collectionis* then followed. The prospectus, including a list of publications that were announced under the title *Mox prodibunt* ("To be published soon"),<sup>26</sup> was intended to be added to the first volume, consisting of a general introduction on Tertullian, the critical edition of *Ad martyras* prepared by Dekkers himself, and a newly reworked edition of Jan W.P. Borleffs' already existing *Ad nationes*, these two works carrying numbers 1 and 2 in the *Clavis*.<sup>27</sup>

### 1.6 *The Tertullian Edition*<sup>28</sup>

Needless to say, an edition of Tertullian's extensive work was a huge enterprise. The quality of the existing (critical) editions was varying. Some, like Waszink's edition of *De anima* (CPL 17) were outstanding, and for this work Dekkers had already received permission to reprint. Furthermore, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* had given permission to integrate those works by Tertullian published in their series in previous decades. Dekkers was convinced that the publication of a first volume one year after the appearance of the *Clavis* was needed, both in view of subscribers' expectations and as an encouragement for (future) collaborators. However, Brepols was of the opinion that *De anima* was too small a booklet to be published separately.<sup>29</sup> For his part, Dekkers insisted on the publication of a number of smaller fascicles, and in the beginning of 1953 a first, modest volume of *Corpus Christianorum* did indeed appear. It consisted of the two abovementioned works of Tertullian, a short introduction, a survey of the text tradition and a substantial bibliography. Moreover, *Ad martyras* was not a reprint but the first critical edition. The publication was well received.

26 Some of the works on the *Mox prodibunt* list would appear years later, some with other editors than those initially announced, while for the edition of some works announced there, one would have to be patient for several more decades.

27 Cf. bundle *Corpus Christianorum*, CC Archives, Steenbrugge, currently kept at cc headquarters in Turnhout.

28 An elaborated version will be found in Lamberigts, "Corpus Christianorum (1947–1955)," 65–69.

29 Letter of Van Gestel to Dekkers, 7 August 1952.



However, the fact that Steenbrugge was unable to deliver manuscripts quickly enough made Brepols nervous. There were several reasons for Steenbrugge's delay, the most important being that Dekkers was not willing to go ahead with the speedy publication of mere 'reprints'. He had become convinced that subscribers would appreciate receiving an edition that would present a real progress in comparison with previous editions.<sup>30</sup> However, under pressure of Brepols, he opted for a reprint of Tertullian's *De cultu feminarum* (CPL 11) and *De corona* (CPL 21), making use of Emil Kroymann's edition of these two works in CSEL 70, originally published in 1942. But even this concession did not diminish Brepols' impatience, for the company had tied up 6,000 kilograms of lead for the production of Tertullian's first and second volumes as well as Augustine's *Tractatus in Iohannis evangelium*, while soon a further hundred pages of Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos* would be sent to Steenbrugge. Brepols was asking for a regular and systematic input from Steenbrugge so that the work with regard to lay-out, typesetting, correction and print could be planned properly.<sup>31</sup>

The frictions between Brepols and Dekkers also had to do with the fact that some editors like Borleffs were doing a great job – for the preparation of the edition of Tertullian's *De resurrectione* (CPL 19) he had made use of manuscripts unknown to previous editors – but that because of their academic rigor and carefulness, the edition incurred delay. Dekkers really wanted to offer the best possible edition of the Fathers and thus had to ask for patience, while adding himself last minute corrections on the basis of very recent new insights and discoveries. In other words, there was a constant tension between academic requirements and business concerns. Anyway, the two Tertullian volumes would be ready in the beginning of 1955 (although on the title page the year 1954 was printed, in order to avoid the impression that 1954 had been a lost year). Tertullian's *Opera omnia* offered a new edition for twelve of his works,<sup>32</sup> or at least a thoroughly reworked edition.<sup>33</sup> For existing editions, the editors had not neglected to add corrections. In sum, *Corpus Christianorum*, once presented as the 'new Migne', had become much more than a reprint of existing material.

30 Letter of Dekkers to Van Gestel, 15 October 1953.

31 Letter of Van Gestel to Dekkers, 28 March 1954.

32 Six out of the twelve new critical editions were prepared by Dekkers himself.

33 So, e.g., Borleffs' edition of *Ad nationes* and Kroymann's *De exhortatione castitatis* (CPL 20).

### 1.7 *Other Text Editions*<sup>34</sup>

In 1937, Dom Germain Morin had published the work of Caesarius of Arles in Maredsous. During a fire at the abbey in 1940, most of the stock had been destroyed and it had become hard to find copies of the work. Dekkers therefore wanted to provide a reprint in volumes 103 and 104 of the *CC SL* series. While Brepols regularly complained about the slowness with which dossiers were handed in, this case was proof to the opposite. Although the text had been submitted at the end of 1951, Dekkers had to wait until the beginning of 1953 before he received page proofs. Only in the beginning of 1954, things were finally settled. Given the fact that 1953 had been a rather thin year with regard to new publications, the edition was dated to 1953. In this period, antedating seems to have been a customary trick to mask a slow publication rhythm.

In 1954, the 1600th anniversary of Augustine's birth would be commemorated. Dekkers considered this a good opportunity to publish some of Augustine's main works but apparently it was hard to convince Brepols to give up the idea that the pre-established sequence of the *Clavis* numbering should be followed very strictly. Dekkers was of the opinion that one could easily edit Augustine's *Tractatus in Iohannis evangelium* (*CPL* 278), the edition of the Maurists serving as a good point of departure. Moreover, the Maurist edition could be improved on the basis of a series of text-critical publications. The work would be done by Dom Radbod Willems, at the time a monk of St. Peter's Abbey in Steenbrugge. In other words, both the feasible extent of the work and the fact that it would be performed under the direct supervision of Dekkers were considered guarantees for a timely realisation of the edition. The *Tractatus*, volume number 36 of the *Series Latina*, would be published in November 1954, i.e. after the great conference on Augustine of September 1954.

In 1955, a re-edition of *De civitate Dei* (*CPL* 313), originally edited by Bernhard Dombart and Alfons Kalb, and published by Teubner in Leipzig (1928/9), appeared in *Corpus Christianorum*, taking into account the corrections by Kalb. The stock of the Teubner edition had been destroyed during the war, copies were lacking and the German editor was most willing to support a *CC* edition. In 1956, Augustine's monumental *Enarrationes in Psalmos* (*CPL* 283) were published as *CC SL* volumes 38–40.

