

Book Reviews

ALIMI, Toni, *Slaves of God: Augustine and Other Romans on Religion and Politics*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2024, xvii-306 p.

The question of the patristic attitude toward slavery is as difficult as it is disturbing, primarily due to the idea that most supported the practice of chattel slavery. There is, of course, Gregory of Nyssa who, in his fourth Homily on Ecclesiastes condemned chattel slavery (p. 1). We also find Lactantius resisting slavery in his *Divine Institutes* (p. 9), but there does not seem to be much else. Rather, there is a lot of rhetoric that embraces the institution of slavery in the late-antique Roman world. Toni Alimi (Assistant Professor, Cornell University) begins his published dissertation with the bold sentence: “Augustine got slavery wrong” (p. 1). Alimi’s aim is to address Augustine’s understanding of slavery in the context of Roman Christianity, particularly noting Augustine’s theological understanding of the relation between human slavery to God and humans enslaving other humans. Alimi argues “that [Augustine’s] writings on slavery especially reflect the influence of two philosophers Augustine first encountered in his classical Roman education, Cicero and Seneca, and a Christian theologian he discovered as an adult, Lactantius” (p. 5). By tracing Augustine’s understanding through Cicero, Seneca, and Lactantius, Alimi aims to present “a historically sensitive interpretation of Augustine in his context” (p. 7). Thus, he exposes the implications of Augustine’s understanding of slavery. Alimi develops his argument over three sections. In part one (“Slaves of Men”) he presents the Roman cultural foundations of what the institution of human chattel slavery meant for Cicero, Seneca, Lactantius, and Augustine. In part two (“Slaves of God”) the focus is mostly on Lactantius and Augustine, expositing their teaching that all humanity is by nature enslaved to God. In the final part (“Slavery and Liberty”) Alimi brings these ideas together to present an explanation of Augustine’s support for chattel slavery and how he grounded it theologically in his doctrine of eternal slavery to God.

As per Alimi’s aim to present Augustine in his historical context, the first part of his book covers the Roman cultural context that Augustine received through Cicero and Seneca. Alimi discusses a translation issue with the words *servus* and *dominus* (and their cognates). He argues that “by a *servus*, Augustine often meant a person at the near-absolute mercy of a *dominus*, with no legal recourse to resist mistreatment” (p. 24). The thesis of this book states that Augustine’s understanding of slavery was shaped by Cicero, Seneca, and Lactantius. Thus, in this first part, Alimi gives an overview of these three and those of their perspectives that influenced Augustine. Cicero developed the notion of political slavery. He did not write about the ethics of chattel slavery but warned against the danger of political slavery whereby a whole people become enslaved to a tyrant (p. 35). Seneca developed the notion of moral slavery. For Seneca, chattel slavery was ethically neutral, because “masters may be moral slaves and slaves morally free” (p. 41). Seneca’s exhortation was to pursue virtue and thus to avoid becoming a moral slave. Alimi, working with this idea from Seneca, argues that Augustine thought chattel slavery could be a good for some people, as a means to shape virtuous living (p. 59). Lactantius drew from both Cicero and Seneca, and “conceived of God as *paterfamilias* over all humanity ... everyone is a slave of God” (p. 45). He worked with Cicero’s definition of justice (giving each their due), and “viewed religion as the first part of justice – giving God and other humans their due” (p. 47). Thus, God, as the slave-master of all humanity, is due worship, and humans, as completely equal, cannot be enslaved by other humans. Alimi argues that Augustine, by ignoring this final point in Lactantius, embraced the notion that slavery can be good as a means of evangelizing. Alimi thus presents a seemingly unresolved tension in Augustine. “First, why should any non-Christians be masters? Second, why should any Christians be slaves?” (p. 66).

In the second part Alimi covers the development of Augustine's theology of humanity being eternally enslaved to God. He begins with a focus on how Lactantius developed the doctrine that all humanity was naturally a slave of God. He argues that it came (indirectly) from Cicero, in that Cicero connected his definition of justice (i.e., to each their due) to religious virtue whereby people owe worship to the gods (p. 87). Lactantius adopted Cicero's philosophy of justice within religious virtue, but re-shaped it through the context of being naturally slaves of God. Thus, for Lactantius, giving God his due was more than mere worship. Since "humans radically depend on God for their entire existence" (p. 95), it follows that each person must submit to God as their master. Next, Alimi shows how Augustine took up, and developed, Lactantius's theology. Augustine held that slavery was both universal and eternal. As Alimi summarizes Augustine: "Humans radically depend on God in virtue of being created. Since humans will always be creatures, they will always radically depend on – and thus be slaves of – God" (p. 114). Then, Alimi looks closer at a tension within Augustine's theology of slavery. Humans, for Augustine, are eternally slaves of God, yet, in John 15:15, Jesus calls his followers friends, not slaves. Alimi shows that "Augustine came to believe that slavery to and friendship with God are compatible" (p. 146). On this point Alimi criticizes Augustine's notion of eternal slavery on the basis of Augustine's embrace of friendship with God. Alimi says, "We might have expected that slavery to God expires once the threat of sin is neutralized because Augustine so often discussed slavery to God in the context of freeing humans from slavery to sin. ... The glorified person is still a slave of God" (p. 150). Alimi argues that Augustine took his theology of slavery too far, especially considering the concept of divine friendship.

In the final part Alimi brings the two aspects together, human chattel slavery and slavery to God, to show how Augustine viewed these together. He first overviews the Roman context of the laws around coercion, with attention to Augustine's endorsement of coercing the Donatists to convert. Alimi concludes that, for Augustine, coercion can be beneficial if it serves to bring someone into the true religion, and thus too with chattel slavery. "Augustine's account ... helps us see that slaves might be able to derive eternal benefit from slavery" (p. 197). Alimi then returns to the slave-friend tension with regard to the notion of holding an authority accountable. He demonstrates that in the Roman world, authority figures could be held accountable by their friends, and Augustine recognizes that Christians are God's friends. Also, Augustine's understanding of citizenship required non-slave status, and he recognizes that Christians are citizens of God's kingdom, thus how can even glorified persons still be slaves? "Augustine's commitment that glorified persons are unable to sin makes it difficult to attribute to him the view that humans are eternally incapable of self-rule" (p. 209). He further critiques Augustine for holding a double standard with regard to the Roman pagan context, in that God is above any accountability structure, whereas the pagan pantheon is deserving of criticism (p. 220-221). Alimi acknowledges that Augustine appeals to the created-uncreated distinction, but he still claims this as unfair of Augustine. Lastly Alimi discusses Augustine's critique of Rome as never being a Republic according to Cicero's standards. Just as everyone is a slave of God, they are also "either actual or potential citizens of the heavenly city" (p. 251). Thus, Alimi shows that Augustine was wrong to ignore Lactantius's critique of slavery, and that he should have, and could have, known better.

Alimi's overview of Augustine is helpful, though it needs some critical response. One point is Alimi's critique of Augustine's double standard with regard to the pagan gods. Alimi argues that Augustine should have held God to the same standard to which he held the pagan gods. He said, "If authority requires accountability, and God's power is unaccountable, then God lacks authority. ... To be consistent, Augustine needed to show that God's mastery over humans doesn't involve unaccountable power. But he wasn't consistent" (p. 220). The distinction between created and uncreated is important

for Augustine, as Alimi notes. Alimi does not note that Augustine goes to great lengths in *De Civitate Dei* 8-10 to show that the Roman gods were created, as acknowledged by their own authorities. Admittedly, Augustine's treatment of these authors is less than fair, but Augustine was not necessarily trying to convince pagan readers. Rather, Augustine wrote *De Civitate Dei* for Christians (cf. Gillian Clark's recent commentary). Also, Alimi holds Augustine to an unfair standard as if he were seeking to utilize the Republican system of authority and accountability. Rather, Augustine used the system in a Christianized way, i.e., he baptized it for the sake of his theological rhetoric which gave him the liberty to re-shape it as he saw fit. Alimi states, his primary aim is to interpret "Augustine in his context" (p. 7). It is surprising that his critique neglects the context of Augustine's rhetoric.

A second point of critique is Alimi's suggestion that Augustine's view of eternal slavery to God was inconsistent, i.e., that humanity should eventually achieve self-rule. Alimi bases this critique on the notion of humanity becoming incapable of sinning (p. 209). He seems to neglect some important elements of Augustine's eschatology regarding the *how* of Augustine's *non posse peccare*. Alimi claims that once humanity is *non posse peccare* then there is no need for God. Augustine holds rather that God's eternal sustaining power is what enables this glorified life. Thus, Alimi's critique is a non-sequitur.

Despite the above critical points, Alimi's main argument is convincing, that Augustine should (and could) have known better regarding chattel slavery, based on what Lactantius wrote. Alimi's book helpfully presents an element of Augustine's theology that should be recognized. He pushes his arguments for connecting this problematic view with Augustine's eschatological slavery to God too far, but his presentation of Augustine's reception of Cicero, Seneca, and Lactantius is well argued. Thus, Alimi's book is worth engaging with when considering Augustine's attitude toward slavery.

Nathan Alexander Scott

BARNES, Michel R., *Augustine and Nicene Theology. Essays on Augustine and the Latin Argument for Nicaea*, Cambridge, James Clark & Co., 2024, XXVI-317 p.

This book is a monumental collection of thirteen essays by Michael Barnes, situating Augustine within the polemical framework of Latin Nicene theology. Even if most of the essays were already published individually, this new volume offers a comprehensive overview of Barnes' groundbreaking findings over a lengthy scholarly career. Barnes exhibits an exceptional level of erudition concerning primary sources and secondary literature, providing a detailed account of Augustine's Trinitarian views and the relevant historiography around it. The reader has much to learn from this important contribution to Augustinian studies. Yet, there is more. A careful analysis of the textual evidence leads Barnes to depart from traditional and predominant narratives. He claims that "the articles in this collection were written with the aim of re-narrating accepted accounts of Augustine's Trinitarian theology and the character of Latin Nicene theology in general" (p. XIII). I consider Barnes's intellectual boldness and honesty in challenging widespread accounts the most impactful aspect of this book, moving us to rethink what (we believe) we know about Augustine.

The first two chapters – 'Augustine in Contemporary Trinitarian Theology' and 'De Régnon Reconsidered' – have received considerable backlash from modern systematicians. Barnes explains that this is so because he has shown how their readings of Augustine were based on an unproven assumption. Specifically, according to Barnes, modern systematicians take for granted that there is a neat conceptual distinction between Greek and Latin Trinitarian doctrines, i.e., the former privilege plurality, whereas the latter unity. To make things worse, the author continues, they also ignore that this assumption is a 'watered-down' version of a thesis propounded for the first time by de Régnon in the late 19th century. Furthermore, Barnes insists that modern systematicians, influenced by

German idealism, embrace an architectonic narrative characterised by an open-ended” comprehensiveness. Hence, in this approach, the textual evidence takes a backseat since the interpretation of Augustine’s writings follows a predetermined agenda. Barnes describes the situation very eloquently:

... the integrity of the discipline of historical studies is ruptured by the need to find a “historical” account which is already cast in idealistic terms. History is then treated as the material enstructuring of those themes which are constitutive of contemporary systematics. The dialogue between systematic theology and historical theology is transformed into a conversation between a ventriloquist and her or his prop (p. 7).

The remaining chapters can be divided into two groups. The first one outlines the conceptual milieu from which Augustine’s views emerge. It includes: “Early Latin Trinitarian Theology”, “The Forms of Latin Theology”, “Other Latin Nicenes”, and “Marius Victorinus. A Non-Athanasian Latin Trinitarian Logic”. In this case, Barnes’s refusal to accept any given narrative without adequate evidence leads him to thoroughly revise a vast number of figures and their writings. On this basis, for instance, he aims to correct claims concerning the development (p. 40), relevant texts (p. 60), significant authors (p. 86), and varieties of Latin Nicene Trinitarian theologies (p. 125).

The second group of chapters advances new interpretations of Augustine’s Trinitarianism and sets out his methodology. In “Rereading Augustine’s Trinitarian Theology”, Barnes presents certain criteria underpinning his novel interpretations, which can be summarised as follows. To offer a “credible” reading of a text, he maintains, one must locate it within its contemporary framework while also identifying it as belonging to a particular tradition. The resulting account should then be introduced within a larger narrative, thus determining its degree of plausibility. Likewise, the more one engages with the relevant scholarly work, “the more sophisticated the reading” will be. It is also necessary to unearth the underlying logic of the text and be acquainted with the author’s “conceptual idioms”. Lastly, one must adopt the ‘part-whole’ method. In other words, the meaning of sentences or sections cannot be extracted without attention to the entire text. Barnes considers these steps “necessary for a credible reading of *any* theological (or philosophical) text” (p. 155). Accordingly, he faithfully adopts them in the remaining chapters: “Exegesis and Polemic in *De Trinitate* I”, “The Arians of Book V and the Genre of *De Trinitate*”, “The Visible Christ and the Invisible Trinity. Matthew 5:8 in Augustine’s Trinitarian Theology of 400”, “*De Trinitate* VI and VII. Augustine and the Limits of Nicene Orthodoxy”, “Augustine’s Last Pneumatology”, and “Ebion at the Barricades. Moral Narrative and Post-Christian Catholic Theology”. I will not comment here on their content due to space limitations, but I can guarantee that the reader will find in them a more rigorous analysis of Augustine’s ideas than that which is typical.

In sum, this book is a most valuable resource for Augustinian studies. Barnes sets an example of how theologians and philosophers should engage with Augustine. One may think it is “standard” for scholars to follow the abovementioned criteria. Yet, the truth is otherwise, according to Barnes (p. 155-158) – with whom I concur. Unfortunately, within the discipline, it is still very common to find published “peer-reviewed” work on Augustine that perpetrates (unconsciously, I want to believe) fictitious narratives. In this context, Barnes’s merit is even more outstanding because he has managed to publish “what, some think, should never have been spoken in the first place” (p. XIII) since it exposed mainstream positions as unfounded. By doing this, the book gives hope to new generations whose careful research also leads them to part ways with widespread interpretations of Augustine.

Rodrigo Ballon-Villanueva

BEHR, John, *Gregory of Nyssa: On the Human Image of God*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2023, XII-367 p.

Gregory of Nyssa's treatise *Περὶ κατασκευῆς ἀνθρώπου*, *De hominis opificio*, *On the Making or Constitution of the Human Being*, is excellently introduced, edited, and translated here with the title, *On the Human Image of God*. Fr Behr's title not only reflects the gist of the treatise itself, based on the 'theology of the image' grounded in Gen 1:26-27, but also comes close to the title used by Eriugena to designate Gregory's *De hominis opificio*, namely, *De imagine* (in which, significantly, some sections on apokatastasis seem to have been dropped, not by Eriugena himself, who was a supporter of this doctrine, but in the ms tradition).¹ Gregory's treatise draws on Scripture, philosophy, especially Plato's *Timaeus*, and the earlier Patristic tradition, above all Origen, who had already provided a Christian philosophical theology, particularly Christian Platonism.

After a rich introduction, Behr supplies the Greek text with facing translation, an appendix on the ms. tradition of Basil's *Hexaemeron*, a bibliography, and indices. The introduction is divided into three long chapters: the first is philological, the second is philosophical-theological, and the third analytical, going through Gregory's treatise to explain each single section, often with analysis of its background, meaning, questions, and impact. The philological section begins by remarking that the promised edition of *De hominis opificio* in the GNO series (Gregory Nysseni Opera) was not yet available when the book came out; I checked again in August 2025, just before handing my review to *Augustiniana*, and Gregory Nysseni Opera Online at De Gruyter Brill indicates that the edition is still awaited. The nineteenth-century Forbes edition was therefore the basis for Behr's edition. Behr re-examined several of the mss used by Forbes and lists the mss employed for his own edition; he also collated the Latin translations of Dionysius Exiguus (who wrote about a century and a half after Gregory) and Eriugena for his present edition.

