

THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS' TEXTS

We present two versions of the Greek text for the works of the Apostolic Fathers in this collection. The 'primary' version (used predominantly in the parallel/annotated files) is that of Kirsopp Lake's two-volume work published in 1912[§], which is a 'consolidated' text derived from numerous manuscripts (*Greek, Coptic, Syriac, Ethiopic, and Latin*) rather than a transcription of any single source manuscript. We also present a version of J.B. Lightfoot's classic transcriptions, dating from 1869 to 1888, which more strongly reflect the extant Greek MSS available to him.

These texts have been gleaned from sources that are not without problems: For the Lake texts, the [Scaife Viewer website](#) was the source but this has numerous errors in minor details (such as having semicolons instead of Greek question marks, colons in place of *ano teleiae* and numerous incorrect accents). To address this, the text of each book has been compared with that from the [CCEL website](#) and, where there were differences (there were many), the text has been 'consolidated' by manual comparison with a PDF (image) of Lake's *original* publication. So, although no claim is made that the texts presented are perfect, they most likely are better representations of Lake's text than those of either of the 'sources'.

The Lightfoot Greek texts (for most books – *vide infra*) were taken from at least two sources; one was Ben C. Smith's "Text Excavation" website, which is no longer maintained and has been corrupted; this text is entirely without accents and has some missing words and passages. A similar process to that used for the Lake texts has been applied, in this case using the text from Michael W. Holmes' 1999 work (an emended version of Lightfoot's text), which was gleaned from a [Logos Bible Study](#) software module. After this, the 'corrected' text was then compared to that extracted (where possible) from a PDF reproduction of the 1898 reprint[‡] of Lightfoot's text and, again, where differences were found, the text was consolidated by manual comparison with the reprint. We now believe that our representation of Lightfoot's Greek text is tolerably accurate, although we do not claim that it is perfect. Ben C. Smith's website does not have text for the Shepherd of Hermas; for this book, the text extracted from the PDF reprint was compared directly with Holmes' text and corrections applied. A similar process will be used for Lightfoot's two 'auxiliary' sections: the *Fragments of Papias* and the *Relics of the Elders* (neither of which is included by Lake).

The English translation presented in the 'stand-alone' files is that of Bishop Lightfoot (published, posthumously, in 1891 by J.R. Harmer); the text is taken from the [Early Christian Writings](#) website – this appears to have been extracted from a PDF file and there were/are some (minor) errors, especially with respect to punctuation marks (some corrections have been made but this is an on-going process). The text used in the annotated/parallel files is heavily based on that from Lake's 1912 publication referenced above but with some degree of 'modernisation' of the more extreme archaisms.

The Syriac and Coptic texts presented have been extracted from PDF reprints of their respective transcriptions (all published over 100 years ago); these should be considered preliminary and treated with some degree of caution – *especially the Coptic text for the First Letter of Clement*.

§ "The Apostolic Fathers," (2 volumes). Kirsopp Lake (Editor), London: William Heinemann Ltd.; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912.

‡ "The Apostolic Fathers," J.R. Harmer (Editor), Macmillan & Co. Ltd, London/New York, 1898.