At that time, *Corpus Christianorum* was well underway and despite the mutual irritation over the delays caused by both parties, a constructive relationship had been built between Brepols and Dekkers. Moreover, the first volumes were very well received by the scholarly community. Ludwig Bieler's review in *Scriptorium* can be cited as a representative example: "Individual

34 For the details, see Lamberigts, "Corpus Christianorum (1947–1955)," 69–73.

volumes differ considerably in their standards of editorship. This is the price that had to be paid if the series was to be completed within a reasonable time. I feel that the price has been worth paying. At the moment when so many standard editions are out of print, when stocks have been largely destroyed by military action, there is a great and urgent demand for good workable texts. This minimum requirement is invariably met and very often surpassed.”<sup>35</sup> At the end of his detailed review of all the separate volumes, Bieler qualified *Corpus Christianorum* as “an enterprise which, together with the Vatican Vulgate and the Beuron *Vetus Latina*, continues in these troubled times the great tradition of Benedictine scholarship.” Reactions such as this show that the first *cc* volumes were warmly welcomed and that they were, right from the start, a product of scholarship that was highly appreciated in the world of patristic studies.

In sum, it can be said that the problems of the start had been overcome and that a solid basis was laid for a period of growth and expansion. The *Corpus Christianorum* train had left for a bright future. In time, the series would expand chronologically and linguistically as well as include lexicographical works and individual studies of different authors. What had been announced as a ‘new Migne’ very soon became an enterprise in its own right.

## 2 Four Decades of Expansion (1955–1995)<sup>36</sup>

### 2.1 *The Series Latina and the Continuatio Mediaevalis at Steenbrugge (1955–1969)*

Between 1957 and 1968, *Corpus Christianorum* published 38 volumes in its *Series Latina* (*CC SL*). Many of these were re-editions of texts published elsewhere before. Cases in point are a number of Jerome’s exegetical works: the *Tractatus sive homiliae in psalmos* (*SL* 78, 1958); the *Hebraicae quaestiones in libro Geneseos*, the *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum* and the *Commentarioli in psalmos* (*SL* 72, 1959); the *In Hieremiam prophetam libri VI* (*SL* 74, 1960). Other volumes contain re-editions of hagiographical and historical texts, reprinted from the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (*SL* 117, 1957) or from the *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*. An example of the latter is

35 Ludwig Bieler, “Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina. Editions Brepols, Turnhout, 1954–1955,” *Scriptorium* 10 (1956): 322–324.

36 Sections 2 and 3 of the present chapter are a revised and updated version of Johan Leemans, “Fifty Years of *Corpus Christianorum* (1953–2003): From Limited Edition Project to Multi-located Scholarly Enterprise,” in *Xenium Natalicium: Corpus Christianorum 1953–2003: Fifty Years of Scholarly Editing*, ed. Johan Leemans and Luc Jocqué (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 9–55.

the volume of *Itineraria* and other *Geographica* (SL 175–176, 1965). To the writings simply reprinted from the *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, however, were also joined a few others, of which the text printed was that of other, earlier editions, but revised by Jean Fraipont or François Glorie, two of Dekkers' early collaborators. Besides Fraipont and Glorie, the team also included Radbod Willems and Marc Adriaen. In this early period the same procedure was applied very often by Dekkers and his team: instead of simply reprinting editions, albeit in each case the best one available, they reviewed each text thoroughly, inserting corrections and checking the text against some of the best manuscripts and/or manuscripts that had not been used by the previous editor. The Tertullian volume had already been prepared along these lines, but in the years 1954–1971 it would become a standard procedure, resulting in the publication of editions of several exegetical works by Augustine (SL 33, 36, 38–40), Ambrose (SL 14), Jerome (SL 73, 73A, 75, 75A, 76, 76A, 77), Cassiodorus (SL 97–98) and Gregory the Great (SL 142). All these editions filled clear lacunae. The succinct introduction and survey of the textual transmission was valuable in itself and provided the user with documentation hitherto often virtually inaccessible. Moreover, since they incorporated readings from other good manuscripts, the revised text editions in *Corpus Christianorum* also were based on a larger material basis, in most cases resulting in a more trustworthy text than had previously been the case. One should also keep in mind that, in offering such revised editions, the initial purpose and goal of *Corpus Christianorum* had already been surpassed. Hence, also in later years Dekkers did not hesitate to include revised editions or reprinted editions in *Corpus Christianorum* when he saw fit to do so or when the opportunity arose. Thus, the most recent example, that of the re-edition of Ambrose's *De officiis* (CPL 144) according to the Budé edition by Maurice Testard (1984–1992), found its way to *Corpus Christianorum* as late as 2001 (SL 15).

These re-editions and revised editions shaped *Corpus Christianorum* and helped making Dekkers' dream a tangible reality. Yet, a next step imposed itself. Already from the early sixties, when the revised edition of the *Clavis Patrum Latinorum* was published,<sup>37</sup> it was clear to the scholar Dekkers that in the end it would only be new, modern, critical editions that could offer the firm textual basis for the kind of scholarship he was looking for, and that only

37 The second edition, published in 1961, contained some 180 extra pages, and a couple of dozen of texts omitted from the first edition were added by inserting a, b, c, etc. numbers. Some texts mistakenly attributed to the patristic period had been put between square brackets not to disturb the range. A third edition, "aucta et emendata," was published in 1995.

these would solidly establish the international academic reputation of *Corpus Christianorum*. Such new editions would be based on a study of the complete transmission of the text, present this material in the introduction, and lay down the results of the analysis in a reliable text with a detailed critical apparatus.

This was, of course, not completely new in the history of *Corpus Christianorum*. Already in the very first years of its existence, new editions of this kind had been prepared: one may think of the works of Eusebius of Vercelli (Vincenz Bulhart; *SL* 9, 1957) and the *Sermones* of Maximus of Turin (Almut Mutzenbecher; *SL* 23, 1962). But in these years, revised editions were still the rule and new editions the exception. This balance gradually shifted during the 1960s and 1970s, when the re-editions and revised editions largely disappeared from the *Series Latina*. Thus, the *Series Latina* entered its next phase, increasingly producing new, modern, critical editions.