Written by Gregory between the death of his brother Basil in September 378 and Easter 379, the earliest reference to this work in Greek is by Emperor Justinian in his Letter to Mennas from 543, where he calls the treatise ἡ εἰς τὸν ἄνθρωπον πραγματεία. John Damascene entitles it *Περὶ κατασκευῆς ἀνθρώπου*, the Greek title we are familiar with and that was already printed in the 1567 edition by Löwenklau and in the seventeenth-century *editio Morelliana*, which formed the basis for the *Patrologia Graeca* edition. The earliest mss of Gregory's treatise, from the 9th and 10th centuries, entitle it *Περὶ εἰκόνοσ ἀνθρώπου*, while the current title *θεωρία εἰς τὴν κατασκευὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* is first found in the *explicit* of two tenth-century mss. Behr's full title takes into account this history: *On the Human Image of God, that is, A Contemplation* [which translates *θεωρία*] *on the Formation of the Human Being*. Gregory's Letter to Peter, in which he presents his own work as the completion of Basil's *Hexaemeron*, was the original preface to this treatise and, like Origen's Preface to his *Περὶ*

¹ See my *The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis: A Critical Assessment from the New Testament to Eriugena* (Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 120), Leiden, Brill, 2013, 773-815, p. 775, and *From God to God: Eriugena's Protology and Eschatology against the Backdrop of His Patristic Sources*, lecture within the Oxford workshop, *Eriugena's Christian Neoplatonism and its Sources in Patristic Philosophy and Ancient Philosophy*, Oxford University, August 2019, dir. I.L.E. RAMELLI, in Eadem (ed.), *Eriugena's Christian Neoplatonism and its Sources in Patristic and Ancient Philosophy* (Studia Patristica 122.19), Leuven, Peeters, 2021, 99-123. *Sermo Gregorii Episcopi Nysae de <Imagine> in ea quae relictæ sunt in Examerō a beato Basilio suo fratre* is the title reported in the only complete manuscript of Eriugena's translation of Gregory's treatise: Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek Patr. 78 (Bamberg B. IV. 13, discovered by M. CAPPUYNS). The only chapter that was dropped at some point in the ms tradition – whereas it was translated by Eriugena, as is proved by an anthology in which it is preserved, albeit not without textual corruptions – is a chapter containing a clear reference to the doctrine of apokatastasis: *Sancti Gregorii episcopi Niseni* [sic]. *Peracta quidem hominum genitura eius quae termino conterminari tempus, et sic omnium adunari, et humanum a corruptibili ac terreno ad impassibile et sempiternum, hoc mihi videtur. Beatus apostolus considerans predicare, per epistolam ad Corintheos, propter repentium temporis statum, et iterum in unum futuram moventium resolutionem...*

ἀρχὼν, outlined the main points of the treatise. Chapter 16 indicates the kernel of the oeuvre, being the only heading beginning with the word θεωρία: “A contemplation of the divine word which says, ‘Let us make the human being in accordance with our image and likeness’”.

The second chapter explores the philosophical and theological background of Gregory’s *De hominis opificio*. Anaxagoras is the first author taken into consideration by Behr for the cosmogenic activity of νοῦς (p. 34-40). The importance of νοῦς in this sense is already present in Origen, although Anaxagoras exerted an indirect influence on Origen and is never cited in the lists of his favorite philosophical readings by Porphyry or Jerome.² Thus, Behr is right to be prudent: “It is *not impossible* that he is playing with these words, and thus intimating his own indebtedness to, and standing within, the same tradition as had, according to Tzamalikos, Origen” (p. 40, emphasis mine).

The second author is, of course, Plato, and here Behr sets out his argument that Gregory deliberately structured his treatise on the basis of Plato’s *Timaeus*, reproducing the sequence of Timaeus’s speech therein (p. 40-50). So, we can see that, while *De anima et resurrectione* is a Christianisation of Plato’s *Phaedo* with elements of Plato’s *Symposium*, something that has long since been recognised by scholarship, similarly *De hominis opificio* is a Christianisation of Plato’s *Timaeus*. This does not surprise me. Origen, according to Porphyry, “was always with Plato” and his admirer Gregory took Plato as a model likewise. Of course, both *Christianised* Plato, as they had to construct their Christian Platonism. Gregory read Genesis in the light of Plato’s *Timaeus*, as Origen had already done and shortly before him Bardaisan, as I argued elsewhere.³ Many particular points of convergence emerge between *De hominis opificio* and Plato’s *Timaeus*, as well as the parallelism between the threefold division of both treatises, along with a number of “foreshadowings, backtracking, and apparent detours, and switching between different modes of speech” (p. 49). Gregory is convinced that “the seminal cause of our constitution is neither soul without a body nor a body without a soul” (p. 50). This is a pivotal tenet in the anthropology of Gregory, who also speaks of an ineffable union of the intelligible with the bodily (*Hom.op.* 15.3), and there are reasons to suppose that he drew this idea of soul and body existing together from the beginning to the end from Origen.⁴

The third philosophical-theological author examined by Behr as the background of Gregory’s thought in *De hominis opificio* is Philo of Alexandria (p. 50-62). Behr rightly remarks that with Philo “we see for the first time the cosmological reflections of the Greek philosophers applied to the opening chapters of Genesis” (p. 50). I add that the Christians Athenagoras, Bardaisan, and Origen before Gregory would follow suit, all of them applying especially Plato’s *Timaeus* to their reading of Genesis. Note that Bardaisan probably knew Philo (I have found hints) and Origen definitely did. Philo, like Gregory, maintained that God created everything simultaneously on “Day One”, before

² P. TZAMALIKOS, *Anaxagoras, Origen, and Neoplatonism: The Legacy of Anaxagoras to Classical and Late Antiquity*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2016, with my review in *Gnomon* 92.2 (2020) 109-113; Ead., *The Reception of Paul’s Nous in the Christian Platonism of Origen and Evagrius*, in J. FREY – M. NÄGELE (eds.), *Der νοῦς bei Paulus im Horizont griechischer und hellenistisch-jüdischer Anthropologie* (WUNT I 464), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2021, 279-316.

³ I.L.E. RAMELLI, *Origen, Bardaisan, and the Origin of Universal Salvation*, in *Harvard Theological Review* 102 (2009) 135-168; *Bardaisan of Edessa: A Reassessment of the Evidence and a New Interpretation. Also in the Light of Origen and the Original Fragments from De India*, Piscataway, Gorgias, 2009, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019; *Bardaisan: A Christian Middle Platonist from Edessa and his Reading of Scripture in the Light of Plato*, in C. HORN – S.H. GRIFFITH (eds.), *Biblical & Qur’anic Traditions in the Middle East*, Eastern Mediterranean Texts and Contexts, Warwick, RI, Abelian Academic, 2016, 215-238; Eadem, *Plato’s Timaeus in Athenagoras, Bardaisan, and Origen*, in M. BOERI – I. COSTA (eds.), *Plato’s Timaeus and Its Reception – El Timeo de Platón: Aspectos sistemáticos y de recepción del diálogo*, Oxford, OUP – Universidad de Zaragoza, forthcoming, 437-488.

⁴ As I argue in *Origen on the Unity of Soul and Body in the Earthly Life and Afterwards and His Impact on Gregory of Nyssa*, in J. ULRICH – A. USACHEVA – S. BHAYRO (eds.), *The Unity of Soul and Body in Patristic and Byzantine Thought*, Leiden – Paderborn, Brill, 2021, 38-77, and *Origen*, in S. CARTWRIGHT – A. MARMODORO (eds.), *A History of Mind and Body in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge, CUP, 2018, 245-266.

time, when the intelligible cosmos was founded (identified by Athenagoras, Bardaisan, and Origen with Christ-Logos-Wisdom). This is Platonic exemplarism applied to Genesis.⁵ Philo commented on the theology of the image: the “likeness” to God in the human being should not be inferred “from the characteristics of the body, since God does not have a human shape and the human body is not Godlike. The term ‘image’ has been used here with regard to the hegemonic of the soul, νοῦς” (*Opif.* 69). Behr translates Philo’s connected observation: “On that single intellect of the universe, as on an archetype, the intellect in each individual human being was modelled. In a sense it is a god of the person who carries it and bears it around as a divine image” (p. 56). I note that the identification of νοῦς with a divine image (ἄγαλμα) in every single human being is a notion that Bardaisan also sets out in an important fragment preserved literally by Porphyry and explicitly based on Plato’s *Timaeus*, which Bardaisan cited, interpreting Genesis in light of it.⁶ The similarity is very close (and not widespread). Behr also cites *Opif.* 73: “intellect and reason [νοῦς καὶ λόγος] may be regarded as the home where goodness and evil naturally reside” (p. 56). This, I note, is an expression of ethical intellectualism, which Philo followed as a good Platonist and Gregory even applied to the Fall of the protoplasts, noting that they chose evil when they ate the forbidden fruit because it appeared to them to be good, whereas it was evil, and it appeared to them good mistakenly, because they were deceived in their minds by the serpent, the devil.⁷ Behr is somewhat uncomfortable at the use of “double creation” in Philo (“Rather than a ‘double creation’ as such, Philo’s interest is thus, as becomes clear in what immediately follows, on ‘the composite structure [τὴν κατασκευὴν σύνθετον] of the sense-perceptible and individual human being, composed of earthly substance and divine spirit’ (*Opif.* 135)” (p. 59). I am even more uncomfortable at its use in the case of Origen and more still in that of Gregory, so that I spoke elsewhere of an “extenuated” sense of “double creation” in their cases (if one wants to keep this designation at all).⁸

The points that Behr highlights in Gregory’s reception of Philo include the following: the sequence of increasing levels of life in the Genesis account; human νοῦς as seeing all, remaining unseen; νοῦς and λόγος as the seat of goodness and evil; the human being as created in Gen 1:27, but the individual as coming into existence only in Gen 2:7; and the first “attempt to combine the two creation [narratives] in Genesis into a unified one”, which accounts for “‘the composite structure’ (τὴν κατασκευὴν σύνθετον) of the human being”, qua μεθόριον between the mortal and the immortal (p. 62). I have argued elsewhere that many theological points passed on from Philo to Gregory through exegesis (in this case the exegesis of Genesis) and that some reveal the mediation of Origen, while others suggest a more direct dependence.⁹

The most extensive section concerning the philosophical-theological antecedents to, and sources of, Gregory is of course devoted to Origen (p. 62-88), of whom Gregory, I think, was one of the most insightful readers and admirers. This section, unlike the others among the sources, is divided into a number of subsections: this witnesses to the complexity of Origen’s legacy. Behr is correct to observe

⁵ See my *Nous and the One in Christian and ‘Pagan’ Neoplatonism*, in *Human and Divine Nous from Ancient to Renaissance Philosophy and Religion: Key Themes, Intersections, and Developments*, forthcoming.

⁶ My *Bardaisan and his Reading of Scripture in the Light of Plato*, and *The Body of Christ as Imperishable Wood: Hippolytus and Bardaisan of Edessa’s Complex Christology*, in E. VERGANI – S. CHIALÀ (eds.), *Symposium Syriacum XII*, Held at St Lawrence College, Rome 19-21 August 2016, Organised by the Pontifical Oriental Institute on the occasion of the Centenary Celebration (1917-2017) (*Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 311), Rome, Pontifical Oriental Institute, 2022, 447-458.

⁷ Argument in my *Ethical Intellectualism in Seneca and the Roman Stoics*, in *Lucius Annaeus Seneca* 2 (2023) 131-162.

⁸ In *The (Double) Creation of the Human Being and Philosophical Soteriology*, in M. COVER – L. DÖRING (eds.), *Philo and Philosophical Discourse* (Ioudaioi 14), Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2024, 313-358.

⁹ *Philosophical Allegoresis of Scripture in Philo and Its Legacy in Gregory of Nyssa*, in *Studia Philonica Annual* 20 (2008) 55-99.

that the narrative presenting Origen as “teaching that there was an eternal realm of intellects existing alongside God, which then fell away from God and into bodies, from which they will eventually be liberated to return to their original state of unity together and with God”, a narrative that dominated twentieth-century scholarship, “has more recently been challenged and a new picture is gradually gaining acceptance” (p. 62). I have contributed myself, hopefully with significant points, to such a revision.¹⁰ It is a pity that Origen’s Commentary on Genesis is lost, since this would have illuminated most of all Gregory’s indebtedness to Origen in *De hominis opificio* and Philo’s influence on Gregory through Origen and more directly. “Only the middle is visible” (*Hom. Is.* 1.2, cited on p. 65): Origen thus used allegory for the ἀρχή and the τέλος because they fall out of history. This has a parallel in Plato who used mythical and not historical or theoretical accounts to speak of the ἀρχή and the τέλος.¹¹ That the end is similar to the beginning is a principle posited by Origen (p. 65-66) and, I add, by his co-disciple of Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus. For Origen, the τέλος is actually better than the ἀρχή, because it depends on one’s voluntary movements of the intellect-will in embracing the Good, namely God. It is not accidental that, as I have argued elsewhere, Gregory’s doctrine of epektasis, connected with that of apokatastasis, has its roots precisely in Origen.¹²

The Son is the ἀρχή (like the other Hypostases of the Trinity, so that the title Περὶ ἀρχῶν most likely refers to this) and the Logos and Wisdom, which is the very first *epinoia* of Christ: this is why the Son has his very Hypostasis or individual substance in Wisdom, the ἀρχή of creation itself, as the Johannine Prologue makes clear (ἐν ἀρχῇ τῇ Σοφίᾳ τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἔχων).¹³ I even suspect that the identification of Christ as ἀρχή points to the probability that the ‘pagan’ Neoplatonist Amelius, a faithful Plotinian, commented on the Johannine Prologue with Origen’s comments on the Prologue at the back of his mind.¹⁴ Origen details that what is first is always ἀρχή, while what is ἀρχή is not always first (p. 67). This claim is paramount, I observe, in intra-Trinitarian relationship: the Son is not first because of his filiation from the Father, who is the only “first”, but not because of subordination, whereas some narratives mix up filiation with subordination in the case of Origen.¹⁵ Both the Father and the Son indeed are ἀρχαί, the Father of all creatures and the Son-Logos of all *logika*. The same narrative maintains that Origen needed subordinationism to fight Monarchianism,

¹⁰ Several of the essays I have devoted to these points are now collected, along with three new, unpublished ones, in my *Origen, The Philosophical Theologian: New Research in Anthropology and Ethics: Selected Studies / Kleine Schriften* (Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 160), Berlin, De Gruyter, 2025.

¹¹ Argument in my *Plato in Origen’s and Gregory of Nyssa’s Conception of the ἀρχή and the τέλος*, in R. FOWLER (ed.), *Plato in the Third Sophistic* (Millennium Studies 50), Berlin, De Gruyter, 2014, 211-235; see also my *Allegorizing and Philosophizing*, in R.S. SMITH – S.M. TRZASKOMA (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Mythography*, Oxford, OUP, 2022, 331-348.

¹² My *Apokatastasis and Epektasis in Hom. in Cant.: The Relation between Two Core Doctrines in Gregory and Roots in Origen*, main lecture at *Gregory of Nyssa: In Canticum Canticorum, 13th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa*, Rome, 17-20 September 2014, in G. MASPERO – M. BRUGAROLAS – I. VIGORELLI (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: In Canticum Canticorum. Commentary and Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 13th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Rome, 17-20 September 2014)* (Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 150), Leiden, Brill, 2018, 312-339. On the *telos* better than the *arkhé* in Origen, see my *Christian Soteriology and Christian Platonism. Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Biblical and Philosophical Basis of the Doctrine of Apokatastasis*, in *Vigiliae Christianae* 61 (2007) 313-356, and *The Legacy of Origen in Gregory of Nyssa’s Theology of Freedom*, *Modern Theology* 38.2 (2022) 363-388.

¹³ Full argument in my *Origen, Greek Philosophy, and the Birth of the Trinitarian Meaning of Hypostasis*, in *Harvard Theological Review* 105 (2012) 302-350. Further *Porphry’s Criticism of the Logos of Origen and the Probable Role of a Sethian Treatise*, new, unpublished article in *Origen the Philosophical Theologian*, 397-426.