While these developments took place and while the Steenbrugge team, together with the external collaborators, were giving shape and foundation to the *Series Latina*, the indefatigable Eligius Dekkers had already defined a new challenge. When he initially launched *Corpus Christianorum*, he chose Tertullian and the Venerable Bede as chronological limits. Even at that time, however, he did not exclude the possibility that later authors, throwing light on the events of this period, could also be included.<sup>38</sup> Now, not even a decade later and the *Series Latina* hardly begun, he wanted to turn to the Middle Ages and incorporate the Christian literary heritage of this period into his editorial work. In an article in the 1957 issue of *Sacris Erudiri*, he presented his plans.<sup>39</sup>

The problems a researcher of medieval Christian literature was encountering, Dekkers observed, were not the same as the ones presenting themselves with regard to patristic literature. Hence, the solutions he proposed were different too. In the field of Latin patristic literature, editorial work had made big progress since Migne, to the extent that of the 2,350 patristic writings dating from the period between Tertullian and Bede, only some 350 were at the time not available in a more reliable text edition than the one printed in the first 96 volumes of Migne's *Patrologia Latina*. In that situation the major focus could be on improving the quality of existing text editions and on bringing these higher-quality editions together in a single uniform corpus. The medieval Christian literature from the period after Bede, however, first of all confronted

38 Cf. "A Proposed New Edition," 413.

39 "Pour une nouvelle édition de la littérature latine médiévale," *Sacris Erudiri* 9 (1957): 377–390. As with the initial announcement in *Sacris Erudiri* 1, although the text clearly comes from the pen of Eligius Dekkers, the article was actually signed by "Les Éditeurs," in this case being the "*Éditions Brepols*, Turnhout (Belgique)" and the "*Monachi S. Petri*, Steenbrugge (Bruges)."

the scholar with its sheer size: there is so much more material that it simply defies any attempt to bring it all together into one single corpus. Moreover, while the lion's share of Latin patristic literature had already been edited, this was certainly not the case for these later texts, the bulk of which remained unedited. Under these circumstances, Dekkers concluded, it did not make sense to begin by preparing a *Clavis Medii Aevi*.<sup>40</sup> For the same reason, it would be insufficient to simply 'redo' volumes 97–217 of the *Patrologia Latina*. Hence, Dekkers proposed a two-pronged approach: on the one hand, the 'medieval volumes' of the *Patrologia Latina* had to be corrected where necessary; on the other, they had to be supplemented with editions of the inedita.<sup>41</sup>

As for the corrections to volumes 97–217 of the *Patrologia Latina*, Dekkers wanted to proceed as follows: Brepols had to acquire what was left of the stock as well as the right to reprint both the *Patrologia Latina* and the *Patrologia Graeca*.<sup>42</sup> The very first goal was to guarantee that the volumes containing medieval texts remained permanently available. In addition, specific instruments would be compiled, listing addenda and corrigenda to the material present in the 'medieval' volumes 97–217 of the *Patrologia Latina*. By proceeding in this way, Dekkers hoped to ensure that the material in Migne would remain at the disposal of scholars and students, while the updates would make up for its shortcomings. While corrections to Migne's *Patrologia Latina* in the guise of reprints with an extensive preface or lists of addenda and corrigenda have never been published, Brepols did continue the reprint and distribution of *PL* and *PG* volumes until mid-2012.

If correcting Migne was no big success, the opposite must be said about Dekkers' plan to supplement Migne. Here the intention was to bring together all the texts which had been omitted by Migne, which had been discovered after the Migne edition, or of which the edition printed by Migne showed

40 Now, sixty-five years later, such an instrument is being compiled for sources with a provenance on French territory: *Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis: Clavis scriptorum latinorum medii aevi: Auctores Galliae 735–987*. Up to now, four volumes have appeared. A start has also been made to add the data of these volumes to the online *Clavis Clavium*.

41 "If the study of Latin Patristics has progressed especially in depth, aiming to obtain purer and better established texts, the progress of medieval studies has manifested itself in breadth, in extent (...) There is therefore no need, at least not at this time, to redo volumes 97–217 of the *Patrologia Latina*, but rather to correct and complete them." "Pour une nouvelle édition," 380 (our translation).

42 The bringing up-to-date of the *Patrologia Graeca* was entrusted to the monks of the abbey of Chevetogne. A few fascicles of this re-edition have seen the light, e.g. *In tomos 44, 45, 46 Patrologiae Graecae ad editionem operum Sancti Gregorii Nysseni introductio*, published by Brepols in 1959. The author of the introduction is not mentioned.

too many blatant shortcomings. Texts of which good and accessible editions existed, such as the *opera omnia* of Anselm of Canterbury, were not to be included. The same held true for texts edited in well-accessible series such as the *Acta Sanctorum* or the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, as well as for texts which were already included in specialised collections, such as the *Corpus scriptorum de musica*. All in all, Dekkers estimated, 40 (!) volumes would suffice for this supplement to Migne, which was to be called *Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis* (*cc cm*). Dekkers did not unequivocally write that for the *Continuatio Mediaevalis* he had in mind modern critical editions, meeting the highest standards (as opposed to mere revised editions), but the description of which kind of editions he was aiming at, goes a long way in that direction.<sup>43</sup>

Copies of Dekkers' programmatic essay were widely distributed to learned journals and societies as well as to individual scholars. Reactions generally were positive again, and many encouraged their readers to take seriously the call for ideas, suggestions and criticisms at the end of the article. Yet, it would take a while before the first editions of the new series would come to light: after this first announcement in 1957, it was only in 1966 that the first volume in the series would be published. Whatever the reason for this delay, the *Continuatio Mediaevalis* made up for it very quickly. Having produced one single volume in both 1966 and 1967, the yearly number of published volumes gradually increased. By 1971, fourteen volumes had been published, as diverse as the *Opera ascetica* of Aelred of Rievaulx (Anselm Hoste and C.H. Talbot; *cm* 1, 1971), the *Opera theologica* volumes I and II of Peter Abelard (Eligius Buytaert; *cm* 11–12, 1969), the first three books of a canonical collection in five books (Massimo Fornasari; *cm* 6, 1970), writings by Rupert of Deutz (*De divinis officiis*, *In evangelium sancti Iohannis* and *De sancta trinitate et operibus eius*, Hrabanus Haacke; *cm* 7, 9 and 21 respectively, 1967, 1969 and 1971), and Paschasius Radbertus' treatise *De corpore et sanguine Domini* (Beda Paulus; *cm* 16, 1969). This diversity of writings included in the *Continuatio Mediaevalis* is the inevitable consequence of the fact that no *Clavis* had been prepared beforehand. As the abovementioned titles show, the *Continuatio Mediaevalis* could and was bound to develop in the most diverse directions. To date, the collection offers some 400 edition volumes of an unparalleled variety of texts,

43 "We will be inspired above all by the desire to provide the reader with reliable texts, capable of being checked by means of a critical apparatus, with reference to the sources. Each volume of the collection will also contain detailed indexes which will facilitate research." "Pour une nouvelle édition," 382 (our translation).

many of them never edited before, which makes it a most important resource for medieval studies.