¹⁴ As I argue in my *The Logos in the Johannine Prologue and Its Philosophical Reception*, in S.E. PORTER – D. YOON (eds.), *The Johannine Prologue and its Resonances* (JOST 4), Leiden, Brill, 2024, 168-199.

¹⁵ *Monarchianism and Origen’s Early Trinitarian Theology*, in *Revue d’Histoire Ecclésiastique* 119/1-2 (2024) 301-305; invited review of M.M. MILLER, *Origen of Alexandria and the Theology of the Holy Spirit*, Oxford, OUP, 2024, in *The Heythrop Journal* (2025) 1-4: DOI 10.1111/heyj.14458; *Nicaea: Historico-Theological Reflections*, Keynote Lecture in the international conference, *The Creedal Spirit*, McDonald Agape Foundation, London, St Mellitus College, dir. Rt Rev R. WILLIAMS, 30 April – 1st May 2025, Baylor University Press, forthcoming.

although I suspect that his novel doctrine of the three Hypostases in one Divinity was more than enough to combat Monarchianism without any need of a full subordination scheme.¹⁶

Behr rightly expands on Origen's exemplarism,¹⁷ although he does not name it technically (p. 68). This doctrine is common to Platonism, although Origen, as Behr notes correctly (p. 69), maintained *creatio ex nihilo* and not the preexistence of matter. However, I add that Origen was keen on presenting his own doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* as a better interpretation of Plato's *Timaeus* and as more consistent with Plato's theology and doctrine of creation than contemporary 'pagan' interpretations of Plato were (D3 Metzler, preserved by Eusebius).¹⁸ Origen maintains that "'bodily nature is nothing other than qualities' and it is these qualities that are created by God and are brought together in various ways to form bodies (*Princ.* 4.4.7)" (p. 69). This is the same doctrine that Gregory would also stress in his "bundle theory of matter" resolving, on the basis of Origen, the big issue of how a totally immaterial God can create matter: God created immaterial qualities and their combination gave rise to matter.¹⁹

Although he does not speak of apokatastasis, Behr is right to note that Christ's eschatological (not protological) "creation" is made up of those "who have been persuaded to subject themselves willingly to their Creator" (p. 71). These elements of persuasion and willingness are paramount in Origen's doctrine of apokatastasis and avoid the trap of understanding it within the framework of mechanical determinism.²⁰ This of course has to be taken in an emic, not an etic, perspective: in the latter view, Origen may well be found wanting and not aligning with our present theories of free will.²¹ But I read his doctrine of free will and its application to apokatastasis from an emic point of view, that of Origen himself. I definitely concur with Behr that "although he was repeatedly accused of teaching that pre-existing incorporeal souls fell into embodied existence, Origen emphatically denies that he taught any such thing" (p. 71), as I argue elsewhere.²² Behr does well to emphasise that Genesis speaks "'in a way exceedingly dialectic (πάνν διαλεκτικώτατα)'" (p. 72).²³ The human being was created "'according to the image' in whom is found no matter [οὐ ὕλη οὐκ εὕρίσκεται] ... There are, therefore, two humans regarding each of us" (*Dial.* 15.30–16.17): I also say, as anticipated, that

¹⁶ Arguments in note above.

¹⁷ See my *The Logos/Nous One/Many* for exemplarism, and *Hypostasis*.

¹⁸ See my *Divine Power in Origen: Sources and Aftermath*, in A. MARMODORO – E.F. VILTANIOTI (eds.), *Divine Powers in Late Antiquity*, Oxford, OUP, 2017, 177-198 and *Matter in the Dialogue of Adamantius: Origen's Heritage and Hylomorphism*, in J. ZACHHUBER – A. SCHIAVONI PALANCIUC (eds.), *Platonism and Christianity in Late Ancient Cosmology: God, Soul, Matter* (Ancient Philosophy and Religion 9), Leiden, Brill, 2022, 74-124.

¹⁹ Gregory claims that matter results from qualities or properties combined together in *Hex.* 7 and *Hom.op.* 24. On his bundle theory of matter see my *The Dialogue of Adamantius: A Document of Origen's Thought?*, in A. BRENT – M. VINZENT (eds.), *Papers Presented at the British Patristics Conference, Durham, september 2010* (Studia Patristica 52), Leuven, Peeters, 2012, 71-98; *Rediscovering Origen* (Studia Patristica 56), Leuven, Peeters, 2013, 227-273; G. VAN RIEL – T. WAUTERS, *Gregory of Nyssa's Bundle Theory of Matter*, in *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 28.3 (2020) 395-421.

²⁰ RAMELLI, *The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis; Origen, Greek Philosophy, and the Birth of the Trinitarian Meaning of Hypostasis*, in *Harvard Theological Review* 105 (2012) 302-350; *The Legacy of Origen in Gregory of Nyssa's Theology of Freedom; Origen's Philosophico-Theological Interpretation of Romans 7 and Augustine: A Source of Inspiration and Development*, lecture at the Oxford Seminar, *Origen's Philosophical Engagement*, dir. I.L.E. RAMELLI, 2024, in Eadem (ed.), *Origen's Philosophical Engagement* (Studia Patristica), Leuven, Peeters, forthcoming.

²¹ C. HORN, *Free Will in Origen? Arguments For and Against*, in I.L.E. RAMELLI (ed.), *Origen's Philosophical Engagement* (Studia Patristica), Leuven, Peeters, forthcoming, and my introduction to the volume with discussion of the essay.

²² See my "Origen", in *A History of Mind and Body; Matter in the Dialogue of Adamantius: Origen's Heritage*, and *Origen, The Philosophical Theologian: New Research in Anthropology and Ethics*.

²³ I examine this passage as the basis of Origen's theological dialects in *Ancient Greek Dialectic and its Reception in Origen of Alexandria: From Plato to Christ-Logos*, in M.G. MOUZALA (ed.), *Ancient Greek Dialectic and its Reception*, Topics in Ancient Philosophy 10, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2023, 331-369, and for his "theo-dialectics" (in my definition) see my *Eriugena on Knowledge: Origen's Heritage and Christian Neoplatonism*, in *Diálogos* 116 (2025) 437-472.

Origen maintained a “double creation” in an extenuated sense.²⁴ Origen allegorises “male and female” in the creation of the human being as spirit and soul, two anthropological components, in *Hom. in Gen.* 1.15: if they have “concord and agreement, ... they produce ... good inclinations and ... thoughts” (p. 76).²⁵

Behr reflects on the καταβολή (“throwing down”) of the world according to Origen and on his notion of the intelligible world or κόσμος νοητός, inherited from Philo and the Platonic tradition in the theory of exemplarism, and identified with Christ-Logos-Wisdom.²⁶ Not accidentally, it is in his Commentary on John that he states that Jesus chose his disciples out of the world, “that they might no longer be of the world, but come to be outside the throwing down of the world in its entirety” (*Comm. in Io.* 19.150), since John has a negative view of “the world” (ὁ κόσμος), which means essentially sin and which is hostile to the disciples of Jesus.²⁷ The noetic cosmos, namely Christ, and those who are Christ’s, are contrasted with the world “thrown down” (also dealt with, and explained by Rufinus, in *Princ.* 3.5.4). Behr rightly notes that, according to Origen, those who descend to the world “thrown down” are not all cast down as the result of sin, but some descend to serve others, Jesus Christ *in primis*. And “this descent is described not in terms of incorporeal intellects or souls taking a body or being embodied, but rather as entering a ‘denser and more solid’ form of embodiment” (p. 80). I concur, as all noetic creatures, according to Origen, had finer, immortal, spiritual, “angelic” bodies from the beginning of their creation as substances, which, after the Fall, for humans were turned into mortal bodies, and for demons into “ridiculous” bodies.²⁸ In Origen’s view, indeed, only God the Trinity is totally immaterial and bodiless. God’s foreknowledge is not deterministic (p. 81), so a moral choice “does not occur because it is known, but it is known (by God) because it will take place” (*Philoc.* 23.8; see also *Cels.* 2.20). “Anyone who is predestined through the foreknowledge of God is the cause of the events known” (*Philoc.* 25.1-2): this doctrine opposed “Gnostic” determinism and predestinationism. On the basis of the distinction between divine foreknowledge and predetermination, Behr notes that the “‘antecedent causes’ invoked by Origen to reconcile the diversity in which human beings find themselves with the justice of God thus do not refer to the actions of souls prior to falling into bodies, as he was often charged with teaching, but rather to the anteriority of the foreknowledge of God” (p. 81). This is a possible explanation, which would bring Origen’s doctrine of ensomatosis²⁹ still farther removed from the doctrine of metensomatosis, which he has been erroneously accused of supporting. Origen’s preoccupation for

²⁴ In “Double Creation”.

²⁵ I.L.E. RAMELLI, *Christian Platonists in Support of Gender Equality: Bardaisan, Clement, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and Eriugena*, in J. ELBERT DECKER – D. LAYNE – M. VILHAUER (eds.), *Otherwise than the Binary: New Feminist Readings of Ancient Philosophy and Culture*, New York, SUNY, 2022, 313-350; *Constructions of Gender in Origen of Alexandria*, Invited Lecture in 12th Enoch Nangeroni Meeting: *Constructions of Gender in Late Antiquity*, Berlin, 19-22 July 2021, in K. EHRENSPERGER – S. SHEINFELD (eds.), *Constructions of Gender in Religious Traditions of Late Antiquity*, Minneapolis, Fortress Academic – Lanham, Maryland, Rowman and Littlefield, Lexington Books, 2024, 115-159; *Female Metaphysical Principles in Some Patristic Platonists and Reverberations on Gender Equality*, in D. HEDLEY – A.-M. LEMNARU ESPUNA (eds.), *Female Metaphysical Principles in latinism*, Leuven, Peeters, forthcoming 2026. According to Origen, for instance, Christ is both Logos and female Sophia, and according to Nyssen God is Mother.

²⁶ My *The Logos/Nous One-Many between ‘Pagan’ and Christian Platonism: Bardaisan, Clement, Origen, Plotinus, and Gregory of Nyssa*, in *Studia Patristica* 102 (2021) 11-44.

²⁷ This is clear in all of John and especially in Jesus’s Farewell Discourse therein: see *John 13-17*, *Novum Testamentum Patristicum*, in preparation.

²⁸ Origen, in *History of Mind and Body* and Gregory of Nyssa’s *Purported Criticism of Origen’s Purported Doctrine of the Preexistence of Souls*, in S.S. GRIFFIN – I.L.E. RAMELLI (eds.), *Lovers of the Soul and Lovers of the Body: Philosophical and Religious Perspectives in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2022, 277-307.

²⁹ See my *The Soul-Body Relation in Origen of Alexandria: Ensomatosis vs. Metensomatosis*, invited lecture, International Congress, *Early Christian Mystagogy and the Body*, Utrecht – Tilburg University, 30 August – 1 September 2017, in P. VAN GEEST – N. VOS (eds.), *Early Christian Mystagogy and the Body* (*Annua Nuntia Lovaniensia* 83), Leuven, Peeters, 2022, 97-120.

theodicy in his whole doctrine of noetic creatures is paramount: “the cause of the diversity among rational creatures draw[s] its origin not from the will or judgment of the Creator, but from the freedom of the individual will” (*Princ.* 2.9.6, quoted on p. 82). But no human person can determine that one is found in a given condition because of this or that moral choice: only God can; it is “the mark of an ignorant person to seek, and of a foolish person to give, the particular rationale for each being” (*Princ.* 2.9.4). Origen was mindful of Jesus’s statement in John concerning the man born blind: he was born blind *not* because he was a sinner himself or because his parents were, but rather that God’s glory might be manifested. When Procopius of Gaza in his Commentary on Genesis speaks of allegories of the creation account he might well refer to Origen (p. 85): I agree and read Procopius’s passage myself in reference to Origen on the basis of precise coincidences of words and concepts.³⁰

The most important point among the numerous convergences between Origen and Gregory and derivations is surely the eschatological orientation of their doctrines of creation and their whole theories of noetic or rational creatures. Both Origen and Gregory, indeed, are among the major supporters of the Patristic doctrine of apokatastasis, and Gregory drew on Origen’s apokatastasis theory a great deal.³¹

Chapter 3 in the Introduction examines closely the various sections of Gregory’s *De hominis opificio* (p. 89-138). While in his preface (Letter to Peter) he declares that with his treatise he aimed to complete Basil’s *Hexaemeron*, what he does in *De hominis opificio* itself and its companion piece, Gregory’s own *Hexaemeron*, written about the same time, is much more: Gregory offers “a comprehensive cosmology and anthropology”, based on Scripture and on ancient and Patristic philosophy and philosophical theology. The central point in *De hominis opificio* is the sense in which the human being is in the image of God (notwithstanding the misery of human nature and the blessedness of divine nature, *Hom.op.* 16.4): hence the title chosen by Fr Behr: *On the Human Image* in its short form. Chapters 1-15 are thus devoted to the depiction of the human being as the summit of creation and as the image of God. Behr draws a parallel with the first *Homily on Ecclesiastes* (p. 92), in which Gregory exhorts his public to think of what the human being will be eschatologically in order to find the way it was at the beginning. In *Hom. Eccl.* GNO 5.296.12–18, indeed, Gregory is clear that we have to look at the eventual apokatastasis in order to find the original status of the soul (namely, without sin) and the body (immortal, without passions, light, fine, “angelic” and so on): “The soul came to be initially [κατ’ ἀρχάς] just as it will appear again in the end, after its purification. The body, moulded by the hands of God, was made in the way in which the resurrection of the dead will reveal it to be in due course. For *such as it is after the resurrection from the dead, just so was it made at first*. The resurrection of the dead is nothing but the complete restoration (of the human being) to its original state [εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἀποκατάστασις].”³²

Since the ἀρχή is adiastratic, as he warns in *Hex.* 8-9, the creation was made all together in a single point (ἀθρόα καταβολή), as Philo already stated about “Day One”. So, in *Hex.* 64 Gregory can state that “everything was constituted simultaneously [ἀθρόως συστάντος], in the plenitude of creation

³⁰ I.L.E. RAMELLI, *Iamblichus, De anima* 38 (66,12–15 Finamore-Dillon): *A Resolving Conjecture*, in *Rheinisches Museum* 157 (2014) 106-111.

³¹ RAMELLI, *Christian Soteriology and Christian Platonism; The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis; A Larger Hope? Universal Salvation in Christianity from the Origins to Julian of Norwich*, prefaced by R. BAUCKHAM, Cascade Books, Wipf & Stock, 2019; *Christology and Universal Salvation (Apokatastasis)*, invited essay in J. BARTER (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Christian Theology*, vol. *Christology*, London, T&T Clark Bloomsbury, forthcoming. On their orientation of protology and ethics towards the telos see argument in my *Social Justice and the Legitimacy of Slavery: The Role of Philosophical Asceticism from Ancient Judaism to Late Antiquity*, Oxford, OUP, 2016, p. 190-211.

³² I slightly modify the translation by Stuart Hall adopted by Behr to highlight the correspondence between beginning and end.

[κατὰ τὴν κτίσιν πληρώματος], by God's initial will [ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ τοῦ θεοῦ θελήματι]. As I argued, this point of the simultaneous creation by God's will was made by Origen's masters, Pantaenus and Ammonius Saccas, and was developed by Origen himself. Gregory was following in their footsteps.³³ The human being is "adapted for royalty", as God is king and God and Christ are all virtues (Christ as all virtues was a tenet of Origen's theology and anthropology, I note), so the human being becomes fully God's image through the exercise of all virtues. I definitely concur that "for Gregory it is emphatically in the *free* exercise of virtue that the human being manifests their existence as the image of God" (p. 96). Note my emphasis on "free": virtue must be free, otherwise it is no virtue, as Plato already warned in his myth of Er: ἀρετὴ δὲ ἀδέσποτον, "virtue has no master". The human being becomes an image of God as "a form of every beauty, all virtue and wisdom", particularly the "self-determining deliberation" based on free will, without which there would be no virtue (*Hom.op.* 16.10-11). Now, I note, Gregory's "theology of freedom" was a heritage from Origen.³⁴ It is through virtue that the human being fully becomes a "living image" of God and this is the "goal" for which the human being came into existence (*Hom.op.* 4; see p. 101). This is God's eschatological plan for humanity, which is reflected in the ἀρχή.

Human intellect and wisdom participate in the divine intellect and wisdom (*Hom.op.* 9.1): the very category of participation, coming from Plato's doctrine of Ideas/Forms, was largely employed by Origen especially for human participation in Christ's Logos and virtues. The human body, as Gregory emphasises, cooperates: it is "the body in its very structure, and its weakness, that enables human beings to 'become rational'" (p. 98). Humans have to participate in what is most beautiful, namely God (*Hom.op.* 12.9). This of describing God as not only the highest Good, as in Origen and reminiscent of Plato's Super-Idea of the Good, which Origen appropriated in subtle ways,³⁵ but also as the uppermost Beauty, is typical, I note, of Gregory of Nyssa.³⁶ Pointers are already to be found in Origen, including in his Commentary on the Song of Songs,³⁷ and of course both Origen and Gregory were mindful of Plato's Ladder of Beauty and Love in the *Symposium* (which is in the background of Gregory's *De anima et resurrectione* along with his *Phaedo*). When Gregory claims that, "as created, the human being cannot exist without change" (p. 106) he is making, I note, the same point as Origen had done.

From Chapter 16 Gregory embarks on a complex explanation about how we can actually see that the human being is the image of God (which represents the great dignity of each human, *Hom.op.* 16.2), explaining God's providential plan, founded on divine foreknowledge, and the fact that the full image of God in the human being is attained in the *telos*—a position that, as I mentioned, Gregory inherited especially from Origen. He noted that the division of the human being into male and female in Gen 1:26-27 is "outside the Prototype, 'since in Christ Jesus', as the Apostle says, 'there is neither male nor female'" with reference to Gal 3:28.³⁸ Gregory continues: "the constitution of our nature is in a way *twofold* [διπλῆ], one being likened to the divine and the other being divided according to this difference. Indeed, the Genesis account hints at something of this sort by the syntax of the text, first saying, 'God created the human being, in accordance with the image of God he created it', and then

³³ As I argue in *Divine Power in Origen of Alexandria: Sources and Aftermath*, p. 177-198.

³⁴ Argument in my *Legacy of Origen in Gregory of Nyssa's Theology of Freedom*.

³⁵ See RAMELLI, *Nous and the One in Christian and 'Pagan' Neoplatonism*.

³⁶ See my *Good / Beauty, Agathon / Kalon*, in G. MASPERO – L.F. MATEO-SECO (eds.), *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa* (Vigiliae Christianae Supplements 99), Leiden, Brill, 2010, 356-363; translated into Greek by A. ZIAKAS, *To óμορφο και το αγαθό στον Γρηγόριο Νύσσης*, in *Φιλοσοφεῖν* 13 (2016) 381-392; received by D. KONSTAN, *Beauty. The Fortunes of an Ancient Greek Idea*, Oxford, OUP, 2014, p. 217-218 and 249.

³⁷ See my *Apokatastasis and Epektasis*.

³⁸ See my *Gal 3:28 and Aristotelian (and Jewish) Categories of Inferiority*, in *Eirene* 55 (2019) 275-310.

adding: ‘male and female he made them’, something that is *alien to what is conceived about God*” (*Hom.op.* 16.7-8, quoted on p. 102: translation modified here). Although Gregory speaks of a “twofold” or “double” constitution (κατασκευή) of human nature, this cannot be taken as a strong form of double creation but, as I noted, a very extenuated form. The division into male and female is ἐπιγεννηματική, meaning “consequential, secondary” (p. 105), as I have translated it myself many times.³⁹ This is also why, being not original, it will not endure in the *telos*. Gregory remembered Jesus’s words to the Sadducees that in the *telos* there will be no marriage: “in the resurrection there will be no more ‘marrying and giving in marriage . . . for they are like the angels’ (Luke 20:35-36), arguing that ‘if the life of those restored is akin to that of the angels, it is clear that the mode of life before the transgression was something angelic, and hence our ascent to the primordial condition of life [πρὸς τὸ ἀρχαῖον τῆς ζωῆς ἡμῶν] is likened to the angels” (*Hom.op.* 17.2, italics mine). God “foresaw by his visionary power the [human] not keeping a straight course towards the good and, because of this, falling away from the angelic life, in order that the multitude of human souls should not be cut short, by falling from that mode by which the angels increased to a multitude, for this reason he formed in our nature that device for increase [τῆς αὐξήσεως ἐπίνουαν] appropriate to those who had slipped into sin, *implanting in humanity, instead of the angelic nobility, the animal and irrational mode of succession from one another*. Hence... the great David, lamenting the misery of the human being, mourns over his nature with such words as these, that, ‘the human being in honour knew it not’ (meaning by ‘honour’ the equality of honour with the angels), [and] therefore, he says, ‘he was compared to senseless beasts, and made like them’ [Ps. 48:13]. For the one who received in his nature this genesis subject to flux on account of his inclination to things material *truly became like a beast* [ὄντως γὰρ κτηνώδης ἐγένετο ὁ τὴν ῥοώδη ταύτην γένεσιν τῇ φύσει παραδεξάμενος διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸ ὑλῶδες ῥοπήν]” (*Hom.op.* 17.4-5). Since God foresaw “in our moulded figure the inclination towards the worse, and that, voluntarily falling from equality of honour with the *angels*, it would appropriate fellowship with the *lowly nature*, he mingled, for this reason, *an element of the irrational* with his own image, for *the distinction between male and female is not in the divine and blessed nature*; but, when transferring the property of the irrational formation to the human being, he bestowed upon our race the power of multiplying, not according to the lofty character of our creation, for it was not when he made that which was in accordance with the image that *he added the power to increase and multiply, but when he divided it by the distinction of male and female* that he then said, ‘Increase and multiply and fill the earth’ [Gen 1:28]. For such is *not a property of the divine nature, but of the irrational element*, as the narrative indicates, when it narrates that this was first said by God in the case of the irrational animal [cf. Gen 1:22]; since if, before putting on our nature the distinction between male and female, he had added the power for ‘increase’ expressed by this utterance, *we should not have needed this form of birth, by which the irrational animals are born*” (*Hom.op.* 22.4, cited on p. 113). God foresaw the Fall, so he created the human being “male and female” from the beginning, although this, Gregory states, is not a property of the divine nature, but rather of the “irrational element” that humans on earth share with animals.

In the Fall, “it is the intellect that is the problem, not the body (made male and female)” (p. 111). I am glad that Fr Behr attributes the male/female divide to the body alone, not to the intellect or soul. This also did Clement, Origen, Nyssen, Olympiodorus, and other Christian and ‘pagan’ Platonists in

³⁹ Gregory argues: “The whole human nature, then, extending from the first to the last, is a kind of single image of He Who Is. But the difference between male and female was *additionally fashioned* for the creature last, I suppose, for this reason” (*Hom.op.* 16.17-18, cited on p. 109).

antiquity.⁴⁰ The intellect, I note, is the problem with the Fall basically because of ethical intellectualism, which Gregory embraces to explain the Fall, since it is from the intellect (νοῦς) that will depends, and a deception of the intellect (such as knowing what *seems* good but is *not* good) will determine bad (i.e. wrong) moral choices: “The ‘tree’ in Paradise, called ‘all’ (τὸ πᾶν ξύλον; cf. Gen. 2:16) from which we are invited to eat, is none other than Wisdom herself, who is ‘a tree of life’ (Prov. 3:18; *De hom.* 19.1–4). Opposed to this tree is the tree of ‘the knowledge of good and evil’ (which also stands at the centre of the garden), offering a mixed fruit, that is, one that *appears* to be good but *contains evil*” (*Hom.op.* 19.5, quoted on p. 111, emphasis mine). Fr Behr does not single out ethical intellectualism, but he is right that in Gregory’s view, since “‘the majority judge the good to be in that which gratifies the senses’, they are attracted by the *appearance* of the mixed fruit, and so receive also the evil within, ‘the knowledge of which, that is, its reception by experience, is the beginning and ground of death and destruction’” (*Hom.op.* 20.3, quoted on p. 111).

Fr Behr sets out a major argument for Gregory’s doctrine of universal restoration, based on the finitude of evil and the infinity of God, which I pointed out as one of the main metaphysical and theological pillars for Gregory’s doctrine of apokatastasis:⁴¹ “we will *all* ultimately return to God: ‘as *evil does not extend to infinity*, but is bounded by necessary *limits*, the accession of the good consequently *succeeds the limit of evil*, and thus, as we have said, the ever-moving character of our nature runs its journey once more at last towards the good, chastened by the memory of its former misfortunes, so that it will never again be in the same circumstances’” (*Hom.op.* 21.2, quoted on p. 112, italics mine).⁴² Behr comments that “what was seen earlier (*De hom.* 21) as the wayward movement of human beings running its course in finite evil, to return, necessarily, to the good but now with experienced discernment, a higher state than mere knowledge, is now also seen as the completion of God’s own work of making the human being in his image, the completion of the plenitude of human beings, the end of time, and ‘the reconstitution of all things’” or apokatastasis (p. 114). Behr discusses the use that Gregory made of the Neoplatonist “perishability axiom” (ibidem, although he does not use this technical term) and his theological argument for the possibility of the resurrection founded on the doctrine of creation: the One who “‘brought all things into being from the beginning must certainly be able to bring them back into existence’” (*Hom.op.* 26-27). Also, Behr underlines the parallel development of body and soul according to Gregory: “For just as the body proceeds from a very small original to the perfect state, so also the activity of the soul, growing in step with the subject, gains and increases with it” (quoted on 115).⁴³

Then in Chapter 30 Gregory provides a medical account of the structure of the human body, as Timaeus does in the third part of his speech in Plato’s *Timaeus*. While “‘the genesis of evil’ for Gregory lies in the turning of intellect from the good to matter, receiving its shapelessness into itself rather than beautifying matter as ‘an image of an image’ (*De hom.* 12.9-13)”, the human being is restored to its perfection “‘through those more material and animal-like properties of the soul. If it is ‘the evil husbandry of the intellect’ that has perverted all the motions and impulses shared with the animals into forms of passion not known amongst the animals, it is the intellect which needs training,

⁴⁰ I point this out in *Babies and Women in Clement’s Paedagogus: Biology, Anthropology, and Theology and their Interrelations*, in V. HRŮŠOVÁ – A. VAN DEN HOEK – M. GYURKOVICS (eds.), *Colloquium Clementinum III: Clement of Alexandria’s Paedagogus* (Vigiliae Christianae Supplements 188), Leiden, Brill, 2025, 227-259.

⁴¹ RAMELLI, *The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis*, p. 372-440.

⁴² See also 22.2 and *Mort.* 54 (quoted on p. 130): “in order to maintain human autonomy and to ensure that evil would in due course pass away, ‘God’s wisdom found this device to permit humanity to become what it wished, so that by tasting the evils it desired and learning by experience what sort of things it had exchanged for the kinds it chose, it might return willingly by desire to its first blessedness’”.

⁴³ See my *Origen on the Unity of Soul and Body in the Earthly Life and Afterwards and His Impact on Gregory*.

to raise all these motions so that they too are ‘conformed to the beauty of the divine image’ (*De hom.* 18. 4-5)” (p. 118-119). Nyssen theorised not only the suppression of πάθη or negative emotions (which are adventitious to the human nature and superimposed by sin, not belonging to human substance),⁴⁴ within the ethical theory of ἀπάθεια that goes back to Stoicism and partially Platonism, but also the sublimation of impulses, which, instead of leading to sin, lead to holiness (*An.res.* 54-57). Thus, erotic desire is sublimated into desire for God: so, desire will achieve pure, divine bliss. For, as Nyssen argues, “if we remove love, how can we join the Divinity?” (*An.res.* 65 GNO III/3.45.17.18). The same valorisation of πάθη, if used in a positive way, is found in a Patristic theologian who was well acquainted with Gregory: Maximus the Confessor, who, like Gregory himself and Evagrius, had ἀπάθεια as his ideal, ultimately made possible by Christ-Physician, who heals all πάθη through his own πάθος (understood as his suffering in the Passion); Maximus treasured and developed the Stoic doctrine of εὐπάθειαι. For instance, physical grief can bring about redemptive suffering; fear is positive qua fear of God. And, as Gregory taught, divine love is no πάθος but it rather leads to ἀπάθεια through the intersection of divine love of humans and human love of God. As I suggested elsewhere, just as Gregory’s *De anima et resurrectione* is the Christianisation of Plato’s *Phaedoi* (and partially *Symposium*), as is well known, so is the sublimation of erotic love into love for God in fact the Christian revisitation of Plato’s above-mentioned ladder of Love. It is its patristic Platonist version, valid for the ascetics primarily, but spiritually for everyone.

Behr helpfully shows many convergences in salvation history between Irenaeus and Gregory, who surely drew on him, as well as significant derivations in Maximus the Confessor, including the idea that God in his foreknowledge made humans mortal so that sin might not continue and punishment as well. I personally think that as Gregory, with Origen, is one of the main exponents of the Patristic doctrine of apokatastasis, Maximus also had a penchant for this doctrine, although he expressed it very prudently, given the times in which he lived.⁴⁵ I certainly agree with Behr that Gregory should not merely be seen as having “the building blocks of an Augustinian understanding of ‘the Fall’ and ‘original sin’, but not yet having put them together”, but rather that Gregory’s economy of creation and salvation “falls within the pattern developed before him by Irenaeus and after him by Maximus, and ... Origen” (p. 127-128). Indeed, I add, apart perhaps from Irenaeus, all these theologians were supporters of universal apokatastasis, certainly Origen and Gregory, and arguably Maximus.

Behr also investigates parallel works, not distant in time from *De hominis opificio*, namely *De anima et resurrectione* and *De mortuis*, in which Gregory offers hints concerning what will happen eschatologically to the male-female division in humanity. In the former dialogue, Macrina and Gregory agree that there will no longer be marriage in the *telos*, as Jesus claims, and that intercourse, conception, and birth, just as illness, old age, and death, will no longer exist, but Macrina explicitly states that the precise modalities of life in the *telos* are still shrouded in mystery and will become apparent only in the *telos* itself. In *De mortuis*, Gregory takes on Origen’s idea of the continual flow (ῥεῦσις) of the material substratum of the body (ὑποκείμενον, as opposed to the metaphysical form of the body or εἶδος)⁴⁶ when he observes that during the present life we are “constantly changed as though to a new body” (*Mort.* 53). And in *Mort.* 63 Gregory foresees that in the *telos* the power of generation will be converted to the service of spiritual birth, for salvation, while the bodily forms of

⁴⁴ See I.L.E. RAMELLI, *Biography, Hagiography, and Philosophy in Late Antiquity: The Eroticism–Asceticism Relation and Late Antique Platonism in the Lives of Macrina and Evagrius*, in *Eirene* 61 (2025) 1-30.

⁴⁵ RAMELLI, *The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis, 738-757; Dionysius’ and Maximus’ Relation to Origen and their Notion of Apokatastasis – Epistrophe*, invited essay in *The New Ressourcement*, forthcoming.