## 2.2 *Towards a Multi-Located Scholarly Enterprise (1969–1996)*

The celebration in 1969 of the fiftieth volume in the *Series Latina*, the edition of Augustine's *De trinitate* (CPL 329) by William J. Mountain, was at the same time the celebration of more than two decades of dedicated work. At the time, the team assisting Dekkers consisted of five full-time scientific collaborators. Furthermore, Dekkers could rely on the support of five brethren at his abbey. Even more importantly, the Steenbrugge team could count on a group of about 200 national and international collaborators who had offered or were preparing editions for publication in the *Series Latina* or the *Continuatio Mediaevalis*. The team could celebrate that the hard labour had paid off, that it had been fruitful and that it had been well worth the effort. *Corpus Christianorum* had become a well-established scientific enterprise that had gained the recognition and respect of the scholarly world, which had by now left behind most of its initial cautiousness. At the same time, however, this point of culmination also marked a turning point. From this year onwards, the *Continuatio Mediaevalis* began to be really successful, and the number of volumes that had to be produced at Steenbrugge was considerably increasing: in 1968 only four volumes rolled off the Brepols presses; in 1969 there were eight, and in subsequent years that number would be almost always exceeded – in more recent years even doubled. When one realises that the team members at Steenbrugge were preparing editions and doing other scholarly work themselves, besides reviewing and turning submitted manuscripts into published books, one can understand that with the *Series Latina* and the *Continuatio Mediaevalis*, the journal *Sacris Erudiri* and the series *Instrumenta Patristica*, they had reached their maximum-capacity.

In the decades to follow, *Corpus Christianorum* kept growing continuously, but this was in one way or another the result of other independent enterprises being brought under the aegis of *Corpus Christianorum*. The fruits of these scholarly projects would be published in separate series overseen by external boards, incorporated as a subseries within an existing series (most notably the *Continuatio Mediaevalis*), or attached to it as subsidia or supplementary volumes. This development turned *Corpus Christianorum* from a research institute within an abbey on the outskirts of Bruges into a conglomerate of various enterprises, having their centres throughout Europe, but all united under the *Corpus Christianorum* flag. In this changed setting, the role of the full-time members of the editorial team at Steenbrugge had to change into an



auxiliary one: the lion's share of their time would now be devoted to going through the submitted manuscripts and making them ready for publication in the *Series Latina* or the *Continuatio Mediaevalis*, though all of them also provided occasional editorial assistance and actual contributions to the content when necessary.

### 2.2.1 The *Series Graeca*

Because he wanted *Corpus Christianorum* to include every early Christian text, Dekkers in his programmatic essay of 1948 had already explicitly envisaged the creation of a *Series Graeca* alongside the *Series Latina*.<sup>44</sup> The time to move forward in this area came when in 1969–1970, Maurits Geerard joined *Corpus Christianorum* as a collaborator,<sup>45</sup> choosing the Greek Fathers as his preferred field of scholarly and editorial activity. Geerard started a new project *ab ovo*: the compilation of a *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*. After years of intense labour, the first volume, treating the authors of the 4th century, was published in 1974. It was met with enthusiasm.<sup>46</sup> By 1983 the *CPG* was complete, in 1987 a volume of indexes followed. Thanks to the efforts of Jacques Noret, the *CPG* has been continuously updated since then and remains an authoritative reference work until today. Thus, in 1998 a *Supplementum* was published; in 2003 an update of volume III (from Cyril of Alexandria to John Damascene) and in 2018 a major revision of volume IV (on councils and *catenae*) appeared, while still further updates are currently in progress.

From the early 1970s onward, while Geerard was working on the *CPG*, the preparations for the *Series Graeca* continued under the impulse of Geerard, Dekkers, and Brepols. Importantly, Marcel Richard, the famous patristic scholar and text editor, had agreed to become its first Director. Because of his years of dedicated work in searching, cataloguing and microfilming manuscripts<sup>47</sup> and the many contacts he had in the scholarly world, Richard was ideally placed to help the *Series Graeca* get started. Thanks to him, esteemed scholars such as Cornelius Datema, Françoise Petit, Joseph Munitiz and Karl-Heinz Uthemann

44 "A Proposed New Edition," 412–413.

45 On Geerard, see Jacques Noret, "Maurice Geerard (1919–1999)," *Sacris Erudiri* 39 (2000): 429–437.

46 Some reactions on the first volume have been collected in Noret, "Maurice Geerard (1919–1999)," 436–437.

47 Activity culminating in his famous *Répertoire des bibliothèques et des catalogues de manuscrits grecs*, the third edition of which (revised by Jean-Marie Olivier) was published as a subsidium to *Corpus Christianorum*. In 2018 a two-volume supplement was published by the same Olivier. – A sympathetic portrait of Richard's activity is given by Charles Kannengiesser, "Fifty Years of Patristics," *Theological Studies* 50 (1989): 633–656, at 641–642.

agreed to offer text editions to be published in the first volumes of the *Series Graeca*. While re-editions such as those at the beginning of the *Series Latina* were not entirely excluded, under the influence of Richard a clear preference was given to previously unedited or incompletely edited texts and to authors whose oeuvre had been edited in a very dispersed way.<sup>48</sup> Richard himself contributed the first volume of the series, an edition of John of Caesarea.<sup>49</sup>

Before the new series was properly launched and well underway, however, Marcel Richard became ill. Moreover, it soon became very clear to Geerard that the team at the abbey did not have the competence nor the material resources (e.g. an adequately equipped library) to guarantee the highest scholarly standards for the editions in the *Series Graeca*, a fortiori when the assistance of Richard was no longer guaranteed (he would indeed pass away on 15 June 1976). Therefore, it was decided to see whether an academic unit at a university, with the appropriate financial and human resources, would be willing to assume the responsibility for the *Series Graeca*. This partner was found in the KU Leuven Centre 'Hellenisme en Kristendom' (Centre for Hellenism and Christianity), that included the *Series Graeca* in its programme. On 7 July 1976, a formal agreement was signed between *Corpus Christianorum*, represented by Eligius Dekkers and Maurits Geerard, 'Hellenisme en Kristendom', represented by Professors Albert Van Roey and Gerard Verbeke, and Brepols. Van Roey (as Director), Verbeke, Dekkers and Geerard ("secretaries") formed the editorial board, which was to ensure that editions of the highest caliber were produced. In 1982 Professor Carl Laga took over the direction of the *Series Graeca* from Albert Van Roey and in 1994 he was in his turn succeeded by Professor Peter Van Deun. During these years, the *Series Graeca* became an increasingly independent enterprise, which is nowadays firmly situated within the Faculty of Arts of KU Leuven and its 'Institute for Early Christian and Byzantine Studies', while still entertaining the best working relationship with *Corpus Christianorum* as a whole.<sup>50</sup> To date, about 100 volumes have been published in the *Series Graeca*. Patristic theologians, most notably Maximus the Confessor, Byzantine authors,

48 On 25 November 1972, Maurits Geerard presented the plans for the *Series Graeca* at a meeting of the 'Société belge d'Études byzantines'; see the report of this conference by Edmond Voordeckers, in *Byzantion* 43 (1973): 496–504, with a summary of Geerard's lecture at 500–502.