⁴⁶ *My Did Plotinus Know and Criticise Origen’s Doctrine of the Form of the Body and His Theory of ‘Ensomatosis’ as Opposed to Metensomatosis?* in *Origen, the Philosophical Theologian: New Research in Anthropology and Ethics: Selected Studies / Kleine Schriften*, published here for the first time.

male and female will be transformed into the body of Christ, in which there is neither male nor female (p. 132). Maximus would develop Gregory's line – and the Christian Platonist Eriugena, I add, would further Gregory's and Maximus's lines, being familiar with both.⁴⁷ They see the unification of male and female as one step in the eschatological unification that the human being will bring about, ultimately as the image of Christ and God (Christ being the great unifier). "Maximos says that we are to 'shake off from nature the property according to the female and the male.' [...] Importantly, this 'shaking off' is accomplished not through a transition into a sexless existence, but through the acquisition of virtue and the removal of the 'designation' of male and female that currently divides the human being. In this way, 'it is shown to be and becomes simply human [ἄνθρωπον μόνον] in accordance with the divine purpose" (p. 134). Eriugena would later state that *homo melior est quam sexus*, the human being in itself is superior to its division into male and female: this is why this binary, which does not exist in the Archetype, Christ, will be overcome. Maximus is clear, as cited on p. 135, that the male-female binary arose because of the Fall, otherwise humanity would have had a different way of multiplication: speaking of Christ's work of unification, which the human being also performs qua image, he observes that Christ, who was born without the concourse of male and female, "showed, I think, that there was perhaps *another mode*, foreknown by God, for the growth to the multitude of human beings, *had the first human kept the commandment* and not cast himself down to the level of irrational animals by misusing the mode of his proper power" (p. 135). Maximus, like Gregory, cites Gal 3:28 in support of his view: "there is no need for this division (into male and female) to last perpetually, for in Christ Jesus, says the divine Apostle, there is neither male nor female." Otherwise, generally in his oeuvre Maximus, like Philo and Origen, interprets male and female allegorically and spiritually, for instance as anger and desire respectively.

The Greek text of *De hominis opificio* with critical apparatus and facing translation with essential notes follows. Behr's translation admittedly owes much to that of Wilson from 1893 (in the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* 2.5), particularly in the case of medical and astronomical descriptions. But Behr corrects a number of significant errors in Wilson's version. Within the rules of English grammar, Behr supplies as literal a translation as possible. This is what I also have done in my English and Italian (and sometimes French, Spanish, and German) translations of classical and Patristic texts. Indeed, this is what I did in my own translation of (and commentary on) Gregory's *De anima et resurrectione* and *In illud: Tunc et ipse Filius* (Milan, Bompiani, in collaboration with the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan, 2007). Behr's commendable work not only fills a substantial gap, but also proves to be extremely interesting, rich, and careful. It is highly recommended for understanding the background, meaning, structure, and impact of such an important work by Gregory of Nyssa.

Ilaria L.E. Ramelli

BERTRAND, Dominique, *Patristique et spiritualité*, Paris, Cerf, 2023, 417 p.

Il volume *Patristique et spiritualité* di Dominique Bertrand, già direttore per molti anni dell'Istituto *Sources Chrétiennes*, si presenta come un grande contributo nel panorama teologico patristico. Dal titolo di questa monografia si evince subito quale sia l'intento di questo lavoro: non una giustapposizione, bensì una riflessione sul loro intreccio fondativo, nella consapevolezza che la teologia dei Padri sia intrinsecamente legata alla spiritualità.

L'istituto *Sources Chrétiennes* ci offre con questo volume una raccolta di saggi che rappresentano l'esito di decenni di insegnamento, ricerca e studio del professor Bertrand, e si propone come una

⁴⁷ See p. 132-134 and my *Christian Platonists in Support of Gender Equality*.

sintesi matura del suo pensiero. In queste pagine si manifesta una preziosa sintesi tra lo studio dell'età patristica – in generale sui primi secoli del cristianesimo – e la teologia spirituale. In quest'ottica, l'analisi patristica – disciplina teologica che si concentra sulla vita e sulle opere dei Padri della Chiesa all'interno del loro contesto storico – evidenzia la dimensione spirituale come il frutto delle varie opere che gli stessi autori cristiani antichi hanno offerto ai primi fedeli. Bertrand mostra così in che modo i Padri della Chiesa abbiano contribuito alla crescita spirituale e umana dei fedeli, specialmente mostrando l'influenza evidente che il loro pensiero ebbe in tutta la storia della teologia, fino ai nostri giorni.

La struttura del libro è delineata con massima chiarezza. Il volume si articola in tre ampie sezioni, ciascuna della quale sviluppa un asse tematico preciso e coerente, per offrire al lettore una panoramica generale ma completa dei primi secoli cristiani.

La prima parte si apre con una domanda fondamentale: chi sono oggi per noi i Padri della Chiesa? Viene articolata così una riflessione metodologica sull'attualità dei Padri con particolare attenzione ad alcuni autori, quali Ireneo di Lione, Clemente di Alessandria e Gregorio di Nissa, mostrando in che modo essi abbiano indirizzato la riflessione teologica successiva e al tempo stesso come accompagnino oggi la vita spirituale del credente e della Chiesa. In questo senso Bertrand evidenzia lo stile generativo dei Padri, i quali vengono riletti non solamente come i testimoni e trasmettitori della fede, ma anche come i compagni e le guide nel cammino storico della Chiesa. L'autore affronta anche la questione della periodizzazione, proponendo così una sezione che tenga conto dei processi storici e delle varie trasformazioni ecclesiali, facendo emergere alcuni nuclei fondamentali come l'inculturazione della fede, la forza della sapienza spirituale nel tempo della prova e il discernimento come pratica ecclesiale fondamentale.

Un'attenzione particolare è dedicata a Ilario di Poitiers, cui è riservata l'intera seconda sezione del volume. Ilario – sottolinea l'autore – è una figura spesso trascurata ma centrale nell'evoluzione della teologia trinitaria latina. La riflessione teologica sulla Trinità e il suo contributo alla cristologia sono al centro di tanti saggi che ne esaminano l'impatto teologico, intellettuale e storico. Particolare attenzione pone Bertrand al lessico di Ilario soffermandosi sui concetti di *persona*, *substantia* e *subsistentia*, mettendo in risalto l'approccio originale nel superamento dell'eresia ariana e nella costituzione di un linguaggio teologico che, pur rimanendo fedele alla Scrittura, riesce a chiarire e affermare il mistero del Dio Trinità. È interessante la lettura che Bertrand offre dei libri IV-VII del *De Trinitate* ilariano, dove emerge una teologia chiara e profonda, capace di superare le varie incertezze della teologia latina precedente e apre la via agli ulteriori sviluppi che offrirà Agostino nella sua riflessione sulla Trinità.

La terza e ultima parte dello studio raccoglie una serie di saggi che mostrano come la patristica sia uno dei principali fondamenti della spiritualità. In questi ultimi capitoli vediamo un Bertrand capace di coniugare sapienza antica e ricerca contemporanea, sottolineando che l'eredità spirituale dei Padri non si riduce ad astratti contenuti dottrinali, ma è proprio un'esperienza viva dello Spirito nella storia. Il contributo dei Padri alla spiritualità diviene fondativo e costitutivo per la vita della Chiesa, la quale non smetterà mai di guardare questi autori come fari che illuminano il cammino del credente nel corso dei secoli. Bertrand pone in rilievo la tentazione di fare della patristica una teoria astratta ed invita a riconoscerne tutta la portata esperienziale e concreta. A tal proposito si apre una sezione dedicata a esempi concreti di coloro che hanno saputo conciliare l'importanza e la fermezza del dogma con la vita vissuta. Lascerei ai lettori interessati al tema il compito di approfondire questi autori che hanno saputo ascoltare la voce di Dio, rispondendo con la loro vita e costituendo una teologia spirituale incarnata.

L'utilizzo delle fonti adottate da Bertrand nel corso del libro è certamente di aiuto al lettore. I riferimenti ai singoli Padri strutturano l'argomentazione e mostrano che tutto ciò che viene sottolineato è il frutto del pensiero e della vita degli antichi autori.

Patristique et spiritualité resta un testo coerente e solido per tutti coloro che si apprestano allo studio e alla lettura dei Padri della Chiesa. Il volume non si limita a proporre biografie di carattere narrativo, ma sottolinea il movente pratico della letteratura patristica; una letteratura che non nasce "a tavolino", ma dalla predicazione e dalla vita dei fedeli ai quali si rivolgono.

In conclusione, il libro resta un chiaro riferimento per tutti coloro che intendono rileggere la tradizione della Chiesa non come un museo, ma come un vivo laboratorio capace di rispondere con estrema chiarezza alle sfide e ai problemi dei nostri giorni.

Giovanni Tanca

BORRI, Francesco – LA ROCCA, Cristina – VERONESE, Francesco (eds.), *Masculinities in Early Medieval Europe*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2023, 306 p.

The volume under review treats a topic that is highly relevant and controversial within contemporary popular discourse in the Anglo-European world, including significant digital traffic in the so-called "manosphere": what makes men masculine? The product of an international workshop at the *Seminari Centro Interuniversitario per la Storia et l'Archeologia dell'Alto Medioevo*, based at the Department of Humanistic Studies at Ca' Foscari University in Venice, this volume features eleven interdisciplinary case studies, covering the period from the late Roman Empire at Byzantium to the successor kingdoms of Western Europe and Northern Italy, to examine iterations of masculine identity as well as male communal roles and lived experiences.

Cristina La Rocca's introduction to the volume provides an overview of the scholarship over the past forty years and significant debates. The richness of medieval source matter has yielded a flourishing body of work, and the emergence of distinctive Christian "gender bending" categories – bishops, monks, eunuchs, virgins, widows – led to consideration of the multiplicity of masculinities, the breakdown of the male/female gender binary, and various formulations of a third gender. Heavily reliant upon the towering work of Judith Butler, studies of medieval masculinity have posited multiple male genders, a graduated arc of gender distinctions, with male gender at its apex, while others have opted to set aside the third gender to emphasize the seminal transformations of late Roman society producing new virile male identities, including that of the inner martial conflict of the Christian soul. Regrettably absent from this section is an overview of volume essays, their arguments, and thematic organization.

The first unit of essays entitled "Family Matters" opens with Michael Stewart's fascinating analysis of what marriage alliances in Procopius of Caesarea's *Wars* and *The Secret History* reveal about evolving codes of masculinity and the fluidity of Constantinopolitan aristocracy in the age of Justinian. In this reading, Procopius's narrative of these unions reflects his noble audience's resistance to hypermasculine foreign strongmen rising to the highest ranks at court, often abetted by the master marriage-broker Theodora, whose authority as an empress permitted her to transcend gender roles. In order to chart the tension between old and new late antique masculinities, it would have been helpful to provide in this discussion greater contextual background on the construction of noble late Roman masculinity and its culture.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ For a useful recent examination see N. HOWARD, *Christianity and the Contest for Manhood in Late Antiquity: the Cappadocian Fathers and the Rhetoric of Masculinity*, Cambridge – New York, CUP, 2022.

In the next essay of this unit, Annamaria Pazienza's study offers a corrective to the prevailing scholarly androcentric emphasis of migration studies in early medieval Italy on large-scale migration related to war and politics by examining the small and medium-scale residential mobility of migrant grooms and uxorilocal husbands in Lombard Italy. Reading legal material (*Rothari's Edict* and his successors' additions), and archival material from the 8th century in light of recent anthropological studies of "marriage migrants," Pazienza draws attention to the cases of "unhappy husbands" who, as foreign migrants of lower- and middle-class status, relocated to the household of their wives and consequently had to negotiate authority as emasculated outsiders who transgressed gender norms by necessity or by choice. The final essay of this unit by Andreas Fischer traces discussions of the transition from boyhood to manhood in late antique and early medieval legal, hagiographic, and historiographic texts to investigate changing normative ideals of manhood from late Roman society to the successor states. Fischer's analysis highlights the changing role of the Roman *patria potestas* in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, when marriage and establishing one's own household and family replaced the *emancipatio* of the Roman world and the *gentes* of new kingdoms produced varying formulations of the threshold of majority. Additionally, Fischer assesses how early medieval ecclesiastical texts (*Vita Ermenlandi*, *Vita Leobardi*) depicted the transition to manhood in conversation with secular constructions of the warrior's social role.

A second unit, "Let Us Talk About Warriors" opens with Danuta Shanzer's close reading of Gregory of Tours, placed in the context of "soundings" of seventh-century texts (e.g., *Passio Leodegarii*, *Epistolae Wisgoticae*) and an eleventh-century text exposing a cleric's view of a fighting monk (Bernard of Angers's *Liber Miraculorum S. Fidis*) to analyze textual attitudes to clerical manliness and clues about "circumambient" ideas of manhood and violence. Focused on textual subjectivities and shifting internal textual lenses, Shanzer briskly traces both the violent *realia* of clerical experience as well as clerics' aspirational heroic masculinity. Shifting from textual granularities, Francesco Borri's subsequent essay offers a discussion including modern historiography to consider how the barbarian fringe came to compete with and decenter centuries-old Roman culture to produce new normative ideas of martial masculinity in the early Medieval successor states. Careful not to pose "barbarian" and "Roman" as impenetrable monoliths, Borri emphasizes gender construction as dialogue between center and frontier forged on the anvil of the late Roman world. The final contribution to this section by Leonardo Sernagiotto studies the contrasting depictions of the manliness of Lothar I (d. 855) in different sources to offer rare glimpses of an individual's posited masculinities. In this approach, various textual communities represent the same activities of Lothar differently according to the specific interests of individual Carolingian authors. These diverging sources, however, agreed upon "the importance of Being Lothar" (essay title): the driving ambition of the emperor standing as rightful successor to the Frankish kings. In this way, Lothar's depicted masculinity tethered together the Carolingian present and Merovingian memory.

The third unit of essays is concerned with the connection between the construction of manliness and bodies, both living and dead. Rachel Stone examines misbehaving clergy below the rank of bishop depicted in texts from the 4th to the 9th century to investigate changing ideals of clerical masculinity. Stone finds that physical violence of priests, even in cases of self-defense, became far less acceptable by the Carolingian era—a sign of masculinities fracturing along class lines when legitimate personal violence was increasingly the prerogative of an emerging knightly class. Sexual norms remained mixed across the period: there were varied views on married priests, clerics continued to transgress rules, and nuns remained an accessible temptation. Stone posits that the demand for personnel, combined with the attractiveness of the priesthood throughout the early Middle Ages and onward, ensured that, while the most egregious offenders might have been removed, there were always men

of “dubious moral standards” (p. 182) retained in the priesthood. Francesco Veronese next explores the body as an index of masculinity in a study of how concerns about gender shaped the selection and transfer of dead bodies as relics. Drawing attention to the socializing force of narrative *translationes* recording relic travels and moral “mirrors” – *specula* – of idealized male comportment, Veronese demonstrates how relic mobility was depicted as a gendered performance and, increasingly, the purview of Carolingian social and political elites.

Lastly, a final unit comprises some discontents of early medieval manhood including a paleographic study of handwriting and analysis of human remains at Vetricella in early medieval Tuscany. Opening this section is Bonnie Effros’s essay on ultramontane clerical pushback in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century France against scholarly work exposing the unreliability of traditions by Ademar of Chabannes (988-1034), who claimed that St. Martial was not only one of Jesus’s 72 apostles but equal to the original 12 and active in southwestern Gaul in the first century CE. In Effros’s evaluation, Ademar’s account of Martial resembles an eleventh-century movement, the so-called *Herrenfrage* (Jo Ann McNamara), which reflected a desire among celibate clerics to place themselves at the top of the social hierarchy, above non-celibate men and all Christian women. Additionally, Ademar’s Martial asserts a saintly manhood alternative to contemporary hagiographic texts glorifying armed ascetics (*loricati*). Flavia De Rubeis next considers whether men’s handwriting can act as a mechanism of self-definition, and how written scripts denote social roles and hierarchies. Examining primarily ninth- to eleventh-century texts from Italy, with a focus on non-professional writers and a brief discussion of contemporary northern Italian graffiti, De Rubeis argues that writing appears to be a functional marker of representation insofar as writing was considered an implement of authority; when writing was no longer necessary to assert authority, its practice by the end of this period was relegated to professionals. In sum, writing does not indicate masculinity.