49 It was published posthumously: *Iohannis Caesariensis presbyteri et grammatici Opera quae supersunt*, ed. Marcel Richard, *Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca* 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1977).

50 For the activities and the output of the *Series Graeca*, see the note by Peter Van Deun, "En visite chez les Pères grecs et les théologiens byzantins," in *Xenium Natalicium*, ed. Leemans and Jocqué, 159–162, as well as <https://www.corpuschristianorum.org/ccsg>.

*catenae*, florilegia, dialogues, sermons, poetry or hagiographical texts reveal what constitutes the programme of the *Series Graeca* today: excellent critical editions of any Greek Christian text from the patristic or Byzantine periods, regardless of their genre. The latest addition is a subseries collecting the Byzantine translations and commentaries of the works of Thomas Aquinas, introducing the Byzantine reception of Latin scholastic thought, which is of vital importance for studying the transmission of texts and ideas between East and West.<sup>51</sup>

### 2.2.2 The *Series Apocryphorum*

While the first initiative for the *Series Graeca* was taken by the *Corpus Christianorum* unit at Steenbrugge Abbey, the opposite also occurred: as *Corpus Christianorum* grew, external research projects were happy to have the fruits of their research published under the CC umbrella. In this vein, with the *Series Apocryphorum* a fourth major series was attached. Its main aim is the edition of the Christian apocryphal writings. These essentially include the writings which are usually referred to as the apocrypha of the Old and New Testaments, but the series also embraces editions of pseudepigraphs and other texts in which the main subject is a character from the Scriptures. The *Series Apocryphorum* is edited by the 'Association pour l'Étude de la Littérature Apocryphe Chrétienne' (AELAC). For *Corpus Christianorum*, the inclusion of *Series Apocryphorum* as a separate series has been most felicitous for a number of reasons. Firstly, it concerns texts which, while deserving to be included in a corpus of Early Christian literature, by their multilingual tradition and intricate transmission did not easily fit any of the existing series. Secondly, their specific nature also called for a separate series. Third and lastly, the start of a new subseries made it possible to follow a way of organising differing from that of other existing series. In fact, the SA arranges its material in 'dossiers', providing in a single volume all texts which contribute directly or indirectly to our knowledge of an apocryphal text. An extensive introduction and commentary are added, as well as translations in a modern international language. This labour-intensive nature and approach explain why the SA needed some time to start up and is producing, until today, volumes at a somewhat slower pace. Thus, while the series had been formally initiated in 1981 and the first volume, an edition of the *Acta Iohannis* by Éric Junod and Jean-Daniel Kaestli, was published soon (in 1983, as SA 1–2), the latest addition is a collection of some of the most important medieval Irish eschatological texts, published as volume SA 21

51 See <https://www.corpuschristianorum.org/thomas-de-aquino-byzantinus>.

in November 2019.<sup>52</sup> The *claves* to the apocrypha of both the Old and the New Testament, compiled by Jean-Claude Haelewyck and Maurits Geerard respectively, are important research tools in the field,<sup>53</sup> as is the journal *Apocrypha*, published under the aegis of the AELAC. To further open up the field to a larger audience, the AELAC also prepares a paperback series of French or English translations of apocryphal texts, with introduction and annotation.

2.2.3 Creation of Subseries within Existing *Corpus Christianorum* Series  
 Many other external research projects that sought to bring their publications under the *Corpus Christianorum* umbrella were accommodated by the creation of subseries within the *Series Latina*, the *Series Graeca* or the *Continuatio Mediaevalis*. The first completely external research enterprise to be so integrated into *Corpus Christianorum* was the edition of the Latin *Opera Omnia* of Raimundus Lullus (1232/33–1315/16). Of this indefatigable missionary to the Muslim world, brilliant theologian and mystic, some 250 writings have been preserved in Latin, alongside a minority in Catalan. The critical edition of the complete *Corpus Lullianum Latinum* is the main purpose of the ‘Raimundus-Lullus-Institut’, which was founded in 1957 at the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität in Freiburg im Breisgau. Thanks to this Institute’s activities, five volumes of the *Opera Omnia* were published in relatively quick succession between 1959 and 1967 at Palma de Mallorca. After an interval, the *Raimundi Lulli Opera Latina* were incorporated in 1978 into the *Continuatio Mediaevalis* as a distinct subseries. Since then, a new volume has been published almost yearly.<sup>54</sup>

A second example is that of the *Corpus Nazianzenum*, hosted by the *Series Graeca*. This research project, based at the Université catholique de Louvain (Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium), has as its primary goal the edition of the Greek text of the *Orationes* of Gregory Nazianzen as well as of their Latin and Oriental (Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Arabic, Ethiopian, Georgian) versions. The editors of the respective volumes in this series do not just edit one version of one or more *Orationes*, they also carefully indicate in the footnotes where the Oriental version differs from the original Greek. Editions of ancient commentaries on Gregory’s writings and their Oriental versions are also included in *Corpus Nazianzenum*, as well as occasional volumes of collected studies (*Studia Nazianzenica*) pertaining to the edition project. The first volume appeared in

52 See <https://www.corpuschristianorum.org/ccsa>.

53 Maurits Geerard, *Clavis Apocryphorum Novi Testamenti*, Corpus Christianorum, Series Apocryphorum (Turnhout: Brepols, 1992); Jean-Claude Haelewyck, *Clavis Apocryphorum Veteris Testamenti*, Corpus Christianorum, Series Apocryphorum (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998).

54 See <https://www.corpuschristianorum.org/cccm-lullus>.

1988, and steady progress has been made since, the latest volume (*CN* 32, 2021) offering the 6th-century Latin translation of the theological letters 101 and 102 *ad Cledonium*.<sup>55</sup>

At about the same time as the incorporation of *Corpus Nazianzenum* in the *Series Graeca*, the Latin series came to host the *Scriptores Celtigenae*. This subseries accommodates a corpus of all the exegetical and homiletical texts of Irish origin or connected to Ireland, dating from the period 650–800 AD. Interest in these texts was triggered by a seminal essay by Bernhard Bischoff in *Sacris Erudiri* 6 of 1954,<sup>56</sup> was entertained during the 1960s and 1970s by the work of Robert McNally,<sup>57</sup> and culminated in the agreement between the Irish Biblical Association and the Royal Irish Academy to edit these texts systematically in one collection. In 1987, *Corpus Christianorum* agreed to host the *Scriptores Celtigenae* as a subseries. To date, seven volumes have been published, three in the *Series Latina*, four more in the *Continuatio Mediaevalis*.<sup>58</sup> As such, the enterprise is the flagship of current Hiberno-Latin studies.