The closing essay of this section by Giovanna Bianchi and Serena Viva looks at archaeological excavations at the locality of Vetricella within what had been the territorial boundaries of the royal court of Valli in south-central Tuscany. Focusing primarily on analysis of skeletal remains from a burial zone dating to the late tenth/early eleventh century at working facilities specializing in horse and pig breeding, the storage of agricultural produce, and the manufacture of iron objects, Bianchi and Viva engage with the issue of the *laboratores* of Georges Duby’s famous tripartite division of medieval male identities. Human remains suggest the existence of different status groups of employees at this demesne: although most individuals appear to have had a good diet and, provided they survived infancy, a moderate life expectancy, four males are distinctive in that they appear to have been foreign-born (non-autochthonous), of high stature and characterized by horse-riding syndrome, typical of those with long periods on horseback, possibly indicative of horse breeding work. Two of this group had received surgical acts and medical treatment for injuries, including foot amputation and the subsequent use of an assistive walking aid. Though authors refrain from definitive pronouncements about the exact status group of these four men, the authors suggest that they may well have belonged to a class of specialized servile labor who had been transferred between royal estates. The human community at this demesne, dated to a period which some Italian scholars postulate as the decline of the *prebendari* and the increasing use of *masari*, likely comprised men of differing social groups and relationships to royal authority.

The conclusion of Francesco Borri and Francesco Veronese summarizes the majority of volume contributions, synthesizes their themes, and articulates intractable conceptual questions. The editors survey how volume authors highlight historical conceptions of the male gender as relational, as ever constructed in dialectic with imagined others, especially women, and thereby, it both reflects and fortifies social hierarchy and inequalities. Contributors trace the formation of gender and behavioral

norms through social processes and institutions not limited to the family, but also hagiographic texts, epic, and moral treatises, as well as peer-group sociability of the adolescent sons of aristocratic retinues orbiting royal figures. Critical also to many volume contributions is emphasis upon the body as the site for the conceptual elaboration of manhood, masculinity and behavioral expectations. Contributions also identify and uncover the role of sexual activity in representing and regulating male bodies and conduct; similarly, violence emerges in the early Middle Ages as the legitimate prerogative of lay male aristocratic bodies but inappropriate for ecclesiastics. Lastly, volume contents underscore the intersectionality of gender as a category of human experience constantly shaped and challenged by considerations of age and social class.

Although some essays are more interdisciplinary in approach than others, most tend to be undertheorized in their presentation of gender. Greater attention in individual contributions to defining what is specifically “masculine” (or not) about source materials would help to clarify essay arguments and potentially link chapters together conceptually. The volume does contain some typos, but more significantly, there are errors in English usage too numerous to list here in terms of incorrect prepositions, word usage, and improper pluralization of nouns.

As is common for publications of workshop papers, more could be done to establish the thematic cohesion of chapters, but overall, these essays should be of keen interest to scholars working on gender in the early Middle Ages and those interested in the transformations of masculinity in the transition from late Roman to early medieval Europe. Omitting focus on the more well-tilled source of medieval manhood, this collection testifies to wide-ranging and multi-layered methodological approaches founded upon rigorous interrogation of source material, its production, and reception, to expose the living embeddedness of gender ideology in social and historical change.

Elizabeth Mattingly Conner

CHRONISTER, Andrew, *Augustine in the Pelagian Controversy: Defending Church Unity (Patristic Theology)*, Washington, D.C., The Catholic University of America Press, 2023, XII-370 p.

Andrew Chronister’s *Augustine in the Pelagian Controversy* builds upon the contention of Walter Dunphy that church unity was essential to “Augustine’s early anti-Pelagian efforts” (p. 8) by arguing that this concern makes sense of many aspects of Augustine’s involvement in the Pelagian controversy until his death. As Chronister puts it, “Augustine’s battle against the Pelagians was motivated to a significant degree by his fears that the Pelagians’ argumentation and actions over the course of the conflict might lead to significant divisions within the Church” (p. 9). In substantiating this contention, Chronister’s study offers a meticulous examination of the persons, events, texts, strategies, and subtleties of the Pelagian controversy.

The book includes a substantive introduction, five main chapters, a summative conclusion, and an appendix laying out difficulties with the chronology of 411 and the earliest days of the controversy. The introduction to the book contains a very brief adumbration of the controversy; makes known the book’s argumentative upshot; categorizes the types of evidence on which Augustine relies in his argument for the unity of the church (i.e. renowned authors, liturgy and prayer, and various sources from Augustine’s own time); defines the scope of the sources consulted; and offers some final notes on the legitimacy of Augustine’s concerns, two different conceptions of ecclesial unity, and a rationale for using “Pelagian” to refer to individuals who had some kind of relation to Pelagius and supported his teachings.

Chapter 1 familiarizes the reader with the currents that gave rise to the controversy. In his excellent *Augustine in His Own Words* (2010), William Harmless once suggested that even a cursory overview of the Pelagian controversy requires a considerable amount of dexterity and intricacy. This chapter displays the difficulty, for in addition to the voluminous introduction, it explains developments in the Pelagian movement *before* the controversy commenced in Carthage and maps out the landscape of Christianity which existed in Roman Africa at that time. In setting the stage, Chronister establishes the various grounds on which Pelagians would think their teaching represented the ancient and universal teaching of the church, and explains why African Christians would have been on high alert for sources of division threatening the unity of the church when Pelagius and Caelestius arrived in Roman Africa. The African church was in the midst of securing an imperial judgment against the Donatists. Chronister draws a number of interesting conclusions in this chapter. First, in building his case for controversy surrounding Pelagius and his teachings in Rome, he suggests that while in Rome Pelagius's rejection of the transmission of sin may have already faced the objection of infant baptism later to be developed at great length by Augustine (p. 38 n. 40). Second, he contends that Pelagius's following likely arose among aristocratic Christian families because they wanted to distinguish themselves from the "anonymous mediocrity" (p. 41) of Christians whose faith was hardly indistinguishable from being Roman citizens. Third, Chronister affirms, albeit cautiously, Dunphy's contention that the presbyter Rufinus to whom Caelestius and Marius Mercator's *Commonitorium* ascribes the rejection of the transmission of sin is none other than Rufinus of Aquileia, rather than the distinct and lesser known Rufinus the Syrian.

In Chapter 2, Chronister outlines the first controversy caused by Caelestius in Carthage. He begins by narrating Pelagius and Caelestius's arrival in Africa, the theological debate that ensued when Caelestius was indicted upon seeking ordination, and the way Marcellinus drew Augustine into the beginnings of the controversy. Chronister then works meticulously through Augustine's argumentation in *Pecc. mer.* 1-2, *Sermones* 293 and 294, and *Pecc. mer.* 3. Chronister's commentary analyzes how Augustine's arguments are intended to secure the ancient and universal character of an anti-Pelagian theological perspective and to discredit that of Caelestius and those who, like him, deny the transmission of original sin (among other related propositions). By way of example, Chronister documents how Augustine argues by means of the ancient (e.g., Cyprian) and contemporary (e.g., Jerome) theological authorities and by appeal to the difficulties Pelagian theology generates for basic Christian practices such as infant baptism and praying the Lord's Prayer.

In the third chapter, Chronister examines key events as well as Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings between the condemnation of Caelestius at Carthage and the infamous Synod of Diospolis in December 415. The chapter commences with commentary on *Spir. et litt.*, the "sequel" to *Pecc. mer.*, in which Augustine was writing less polemically and more to clarify a residual question for Marcellinus. Still, Augustine certainly argues that the Pelagian doctrine contradicts established Christian patterns of prayer. Chronister goes on to detail disputed visions of virginal devotion to God in the events following the consecration of Demetrias, daughter of the *Anicii*. The subtle notes of *Spir. et litt.* become more pronounced as Augustine writes his *Bon. uid.* for Demetrias's mother, Juliana, whose relation to Pelagius was known to Augustine. Around this time, Augustine also responds to concerns raised over Pelagian teaching from a layperson, Hilary from Syracuse in Sicily, in *Ep.* 157, in which he deals with issues such as the possibility of sinlessness and the transmission of original sin, focusing upon issues raised by someone encountering Pelagianism abroad. Chronister then makes the case that while Augustine's reception of Pelagius's *De natura* from two of the latter's former followers gave Augustine explicit evidence of Pelagius's teaching, Augustine's response in *De natura et gratia* actually suggests not a radical transition within the controversy but a continuation

of the same basic argumentative strategies. In the remainder of the chapter, Chronister explains Augustine's sending of Orosius to Palestine with the intention of strengthening opposition to Pelagian teaching; describes how Augustine's *Perf. iust.* undermines the Pelagian understanding of the Christian life by arguing that it is fundamentally opposed to the vision of the ancient and universal church; and narrates the unfortunate series of events involving Orosius in Palestine in anticipation of the Synod of Diospolis.

The fourth chapter traces how Augustine's concern for unity played out in his response to the acquittal of Pelagius at the Synod of Diospolis. The scope of the chapter is the very full years of 416-418, from the episode in Diospolis to the distribution of Zosimus's *Tractoria*. Chronister begins by outlining the barrage of news Augustine received upon Orosius's return to Hippo as well as the swift and substantive response Augustine and his colleagues made to the news of Pelagius's acquittal. First, Chronister addresses the immediate response to Diospolis. He exhibits how in *Sermo* 348A *auct.* (Dolbeau 30), the first in which Augustine opposes Pelagius as a heretic by name, Augustine focuses on the detrimental consequences of Pelagian theology for the prayer life of ordinary believers in order to position it as a departure from the apostolic faith they know. Chronister then provides an account of the letters and treatises (Pelagius's *De natura* and Augustine's rejoinder in *De natura et gratia*) Augustine delivers by courier to Palestine, and the letters sent from the African Church (from councils in Carthage and Milevis and from Roman Africa's leading churchmen: Aurelius, Augustine, Alypius, Evodius, and Possidius) to Innocent of Rome in order to request Roman support of African opposition to the teachings of Pelagius. After briefly noting Augustine's reluctance to respond to the unofficial acts of Diospolis, the *Chartula defensionis*, which was likely circulated by Pelagius, Chronister analyzes Augustine's *Gest. Pel.* in which he interprets and responds to the official *gesta* of Diospolis sent by Cyril of Alexandria. The chapter concludes with Chronister's account of the African engagement with the oscillation of Roman leadership as Innocent gave way to Zosimus, and his narration of the condemnation (in Zosimus's *Epistula tractoria*) and fate of Caelestius and Pelagius, including Augustine's *Gr. et pecc. or.*, his last work directed against them and written to some of their aristocratic supporters in Palestine (Melania, Pinianus, and Albina).

In a less granular and more summary form, the final chapter makes sense of Augustine's polemic against Julian of Eclanum (418-430) in light of the greater threat he posed to the unity of the church. As Chronister reaches what are some of the least appreciated writings within Augustine's corpus (*Nupt. et conc.*; *C. ep. Pel.*; *C. Iul.*; *C. Iul. imp.*), his proposal regarding Augustine's longstanding concern to protect and preserve the unity of the church reorients much of the polemical edge of his writings against Julian. There was a current of dissent in response to Zosimus's *Tractoria* in Rome and Ravenna, Julian had doubled down in the face of ecclesial and political resistance, and he aggressively appealed to Rome and to Rufus of Thessalonica in a manner that threatened to rend the church East and West. As Augustine died while still composing his *C. Iul. imp.*, Julian was still desperately attempting to secure the support of Nestorius of Constantinople, another move that would not end well for him.

The conclusion of the work allows Chronister to provide an executive summary of his argument and to boil down his thesis that Augustine was not an ivory tower academic theologian, but a man *of* the church and *for* the church. Chronister does not betray theological sympathy with everything Augustine has to say, but he does locate him as a bishop seeking to serve and to preserve the unity of the church in his time against real threats to its ancient and universal teaching.

Augustine in the Pelagian Controversy is a scrupulous and rewarding study. It is unyielding in its historical attention to detail and yet remains on task in aiming its near micro-historical lens at matters that support Chronister's case for reorienting Augustine's efforts in the Pelagian Controversy toward

the end of guarding and preserving the unity of the church. It is clear that Chronister's appreciation for Dunphy goes far beyond his contention regarding the import of the unity of the church to Augustine's anti-Pelagian efforts, and extends to his style of rigorous and careful granular historical analysis of the theology and ecclesial affairs surrounding Augustine. Chronister's appreciation for Dunphy's methodological approach is precisely the reason he departs from Dunphy regarding certain probabilistic judgments with regard to the available evidence. Although I would have enjoyed seeing Chronister register more directly some of the clear differences between his own reading of Augustine's position in the Pelagian Controversy and those of other interpreters, I also appreciate that he kept his focus on the primary sources and what they do and do not tell us. The book is demanding and it is possible some readers with a desire for a more argumentative and less exegetical or analytical approach may see Chronister's scrupulous method as the book's greatest limitation. This is a matter of concern only with regard to audience. Chronister's work is clearly a most reliable guide to the Pelagian Controversy far beyond its primary claim concerning the importance of Church unity. However, it does demand patience and a deep level of interest in the complexities of historical documentation and argumentation. Fortunately, however, it pays its readers off quite well and must be included in the bibliography of anyone doing serious work in this area of study.

Chronister had already established himself as one of the foremost contemporary voices in the rigorous examination of the sources of the Pelagian controversy. His debut monograph now comes as a welcome addition to an already lively conversation.

Alexander H. Pierce

CLARK, Gillian, *Commentary on Augustine City of God, Books 6-10*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2024, x-250 p.

Augustine's great treatise, *De civitate Dei*, is widely known, but is it well understood? Dr. Gillian Clark (Professor Emerita, Oxford University) has stepped up to help Augustine's twenty-first century readers. As she said in her plenary address to close the 2024 Oxford Patristics Conference, "commentary is notes for the sake of teaching." *De civitate Dei* is a text that requires careful (re-)reading. There are resources available to help readers (e.g. Gerard O'Daly's *Reader's Guide*, 2020 – to which Clark frequently refers), but a commentary like Clark's is a welcome contribution. Originally planned as a multi-scholar project, Clark is continuing this as a solo project (anticipating five volumes – according to Augustine's suggestion, cf. *Ep.* 1*A.1). This commentary is not a line-by-line exposition, rather it is "notes for the sake of teaching". In many ways it is reminiscent of Augustine's own style in his various *Quaestiones* works. This volume includes a general introduction to Books 6-10, as well as introductions for each of the five books. In the commentary sections she gives the Latin text (with her own translation) for the lines on which she comments. This format makes the commentary non-limiting to whichever edition/translation one is reading. Overall, re-reading *De civitate Dei* with Clark's notes has led to a richer engagement with Augustine's writings. Throughout this volume, Clark regularly points to Augustine's broad agenda with these five books (i.e., Books 6-10) in the context of the first five. The first five books dealt with the notion that the Roman gods were to be worshiped for benefits in this life. In Books 6 to 10 Augustine critiques the idea that these gods help their worshipers find happiness in the life after death (p. 1). In the first five books Augustine dealt primarily with popular religious beliefs and practices (e.g. festivals, theater shows, etc.); in these five books Augustine has to engage with philosophical arguments. Clark notes that when Augustine began writing Book 6, "he probably knew it would begin a second group of five books on the more challenging task of debate with distinguished philosophers" (p. 2). So, accordingly, Clark helps her reader understand Augustine's rhetoric by highlighting Augustine's interlocutors. In

Books 6 and 7 Augustine deals primarily with Varro's treatise: *Antiquitates divinae* (p. 3). Clark distinguishes between Augustine's engagement with Varro in the first five books and in these two; namely, there is a focus on Natural Theology (i.e., explanations of nature—Latin *natura*, Greek *phusis*), whereas the first five had focused on mythical and civic theologies. In Books 8 and 9 Augustine turns to the Platonists and selects Apuleius's *De Deo Socrates* as his primary representative source to discuss the mediatorial beings: *daemones*. Then in book 10, Augustine focuses his polemic on Porphyry and the beliefs relating to *theurgia*. Throughout this commentary Clark has her doubts about Augustine's familiarity with, and use of, his classical sources. She claims that Augustine uses "short quotations, taken out of context and exploited at length, from a work or part of a work which was both short and available in Latin" (p. 7-8). This is poignantly apparent with regard to Augustine's limited familiarity with Plato's *Timaeus* (likely the only of Plato's treatises he read). He acknowledges only reading Cicero's Latin translation (*Civ.* 13.16), which only contains about a quarter of the treatise. Perhaps Clark's assessment of Augustine's understanding of these texts (e.g. Plotinus, Porphyry, Apuleius, Varro, etc.) is too critical given how extensively Augustine argued. She seems to limit Augustine's potential for understanding a text to his ability to have read it directly, rather than factoring in Augustine's possible use of oral tradition, or memory from his own education. Still, her comments are helpful for someone reading Augustine to recognize the limits but also the actual rhetorical intent and theological focus for which Augustine was aiming. Her extensive familiarity with the texts and context of Roman late-antiquity is evident in her comments and discussion.