Other subseries incorporated in the *Continuatio Mediaevalis* are the writings of Hugh of Saint Victor, William of Conches and Geert Grote (Gerardus Magnus), and the *Opera Omnia* of the Brabantine mystic Jan van Ruusbroec and the well-known Bohemian theologian and reformer Magister Jan Hus. Particular corpora are the collection of *Exempla Medii Aevi* or the so-called ‘Hermes Latinus’, the initiative for which was taken by Paolo Lucentini, a collection of ‘hermetic’ writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistos and his epigones, composed in the Hellenic era, that exerted a particular attraction on the Greek and Latin Church Fathers.

Furthermore, there is the subseries of the *Autographa Medii Aevi*, featuring (partial) facsimile editions of autograph manuscripts, with detailed analyses of their medieval script. Finally, there is the series *Hagiographies*, a collective work attempting to offer a general history of the narrative hagiographical literature, from its origins down to the Council of Trent. And lastly, speaking of councils, there is also an entire series devoted to the critical edition of the decrees of those church councils that are termed ‘ecumenical’ as well as those

55 For an overview see <https://www.corpuschristianorum.org/ccsg-cccn>.

56 Bernhard Bischoff, “Wendepunkte in der Geschichte der lateinischen Exegese des Frühmittelalters,” *Sacris Erudiri* 6 (1954): 191–281. Revised edition in Bischoff’s *Mittelalterliche Studien: Ausgewählte Aufsätze zur Schriftkunde und Literaturgeschichte*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1966), 205–273.

57 Most notably *Scriptores Hiberniae minores*, ed. Robert E. McNally and Joseph F. Kelly, *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* 108B-C (Turnhout: Brepols, 1973–1974).

58 For an overview see <https://www.corpuschristianorum.org/ccsl-cccm-celtigenae>.

of the more 'general' councils whose authority is recognised by most Christian denominations, from Nicaea I in 325 to Crete 2016.<sup>59</sup>

### 3 Years of Consolidation and Further Development (1995–Present)

The 1990s were a period of consolidation and stabilisation. To be sure, promising subseries such as the *Autographa Medii Aevi* and the *Opera* of Gerardus Magnus were initiated, but unlike in the preceding decades, no new major series were launched. This created the breathing space needed to face the question: what about the future of *Corpus Christianorum*? Which way to go? Which areas should receive our primary attention? What should be encouraged, what belongs to our 'province' and what does not? Moreover, there was the looming question: what when Eligius Dekkers will no longer be around? This last question was tackled by Dekkers himself.

When he began to feel the burden of his years, Dom Dekkers and his collaborators sought to provide a broader foundation for their work, a transition Dekkers brought about himself with characteristic purposefulness. In the early 1990s, he had already been assisted in the direction of *Corpus Christianorum* by Professors Luc De Coninck (KU Leuven) and Lieven Van Acker (Ghent University). The latter passed away unexpectedly in 1995. With Maurits Sabbe, KU Leuven Professor of New Testament Studies, acting as an intermediary, Dekkers subsequently managed to persuade Professor Fernand Bossier (1933–2006) to become his successor.

Thanks, among other things, to his contributions to the *Aristoteles Latinus* project, Bossier was a skilled philologist and specialist in the critical edition of Medieval Latin texts. He had retired from his academic positions in Antwerp and Leuven, and agreed to engage himself in the direction of the Latin series of *Corpus Christianorum*. In 1997, he took up his commission for a period of five years, followed by a renewal in 2002. After Bossier's demise in January 2006, Professor Rita Beyers (University of Antwerp), who had already assisted him in previous years, took his place at the helm of the Latin series.

In the same transition period an Academic Board was established, which was to oversee the review, redaction and publication processes for the various series. Besides representatives of the abbey and the publisher, the committee included academics from all Flemish universities as well as the Université catholique de Louvain. The future of Dekkers' lifetime project had thus been secured. Thanks to the integration of the CTLO (Centre 'Traditio Litterarum Occidentalium', the

59 See <https://www.corpuschristianorum.org/cccogd>.

former Cetedoc, which had been based in Louvain-la-Neuve), this now also included the development of a new lexicographical series accompanying *CC* editions as well as an online database, which had been preceded by microfiche and CD-Rom/DVD publications. These tools and publications were being distributed to an ever-growing number of academic institutions worldwide, thus making up for the diminishing number of religious houses with an independent scholarly and educational activity. As a consequence, Dekkers' death on 15 December 1998 would not bring to a halt the mammoth publishing project he had launched. Dekkers was aware that he had founded and developed an important, internationally recognised scholarly enterprise, and could now rest assured that it had been safely handed over to future generations.

Gradually, however, the organisational and institutional weight shifted from Steenbrugge to Turnhout. The editorial offices at St. Peter's Abbey were abandoned, and upon their retirement, members of the Steenbrugge team were replaced by editorial staff based at the Brepols headquarters in Turnhout. In 2008, *Corpus Christianorum* itself, including the library, left the abbey walls and found a safe haven at the publisher's premises in the beguinage of Turnhout, more precisely at the newly installed 'Corpus Christianorum Bibliotheek & Kenniscentrum'.<sup>60</sup>

Dekkers' legacy materialised in other ways as well. The year 2012 witnessed the creation of the 'Dom Eligius Dekkers Fund for the Edition and Transmission of Pre-Modern Texts & Ideas', while in 2014 the *CC* Academic Board was reorganised so as to comprise a total of five newly installed Editorial Boards (supervising the *CC Series Latina* and *Continuatio Mediaevalis*, including the subsidiary *Instrumenta Patristica et Mediaevalia* series, the different *Claves*, *Sacris Erudiri*, and the Centre 'Traditio Litterarum Occidentalium'), adding the expertise of some twenty internationally renowned philologists, theologians and historians. The general academic direction is in the safe hands of a Director and Vice-Director tandem, currently Professor Gert Partoens (KU Leuven) and Dr. Guy Guldentops (Thomas-Institut, Köln) respectively.<sup>61</sup>

The primary purpose of *Corpus Christianorum* still consists in making accessible the treasures of the Christian late antique and medieval past to a modern and critical scholarly readership. This is reflected in the subtitle of *Sacris Erudiri*, which was changed from *Yearbook for Religious Studies* into *A Journal of Late Antique and Medieval Christianity*. Also at the start of the new

60 For more information about the 'Library & Knowledge Centre', see <https://www.corpus-christianorum.org/library-knowledge-centre>.