Books 6 to 10 are focused on dealing with the beliefs around happiness in the life after death, and in Books 6 to 7 Augustine focuses on Varro's assessment, aiming to discuss Natural Theology. Most of Augustine's discussion on nature "is postponed to Book 7" (p. 21), but there are a lot of teasers throughout Book 6 that anticipate it. In 6.1, Clark notes that Augustine begins drawing from Plato's *Timaeus* (i.e., Cicero's Latin edition) to consider who the creator-god is and the beginning of the pantheon, and thus the origin of the material cosmos (p. 27). As much as Augustine was clearly drawing from Plato, his focus was on Varro's text, and Clark doubts that Augustine had access to much of this text. "It is not clear that Augustine read (or had) much else, apart from the final book on the select gods" (p. 31). Book 6 thus centers on the nature of the gods, which Augustine understands to be included in Varro's *secundum genus* of philosophy/theology: natural (p. 34). Book 7 then builds directly on this discussion and overviews created nature through Varro's understanding as being the product of the Roman pantheon. Clark's comments are helpful for understanding the theological context more broadly, as well as other classical sources that may have informed Augustine. Clark notes that this discussion on nature contributes to Book 8.14-15 where Augustine "discusses the divisions of the universe in relation to Apuleius and Plato" (p. 53).

Books 8 to 10 are focused on the Platonists (i.e., the neo-Platonists), first using Apuleius as the central interlocutor before finishing Book 10 with Porphyry. Clark draws out Augustine's central point as being to understand who the mediatorial beings are, i.e., the beings that live in the sub-lunar region, have bodies of air, and mediate between humanity and the gods (who have bodies of aether; 123). In Books 6 to 7 Augustine had laid out the beliefs on nature; now, in Book 8, "Augustine says he will discuss 'the theology they call natural' not with just anyone but with philosophers" (p. 97). In other words, Clark notes Augustine's rhetorical trajectory; namely, now that he has established what nature *is*, he can turn to discussing what this connotes with regard to religious beliefs. He will use the Platonists to engage with the notions of happiness in the life after death, which come through the mediation of *daemones*. Augustine selects the Platonists as his interlocutors because of their nearness to the truth (p. 97). The truth culminates in the divine creator, towards whom these three books

progress. In Book 9 Augustine works to argue for the distinction between angels and *daemones*; as Clark says, “angels should not be called *daemones*; and angels, immortal and blessed beings, are not intermediaries, and should not be worshipped” (p. 147). Clark explains Augustine’s interpretation of Apuleius as presenting three chief beings within created reality: humans “occupy the lowest part of the universe, the gods occupy the highest, and the *daemones* are between” (p. 157). Thus, for Apuleius, the *daemones* occupy the mediary position geographically, but also in sharing aspects of being with both humans and gods. Gods are blessed and immortal; humans are wretched and mortal; *daemones* are wretched and immortal (p. 160-161). Clark then shows Augustine’s response: *daemones* cannot be mediators because they share human wretchedness; the true mediator must be blessed and mortal in order to bring humanity to blessedness (p. 162-164). This mediator, as Clark highlights for Augustine, can only be Christ. This notion of bringing humanity to blessedness, i.e., achieving the *summum bonum*, as the goal of the mediaries, is what Book 10 focuses on.

In the final section of this volume, Clark overviews Augustine’s engagement with Porphyry as representative of the Platonist ideas around seeking blessedness in the life after death. Clark gives a brief overview of how Augustine could have had access to Porphyry’s texts, specifically *Ad Anebonem* (10.11) and *De regressu animae* (10.29). It is possible that these texts were included in the *libri Platonici* “that Augustine was given at Milan,” or he may have accessed them “indirectly through Lactantius” (p. 177). Throughout Book 10, Augustine is engaging with the notion that “anyone who loves himself wants to be blessed (*beatus*) ... [which entails] clinging to God” (p. 187). Clark shows how Augustine argues that the Platonic philosophy ultimately must agree with that point. As Clark summarizes Augustine’s summary of the whole biblical prophetic message regarding the *summum bonum*; “this way leads straight to seeing God and clinging to him for eternity” (p. 236).

This project of providing a commentary on Augustine’s *De civitate Dei* is a gift to Augustine’s readers, both seasoned scholars and the uninitiated. Clark’s commentary is well suited to help those new to reading this massive work to be able to follow Augustine’s rhetoric and theological intent. Her work is helpful for seasoned scholars who teach on Augustine and seek to explain this text to others. In this volume much of the focus is on Augustine’s engagement with philosophical arguments about seeking happiness in the life after death. Clark has reservations concerning Augustine’s familiarity and understanding of his sources, and she has good reason, i.e., Augustine had limited access to many of the texts with which he engages (e.g. Plato’s *Timaeus*, Plotinus’s *Enneads*, etc.). Still, Clark notes examples of Latin editions of various Greek philosophical works of which Augustine may have been aware (e.g. Apuleius’s translation of Plato’s *Phaedo*; 118). Which suggests there may be reason for a more optimistic perspective concerning Augustine’s familiarity with these sources. Despite that, her overview of Augustine’s sources, and explanations of how he could have accessed them is helpful. Overall, readers of Augustine’s *De civitate Dei* will do well to bring Dr. Gillian Clark’s insights into conversation with their engagement with this amazing work.

Nathan Scott

DE FRANCESCHI, Sylvio H., *Théologies en débat. L’Église catholique posttridentine au risque du pluralisme doctrinal dans la querelle de la grâce (XVII^e-XVIII^e siècles)* (Lumière classique 126), Paris, Honoré Champion, 2023, 560 p.

How can God’s omnipotence and omniscience be reconciled with the capacities with which he has endowed humankind, particularly human free will? The controversies over this question defined the theological background of the post-Tridentine Catholic Church throughout the early modern period. Although the debates waned around the turn of the nineteenth century, they were never conclusively settled by ecclesiastical authorities, sowing the seeds for theological discord around the historical

interpretation of Thomas Aquinas and the *nouvelle théologie* in the twentieth century. Despite its significance, the subject has received considerably less scholarly attention from intellectual historians, compared to those pivotal transformations in the fields of science and philosophy that made modernity. With *Théologies en débat*, Sylvio Hermann de Franceschi illustrates how these discussions on the relationship between divine grace and free will can be approached as an intellectual history, rather than a merely doctrinal one.

At the core of the volume is an exploration of how the Catholic Church created and maintained space for doctrinal plurality through discursive strategies and processes of regulation. The intentionally kaleidoscopic format of the study lends itself to this end, bringing together a number of previously published contributions (and serving as a counterpart to de Franceschi's *Thomisme et théologie moderne*). The twenty chapters combine a wealth of perspectives and analyses, from the purely dogmatic to the literary, and provide the reader with long-term overviews, underappreciated episodes and new avenues for research into these notoriously thorny debates. As such, *Théologies en débat* is a work of enormous erudition, spanning the sixteenth to the nineteenth century and performing detailed analysis of both the brightest stars in the theological firmament and previously overlooked intellectuals.

De Franceschi opens the volume with an overview of the competing theological schools that emerged following the promulgation of the Tridentine Decree on Justification (Session VI, 13 January 1547). While it took a firm stance against the predestinarian theologies of Luther and Calvin, the Tridentine Fathers remained rather vague regarding the precise interplay between grace and free will in the economy of salvation. The author provides an excellent introductory summary of the origins and core tenets of the systems (and their offshoots) proposed by the Jesuits (Luis de Molina's *scientia media*), Dominicans (Domingo Báñez's *praemotio physica*), Jansenists and Augustinians (with their "rigid Augustinism"). This dogmatic framework is essential in laying the groundwork for the historicized reading of the debates explored in the following chapters. While the chapters span the entire early modern period, they do shift emphasis from the well-known origins of the debates in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century *auxiliis* and Jansenist controversies – which took place in Spain, Rome, and Louvain – to their developments in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France. The corpus is divided into three parts, which take up different common threads of analysis in De Franceschi's work.

The first part of the volume, "La concurrence des écoles théologiques", examines the conceptualization, formation and patrimonialization of theological schools and systems through the lens of their institutional entrenchment and transmission. De Franceschi begins with the Jesuits' acknowledgment that Molina's *scientia media* was a novel term, though they insisted on its doctrinal roots in Aquinas. The second chapter touches on questions around the place of Aquinas in the Society and demonstrates how this "Molinism" (although it leaned more towards Suárez than Molina during the Jansenist controversy) became the Society's preferred system. Moving beyond Spain, the study then shifts to France, where the Sorbonne's anti-Jesuit stance engendered the construction of a *congruism* that sought an "eclectic" middle path between Báñez and Molina/Suárez, disseminated to the French clergy. The next chapters focus on the Dominican Order and its interpretation of Aquinas, marked increasingly by its anti-Molinism more than by a positive relation to Bañezianism. Chapter 5 shows how Charles-René Billuart's efforts to present a non-polemical Thomist *Cursus Theologiae* created a theological classic that, a century later, played a crucial role in facilitating the reception and adaptation of neo-Thomism in France. The section concludes with an analysis of how the twentieth-century *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* and the Thomist revival under *Æterni Patris* rekindled these long-standing debates on grace, free will, and divine concurrence in modern theological discourse.

The second section, “La théologie à l’épreuve de la polémique”, explores the development of discursive practices shaped by the polemics, together with their audiences, and how these, in turn, contributed to the rise of positive theology and the decline of scholastic argumentation. De Franceschi shows how François Annat, confessor of Louis XIV but not a Doctor of Theology, could nevertheless become the leader of the anti-Jansenists through his position and by effective argumentative strategies. Jansenists and Molinists sought public approval through dialogues and literary exchanges. The *Provinciales* formed a milestone in this regard, with its new literary style, reshaping theological discourse and the way it was assessed by public opinion. De Franceschi examines how theological discussions migrated from universities to salons, where figures such as Arnauld and Malebranche engaged in debates before an audience of educated elites. The study then examines how the satire introduced by the *Provinciales* was adopted by the Jansenists’ Molinist opponents, though not always to the benefit of theological argumentation. The increasingly accessible style of theological discourse should be seen in conjunction with the rise of positive theology, which, unsuccessfully condemned by papal bull after the Synod of Pistoia, cemented the decline of scholastic methods.

The final section, “Augustinisme et revifs du Pélagianisme”, complements the first section—and *Thomisme et théologie moderne* as a whole. It examines how the various schools (including the Oratorians) appealed to Augustine’s legacy to prove that it was in alignment with their own interpretation of Aquinas (and, in the case of the Jansenists, vice versa). De Franceschi examines the tensions navigated by Jean-François Senault and Bishop Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet between their personal preferences and maintaining orthodox or “neutral” doctrinal positions respectively. He then turns to François Fénelon, who played a pivotal role in redefining the *delectatio victrix*, equated with Calvin’s necessitating grace, as the defining trait of Jansenism. While this framing gained traction amongst figures such as Archbishop d’Aubigné and Bishop de Bissy, it faced resistance from Rome, and Fénelon’s own doctrine of grace and free will left him vulnerable to accusations of Pelagianism, even as Molinists in France adopted his characterization of Jansenism. In the epilogue, the author traces the exhaustion of the debates during the nineteenth century, as theological divisions in Catholicism shifted from doctrinal controversies to questions of moral theology.

In his conclusion to this impressive volume, De Franceschi highlights how the magisterium’s insistence on the “filial consanguinity” of Augustine and Aquinas not only shaped the boundaries of orthodoxy but also created space for doctrinal plurality within those boundaries. While this final thought effectively ties together the wealth of studies presented, a deeper reflection on how these doctrinal clashes contributed to shaping European modernity would have been a welcome addition.

Jarrik Van Der Biest

FALCONE, Gianmarco (ed.), VIGILIUS THAPSENSIS, *Contra Eutychetem* (Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 109), Berlin – Boston, De Gruyter, 2024, vi-134 p.

Vigilio di Tapso è autore che il secolo passato e quello corrente hanno progressivamente riscoperto dopo gli studi pionieristici di Ficker, Gerhard, *Studien zu Vigilius von Thapsus*, Leipzig, J. A. Barth, 1897. La sua opera «rappresenta un’esposizione e difesa della dottrina difisita del *Tomus* leoniano veramente notevole per perspicuità e completezza» (SIMONETTI, Manlio, *Letteratura antimonofisita d’Occidente*, in *Augustinianum* 18 [1978] 487-532, p. 522), tanto che si è riconosciuta in lui «la personalità più importante del cristianesimo africano dell’epoca» (Moreschini in MORESCHINI, Claudio – NORELLI, Enrico, *Storia della Letteratura Antica Greca e Latina*, II/2, Brescia, Morcelliana, 1996, p. 593). Se la biografia dell’autore, salva la sua partecipazione al colloquio convocato da Unerico nel 484, resta ancora sconosciuta (per lungo tempo, prima di Chifflet, lo si era addirittura confuso con Vigilio di Trento), l’entità del *corpus* di opere a lui attribuibili registra

significativi assestamenti nei trenta anni che sono intercorsi dalla pubblicazione della *Clavis Patrum Latinorum* (1995). L'edizione del testo per le cure di P.-M. Hombert ha permesso di restituire all'autore, senza grandi contestazioni (almeno a conoscenza di chi scrive) le *Solutiones obiectionum Arrianorum*, prima classificate fra gli *spuria* (CPL 812, ma cf. poi HOMBERT, Pierre-Marie, *Les Solutiones obiectionum Arrianorum: une oeuvre authentique de Vigile de Tapse. Édition intégrale, traduction et commentaire*, in *Sacris Erudiri* 49 [2010] 151-241). Le opere da sempre di sicura attribuzione al nostro autore sono invece due: il *Contra Eutychem* (d'ora in poi solo *CEut.*) e il *Contra Arianos, Sabellianos, Photinianos dialogus* (CPL 807), ormai di recente pubblicazione per le cure dello stesso Hombert: *VIGILII THAPSENSIS Contra Arrianos, Sabellianos, Fotinianos Dialogus*, cura et studio P.-M. HOMBERT, CCL 90 b, Turnhout, Brepols, 2017.

Eppure, via via che si approfondiva la conoscenza di Vigilio, si percepiva in misura sempre maggiore la necessità di leggerne le opere in edizione affidabile, visto che il miglior testo disponibile era quello del Migne (PL 62, 95-238, la nostra opera alle coll. 95-154), ristampa dell'edizione di P.F. Chifflet (Digione, 1664). Quasi trenta anni or sono C. Moreschini faceva notare come «una nuova edizione delle sue opere sarebbe impresa meritoria, ed uno studio approfondito sul pensiero di Vigilio manca tuttora» (MORESCHINI – NORELLI, *Storia della Letteratura*, p. 595). Per il *CEut.* la lacuna era stata solo parzialmente colmata dall'edizione tradotta e commentata per le cure di S. PETRI, *Vigilio di Tapso, Contro Eutiche*, Brescia, Morcelliana, 2003. In questa sede, il vecchio testo di Chifflet era stato migliorato grazie alla collazione di tre manoscritti, quello di San Pietroburgo (*S* nel siglario costituito dall'edizione che qui si presenta), di Karlsruhe (un *Augiensis* = *A*) e il BnF, Lat. 1686 (= *P* nel volume qui in causa). Sebbene tanto meritorio per lo studio di inquadramento storico e dottrinale e per la presenza di una traduzione annotata, il lavoro di S. Petri non era concepito come nuova edizione critica: «malheureusement, c'est une *critica minor*, qui demanderait d'être reprise. Le travail serait d'autant plus profitable qu'il s'agit d'une oeuvre importante qui n'a pas encore révélé son mystère» (P.-M. HOMBERT, CCL 90 b, p. 7).