61 For a full list of Board members, honorary members and editorial staff see <https://www.corpuschristianorum.org/academic-board-of-corpus-christiano>.

millennium, the *Instrumenta Patristica* series was expanded into *Instrumenta Patristica et Mediaevalia*, to which was added the subtitle *Research on the Inheritance of Early and Medieval Christianity*. The series, started as early as 1959, has now grown into a collection of some 90 valuable monographs and miscellanies published both in print and online. Separate subseries cover the life and works of two prolific writers, Maximus the Confessor and Raimundus Lullus, both of whom are well represented in the *Series Graeca* and the *Continuatio Mediaevalis* respectively.<sup>62</sup> Another series that has existed since the end of the 1980s but has picked up speed since the first decennium of the 21st century is the collection *Lingua Patrum*, focusing on grammatical, linguistic and stylistic phenomena and reflections in the writings of early Christian and medieval authors.

To mark the 50th anniversary of the publication of the first *CC SL* fascicle, the ‘Scholars Version’ of *Corpus Christianorum* was created in 2003, aiming to make available the editions of selected key texts to researchers and students in a handy format, handily priced. This popular initiative was gradually expanded to include such research tools as both *claves* of apocryphal literature, or Albert Blaise’s *Lexicon latinitatis mediæ aevi* together with his lesser known but still valuable reference work on liturgy.<sup>63</sup>

Although the addition of modern translations to late antique or medieval texts was explicitly envisaged by Dekkers when he first proposed his project,<sup>64</sup> *Corpus Christianorum* did not – save for a few rare exceptions<sup>65</sup> – publish its first translations until as late as 2010. In view of the decreasing knowledge of classical languages, the importance of translations in determining or augmenting the scholarly canon should not be underestimated. In this regard, the point has been made that including translations in *Corpus Christianorum* is perfectly in line with its basic mission, i.e., to foster the study of the Church Fathers. However, in line with another early consideration, viz. that introduction, annotation and other apparatus, including translation, are the first to go out of date, it was decided not to print translations on facing pages in the actual edition volumes, but as separate volumes in an independent series, *Corpus*

62 See <https://www.corpuschristianorum.org/ipm>.

63 See <https://www.corpuschristianorum.org/ccsv>.

64 See “A Proposed New Edition,” 412–413.

65 Such exceptions where translations were added on facing pages of the edited text are: *SL* 69A (Potamius), 113 (Isidore), 133–133A (*Aenigmata*), the *Opera Omnia* of Ruusbroec (original Middle Dutch text accompanied by the Latin translation of Surius [1552] and a translation in modern English) as well as some volumes in the *Series Graeca* (e.g. vols. 29, 32, 35 and 54, containing the *Tractatus contra Damianum* of Peter of Callinicus) and *Corpus Nazianzenum*.



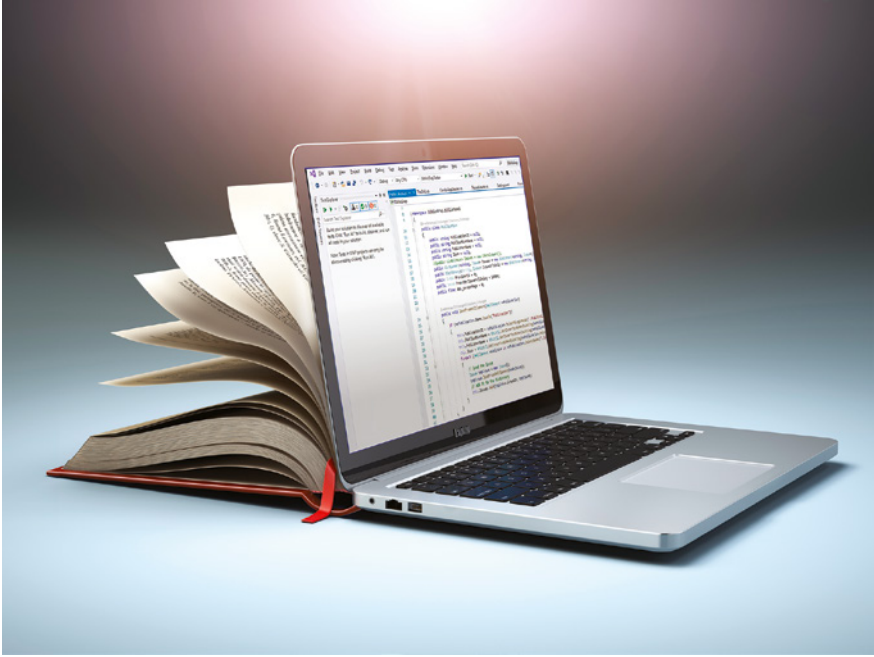


FIGURE 18.2 “More than Books”: impression of the relation between print and online books  
T’HI GRAPHIC DESIGN, LIER, ANTWERP

*Christianorum in Translation*.<sup>66</sup> In these CCT volumes, available both as paperbacks and e-books, a link with the primary edition is established by means of a reference system added to the translated text. An additional advantage is that several translations of the same source text can be offered, prepared by the original text editor and/or by other specialists, in English, French, German, Italian or Spanish.

#### 4 More than Books (2022 Onwards)

Although the physical volumes in the flagship series *Series Latina*, *Series Graeca*, *Continuatio Mediaevalis* and *Series Apocryphorum*, and in the many other *CC* series continue to be produced in print, the digital turn, too, has come full circle: in 2019 *Clavis Clavium* was launched, a freely accessible online collaborative platform building on the foundations of, among other similar publications, Eligius Dekkers’ *Clavis Patrum Latinorum*. In the long run, it will

66 See <https://www.corpuschristianorum.org/cct>.

offer a single entry point for all scholars doing research in late antique and medieval studies. It currently incorporates the almost 8,000 printed pages of the *claves* of the Latin and the Greek Fathers (*CPL*, *CPG*), the apocrypha of the Old and New Testaments (*CAVT*, *CANT*), and the Latin and Greek hagiographical literature as prepared and published by the Bollandists (*BHL*, *BHG*). The addition and integration of further resources like the *Inventory of Late Antique Historiography* (*CHAP*), *La théologie byzantine*, *Traditio Patrum*, and many more is being prepared. At the same time, the electronic format allows for continuous updates by credited contributors worldwide, ensuring that one always has access to the most accurate information.<sup>67</sup> With *RTF* (*Répertoire des traductions françaises des Pères de l'Église*), available since 2018, a powerful tool for identifying and finding modern translations of the works of the Church Fathers was brought online.<sup>68</sup>

The ongoing effort of compiling electronical tools, integrating materials from *Corpus Christianorum* and enriching them with information from outside the collection as well as methods and knowhow from fields like linguistics or Artificial Intelligence is another important avenue for the future. Long before the 'digital turn' and the emergence of Digital Humanities as a field in its own right, Brepols and *Corpus Christianorum* were at the forefront of these developments. With Professor Paul Tombeur (UC Louvain) as founding father and driving force, a number of Latin and Greek lexicographical tools were produced by the Cetedoc, founded as early as 1969, which was renamed CTLO and became a part of Brepols around the turn of the millennium. Based on computer-aided statistical methods, and appearing first on paper and microfiche (from 1979) and later (from 1991 onwards) also on CD-Rom and DVD, these tools had the advantage of making *Corpus Christianorum* and, increasingly, other Latin texts as well, much more accessible for lexicographical and stylistic research, which has no small implications for, e.g., the study of a text's authenticity and attribution.

Since 2005, this evolution has ushered in the creation of the *Library of Latin Texts*, an extensive online database that offers unparalleled access to and search facilities in the Latin literature from its origins until well beyond the Middle Ages, including even some 20th-century Neo-Latin texts. New material is continuously added, and the tool aims to include the most recent or the most reliable critical editions available. The *Library of Latin Texts* is helpful in the preparation of text-critical editions, in the study of an author's vocabulary,

67 See <https://about.brepolis.net/clavis-clavium/>.

68 See <https://about.brepolis.net/repertoire-des-traductions-francaises-des-peres-de-leglise-rtf/>.

or in ascertaining the authorship of a particular text. Maybe most excitingly, the wide chronological and geographical span also makes it possible to study the long-term diachronic evolution of a concept, a lexeme or a semantic field.

Geographical diversity and cross-linguistic research are further enhanced by the *Library of Latin Texts's* sister databases, more particularly the recently added *Patrologia Orientalis Database* (POD)<sup>69</sup> and *Sources Chrétiennes Online* (SCO),<sup>70</sup> both of which provide source texts as well as modern translations, thus opening up perspectives for the application of Natural Language Processing. Lastly but perhaps most notably, within the Brepolis electronic environment connections are established between the *LLT* and other tools, such as the *Database of Latin Dictionaries* (DLD) – an evolution which is expected to result in an integrated ‘Brepolis Latin’ environment by 2025 –, or online encyclopaedias and reference bibliographies such as the *Index Religiosus* (IR) for theology and religious studies,<sup>71</sup> and *L'Année philologique* (APh) for academic publications relating to Ancient Greek and Roman civilisation.<sup>72</sup> Learning from and contributing to developments in Digital Humanities at large has been the hallmark of the enterprise under Paul Tombeur, and one can safely assume that this will be continued under the academic leadership of Professor Toon Van Hal (KU Leuven), Tombeur's successor at the helm of the CTLO.<sup>73</sup>

Its dynamic participation in the quickly developing field of Digital Humanities will certainly help consolidate the position of *Corpus Christianorum* in the Humanities. At the same time, traditional typesetting has been partly replaced by user-friendly desktop software like *Classical Text Editor*, an initiative of the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, developed by Stefan Hagel (Vienna), and opening the way to digital editions. The editorial staff at the Turnhout and Thessaloniki *CC* offices are therefore (re)expanding their expertise from academic assistance and editorial guidance to typography and in-house typesetting. The *CC* library too, since 2008 housed in the St. Annaconvent in the Turnhout beguinage, continues to play its role in fostering a network of scholars, readers, text editors and users that together constitute the *CC* family. It aims to be a lively place of support for those with interests and specialisms in the field, but also a repository where its historical collections can be cherished and made available for future generations. Much in the original spirit of life at the abbey, visiting scholars can even

69 See <https://about.brepolis.net/patrologia-orientalis-database-pod/>.

70 See <https://about.brepolis.net/sources-chretiennes-online-sco/>.

71 For more information, scope and aims, see <https://about.brepolis.net/index-religiosus/>.

72 See <https://about.brepolis.net/lannee-philologique-aph/>.

73 <https://www.corpuschristianorum.org/ctlo>.

spend time in one of both guestrooms over the library, thus not only contributing to the scholarly activity but also partake in the communal life of the *CC* enterprise.

## 5 Conclusion

Right from the start, Dom Eligius Dekkers cherished the idea of a *Corpus Christianorum* which would really constitute a new 'Library of Church Fathers' in the widest possible sense. If one takes the planting of the very first seeds in the Benedictine St. Peter's Abbey at Steenbrugge as its starting point, *Corpus Christianorum* will soon celebrate its 75th anniversary. The journey has been challenging but rewarding. The harvest consists, first of all, of about 950 published volumes: critical text editions, handbooks, *claves*, translations, surveys, journal issues, and monographs. Alongside these are a number of electronic tools that are available online and can be integrated and brought into conversation with one another. Taken together, this remarkable output will support patristic and medieval studies for decades to come.

Moreover, solid foundations for the longer term have been laid. Brepols Publishers at Turnhout, Belgium, is firmly committed to continuing the activities of *Corpus Christianorum* and to investing in the highly qualified academic and editorial staff that supports the preparation of the editions and series within the *CC SL* and *CM* series. The structure of the *CC* Academic Board, too, is well established, and the collaboration with a large group of international leading scholars running smoothly and effectively. Besides the Academic Board overseeing the Latin series, the independent *Series Graeca*, *Corpus Nazianzenum* and *Series Apocryphorum*, and the subseries established within the *Series Latina* or *Continuatio Mediaevalis*, one must think here mainly of the many individual scholars that are enriching our knowledge of the past by publishing their work with *Corpus Christianorum*.

Finally, *Corpus Christianorum* attaches great value to giving opportunities to junior scholars and investing counselling time so as to facilitate the publication of the first fruits of their work as an article in *Sacris Erudiri* or a monograph in one of the *CC* series. The construction of a comprehensive library of all the editions and tools necessary for patristic and medieval studies has become a collaborative enterprise with many stakeholders. *Corpus Christianorum* aspires at remaining one of these and play its role in this polyphonous orchestra, not just in Europe but globally, while further developments lay ahead, e.g., in apocryphal studies, ancient translations and medieval scientific literature, or in the

study of Syriac in relation to Greek, and Hebrew and Arabic in relation to Latin literature.

The period of origin and early development of *Corpus Christianorum* saw the declericalisation and deconfessionalisation of theology, trends which opened the door for a reading of the Church Fathers from more humanist and historical perspectives. These new perspectives, in turn, encouraged the introduction and greater utilisation of historical-critical and literary methods. In recent decades the traditional disciplinary boundaries of fields like New Testament studies, Patristics and Medieval studies have been questioned. In their place, less theologically driven and more interdisciplinary fields such as 'late antiquity' and 'early Christian studies' are now emerging. Therefore, the same combination of critical reflection and openness to the contemporary world seems to apply as much to the original ambition and optimism of the post-War era as to the international academic occupations of our own 21st century.

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