È quindi con grande interesse che il lettore si imbatte, sullo scaffale delle nuove accessioni, nella prima edizione critica vera e propria di un testo per tanti aspetti rilevante come *CEut.* Nelle righe che seguono cerco di presentare, nei limiti delle mie competenze, il valore critico di questa recentissima edizione.

L'esame della tradizione manoscritta si basa in primo luogo sul censimento a tappeto delle testimonianze, condotto sui cataloghi dei manoscritti delle biblioteche mondiali; esso conduce all'identificazione di 8 testimoni manoscritti del testo (p. 5-6), organizzati in un siglario sistematico e collazionati integralmente sul testo del *CEut.* Le schede di descrizione dei codici sono coerenti nella brevità che è imposta dalla sede editoriale. La *recensio* delle testimonianze manoscritte è condotta con sani criteri maasiani, e qui di seguito ne ricordo i risultati con estrema sintesi: in virtù di errori congiuntivi si identificano due rami della tradizione manoscritta, uno facente capo al subarchetipo α (legato agli ambienti palatini e da cui sono i discesi i mss. *A P T*) e uno facente capo al subarchetipo β (legato all'area di influenza dell'abbazia di Corbie e che ha dato origine ai mss. *G O S* e *R M*). All'interno del ramo palatino solo il ms. *A* contiene tutti i 5 libri di *CEut.*, mentre *P* e *T* contengono solo i primi 3. Il motivo della diversa estensione del testo dei manoscritti della famiglia ammette due spiegazioni: *P* e *T* potrebbero risalire ad un capostipite comune (che infatti è indicato con la sigla γ , cf. p. 29), che tralascia gli ultimi due libri; oppure *A* (o, aggiungo io, il suo modello) potrebbe averli trovati altrove ed averli aggiunti al testo del proprio antigrafo (p. 19). Il ms. *A* presenta inoltre un fenomeno paradossale: «diverse lezioni singolari frutto di interventi redazionali di spiccata intelligenza... che si accompagnano, tuttavia, a numerose altre lezioni singolari frutto di errori di copiatura fra i più banali» (p. 20-21); la spiegazione di questo fenomeno è data immaginando la

presenza di un modello perduto, δ : «in tal modo possiamo riferire a δ i miglioramenti del testo... e attribuire ad A i numerosi errori di copiatura che hanno deteriorato il medesimo» (p. 21; per questa spiegazione cf. qui sotto). Il ramo β si dimostra anche più problematico: qui i manoscritti non si lasciano raggruppare in maniera coerente in base agli errori, e l'autore (p. 27) spiega il fenomeno o con la presenza di contaminazione a monte di O o ipotizzando varianti marginali in β stesso, e queste avrebbero prodotto i differenti accordi fra i manoscritti che da β discendono. Dopo lo studio genealogico dei testimoni manoscritti e della (invero ridotta) tradizione indiretta, è analizzata la tradizione a stampa del testo (p. 30-35) e sono spiegati, in maniera molto dettagliata per le questioni grafiche, i criteri di edizione.

Il testo critico vede in basso pagina l'*apparatus fontium* (fonti bibliche e non bibliche sono incluse nella stessa fascia di apparato), l'*apparatus testium* e l'apparato critico. Al termine del volume gli indici della Sacra Scrittura, degli autori citati e delle persone rammentate nel testo sono valido aiuto al lettore nell'utilizzo del testo.

Qui di seguito e in corpo ridotto solo alcune suggestioni/ spunti di riflessione a margine dell'edizione e della sua introduzione.

A p. 4 l'autore ipotizza che i libri 4 e 5, in difesa del *Tomus ad Flavianum* e del concilio di Calcedonia, «costituiscono il primo nucleo del trattato... successivamente, come un frutto più maturo della riflessione e della teologia di Vigilio, sarebbero stati composti i primi tre libri». L'ipotesi sulla genesi dell'opera è contraria a quella di S. PETRI, *Contro Eutiche*, p. 59, che non è citata. Si sarebbe potuto dedicare uno spazio maggiore alla spiegazione del perché l'ipotesi della Petri sia ribaltata. || Per quanto riguarda il capitolo contenente lo studio della tradizione manoscritta, si è accennato ai motivi per i quali l'autore postula la presenza di un manoscritto perduto, δ . Uno dei limiti strutturali della *recensio*, almeno al momento, consiste nell'impossibilità di determinare quanti passaggi vi siano fra gli ultimi punti di divisione e i testimoni conservati (P. MAAS, *La critica del testo*, ed. it. a cura di G. ZIFFER, Roma, 2017, § 8.i., p. 15): non sarebbe più economico pensare che fra α e A vi sia un modello contaminato, col che le «diverse lezioni singolari frutto di interventi redazionali» sarebbero solo prodotte dalla contaminazione con un ramo di tradizione che presentava un testo più pulito, e dal quale sarebbero stati recuperati anche i libri 4 e 5, assenti in $P T$, salvo poi che il copista di A o uno degli anelli precedenti A avrebbe introdotto molti errori di copia? || A p. 55 il testo si apre semplicemente con *Liber primus*, e non è stampato il titolo. Una indicazione più chiara della *inscriptio* dell'opera non avrebbe nociuto, dal momento che la forma del titolo subisce delle oscillazioni, e nel ramo β compare anche la forma *Contra Nestorium et Eutycentum* ($G O S$)/ *Contra Nestorium et Eutychem* (M): in entrambi i casi la menzione dei due eretici sarebbe prodotta dall'analogia col titolo dell'opuscolo boeziano? Assente anche un occhiello tipografico che segnali al lettore la forma esatta del titolo. Suppongo si tratti di convenzioni redazionali imposte dalla casa editrice, se si considera che anche i volumi 102 e 107 della stessa collana presentano le medesime caratteristiche. Se così fosse, una maggiore libertà sarebbe da accordare all'editore moderno di testi antichi rispetto alla astratta *necessitas* delle norme redazionali || Nei libri 4 e 5 Vigilio adduce numerose citazioni e confuta un'opera anonima monofisita (a *CEut.* 4, 18, 18-19 accenna a *in eo libro, quem contra Calchedonense concilium casso labore confecistis*); a partire da SIMONETTI, *Letteratura antimonofisita*, p. 509, si è prospettata l'ipotesi che possa trattarsi di alcuni degli scritti del patriarca monofisita di Alessandria Timoteo Eluro (*sedit* 457-477; solo pochi frammenti greci sono superstiti, mentre si conservano adattamenti in siriano). Nel caso di queste citazioni, l'*apparatus fontium* segnala «n.r.» (= *textus non repertus*), mentre tentativi di riscontro di alcune di queste testimonianze su ciò che resta dell'opera di Timoteo erano già stati condotti da S. PETRI, *Contro Eutiche*, p. 60-65. Una pubblicazione a parte in cui si cerchino paralleli alle citazioni che il vescovo

africano adduce e confuta, o si tenti di ricostruire la sua fonte sarebbe forse auspicabile: i passaggi nel testo latino sono introdotti da formule che lasciano presupporre una riproduzione esatta del testo di partenza. || La presenza delle *lectiones singulares* in apparato è una scelta consapevole (cf. p. 35), ma alla fine non pone problemi di leggibilità dell'apparato, che è sempre agile. || In apparato sono riportate anche le lezioni dei *descripti* *M* e *R*, copie di *S* (p. 29 e 35): anche qui la scelta è comprensibile, e anzi i già citati *M* e *R* non sono *descripti* nel senso stretto del termine, dal momento che derivano da un capostipite perduto π che risente della contaminazione diretta con il subarchetipo α ; le loro varianti possono quindi non essere escluse dall'apparato.

Il corpo ridotto delle recensioni è notoriamente sede di osservazioni appunto microscopiche e spesso ipercritiche. Quanto esposto sopra raccoglie invece solo alcune suggestioni di lettura e spunti che in nulla intendono sminuire la portata di un lavoro di primissima mano che, dopo anni di attesa, restituisce finalmente agli storici del dogma e agli studiosi del cristianesimo antico un testo la cui importanza è da tempo riconosciuta.

Elemento su cui non si insisterà mai a sufficienza in questi tempi: gli studi storici, ad ogni livello, si fondano *principalmente* sullo studio di testi, letti in lingua *originale* in una forma affidabile e corredati dai necessari sussidi esegetici. Un'edizione critica, peraltro punto di arrivo di tante fatiche per chi la realizza, è però anche punto di partenza per tutti coloro che se ne servono per progredire nell'indagine delle molteplici problematiche che un testo antico comporta. Non resta quindi che auspicare che il lavoro di G. Falcone, così solidamente fondato dal punto di vista documentario, venga adeguatamente recepito e utilizzato dagli studiosi successivi e contribuisca alla comprensione di un autore e di un'opera ancora poco valorizzati.

Pietro Podolak

FORD, Coleman M., *A Bond Between Souls: Friendship in the Letters of Augustine*, Bellingham, WA, Lexham Press, 2022, 203 p.

This book is devoted to an under-researched part of Augustine's corpus: his letters. Building upon previous studies on Augustine's view of friendship, Ford seeks to answer the question: is there a relationship between friendship and spirituality in Augustine's epistolary literature? Connected to this primary research question, the author also addresses other questions, such as: how does Augustine's notion of friendship relate to classical notions of friendship? "What is the role of friendship in the spiritual life of the Christian?" "What makes the epistolary format unique to the development of friendship?" "What role do Scripture and the Spirit play in Augustine's notion of friendship?" (p. 10).

After the introductory chapter, Ford explains Augustine's concept of Christian friendship (chapter 2). Friendship should be God-centered, motivated by brotherly love, and it includes honesty about each other's sins and mistakes (p. 27 – *libertas amicitiae*), in order to promote each other's spiritual progress. Moreover, Christian friendship is universal in its scope. The individual Christian should intend to befriend the whole world (if that were possible). Because of our common human nature we owe the gift of friendship to every human being (p. 20). In this fallen world, however, we cannot expect to receive friendship in return. Augustine also says that friendship is necessary for human happiness. We could have all the goods of this world, but if we lack the loving company of other people it is worth nothing. However, true friendship cannot exist if friends do not share the love of God. In this sense, true friendship is only possible between Christians.

At this point I think that Ford expresses Augustine's thought inadequately. Discussing Augustine's interpretation of the Ciceronian definition of friendship in letter 258 to Marcianus ('Friendship is an

agreement on things human and divine along with good will and love'), Ford argues that Augustine regards the friendship they had before their conversion to God as *incomplete* (p. 28), because they had an agreement on things human, but not yet on things divine. However, Augustine explicitly says that at that time Marcianus was not a friend to him at all. He writes: "... it turns out that between friends who do not agree on things divine there cannot be a full and true agreement on things human either. For one who holds things divine in contempt necessarily evaluates things human otherwise than he should, nor can anyone correctly love a human being who does not love the maker of that human being. Hence I do not say that you who had been partly my friend are now more fully my friend. Rather, as reason shows, you were not even partly my friend, since even with respect to things human you did not possess a true friendship with me."⁴⁹

In chapter 3 Ford describes classical models of friendship as they can be found in Plato, Aristotle, the Epicureans and the Stoics. The takeaway of this chapter is that ancient philosophers understood friendship not so much as a private relationship; it rather functioned within the broader socio-political community (*polis*). It focused on this temporal life and was based (particularly in Aristotle's view) on a shared respect for each other's virtues. Ford then continues: "[In Augustine's epistolary context] we will see how his paradigm of promoting divine love for the purpose of building Christlike virtue in the friendship relationship truly set him apart from previous thinkers and practitioners." (p. 55). Although Ford touches upon the differences between Augustine's Christian understanding of friendship and the classical theories he inherited (e.g. its eternal character, its universal character, love not based upon recognition of virtue), it would have been helpful to the reader if Ford had elaborated more on the theological-philosophical background of these differences. Furthermore, what consequences do these theoretical differences have in practice? It would be interesting to compare Augustine to Cicero and Seneca with regard to the way they relate to others in their epistolary literature.⁵⁰

Chapters 4 to 7 are devoted to Augustine's epistolary exchanges with different 'friends'. In each chapter Ford summarizes the content of these letters and makes remarks about what can be deduced from them about Augustine's view and practice of friendship. Here is an impression.

Chapter 4 addresses Augustine's correspondence with *Jerome* on the latter's interpretation of Paul's rebuke of Peter in Antioch (Gal. 2:11-14). Augustine wrote to Jerome that he feared that his reading of the text (according to Jerome Paul did not really mean what he said about Peter's conduct; it was a 'useful lie' – p. 63) undermined the trustworthiness of Scripture. Although expressing his love for Augustine, Jerome responded with bitterness and argued that Augustine was driven by a youthful desire for recognition. Initially, he did not answer Augustine's critical questions. In later letters he defends his exegesis, referring to the authority of other commentators. Following this defense, he wrote another letter in which he requests Augustine that they quit discussing and deal lovingly with each other. Augustine responds by saying that love cares for the truth, and this is also in the interest of the brother (and the community). He defends his own position and expresses the hope that they might reach agreement on the interpretation of Scripture (and on the exegetical consequences thereof).

Augustine's letter exchange with Jerome illustrates his view of Christian friendship as characterized by humble 'frankness' about the mistakes of the brother, motivated by the desire to bring him closer to God (p. 81-83). As Augustine knows that he is as susceptible to mistakes as Jerome, he asks for

⁴⁹ WSA II/4, p. 95. Ford refers to what Augustine's says here, but still uses the word 'incomplete' with regard to their former relationship.

⁵⁰ This is not a criticism of the book, but rather a suggestion for new research.

correction in turn. But only on the basis of Scripture. By an obedient engagement with Scripture friends foster each other's spiritual growth.

Chapter 5 addresses Augustine's correspondence with *monastics* and others dedicated to the ascetic life. Ford shows that Augustine not only acts as a spiritual mentor, as is often emphasized in the literature; he also seeks *mutuality* in the relationship, because he knows he is a fallible human being, in need of God's grace to the same degree as his friends. Ford illustrates this from Augustine's letter exchange with Paulinus of Nola. Paulinus venerates Augustine for his spiritual wisdom and knowledge of Scripture. Augustine 'equalizes' the relationship by responding that the good he is able to share with others comes from God. Paulinus receives spiritual wisdom from God through Augustine, but also in other ways. And this God calls Paulinus also to become a helper of those in need of the wisdom God has given him. Furthermore, Augustine invites Paulinus to think with him and for him about the complexities of his ministry. He wants to learn from Paulinus too.

Chapter 6 is devoted to Augustine's letters to *fellow clergymen*. Special attention is given to his epistolary exchanges with his lifelong friends Alypius and Evodius. "Seeing the vocation of ministry as a sober task, Augustine, as a fellow presbyter and bishop, sought to motivate these friends toward a more faithful ministry and a more profound theological reflection, hoping they would do the same for him as well." (p. 116). The rest of the chapter addresses individual letters to different colleagues. Augustine encourages his colleagues to exemplify the Christian life to their flock, and to see to it that their congregants would have no reason to suspect their leaders of using their position of authority for worldly gain. He also answers different theological questions, though often admitting that he lacks the wisdom to solve exegetical questions.

Chapter 7 treats Augustine's contact with government officials. One of the things he tries to instill in them is that their faith should influence the administration of their civic duties. For example, to Marcellinus and Bonifatius Augustine writes that when they have to apply state penalties against Donatists and Circumcellions, they should do so in a spirit of gentleness, as loving fathers, softening their severity in the service of Christian love, seeking the conversion of the sinner and his eternal wellbeing. We meet Augustine's frankness again in his correspondence with general Bonifatius, who took concubines and lost control over the Vandal armies in Africa. Augustine argues that these moral and political failures arose from disordered loves in Bonifatius, a fixation on his own power and on temporal goods (p. 163). To Marcellinus, Augustine said that *sin* had caused the decline of Roman society (ensuing from the worship of false gods). Christ came into the world to cure the nations from sin. Besides eternal salvation, this also implied the improvement of societies. Where people become good, their society is changed for the better (p. 172). It is this principle that Augustine applies to Bonifatius's personal life. If he repents of an impure love of temporal goods, this will benefit his marriage and the execution of his duty in the Roman army.

The conclusion of the book mainly consists of a summary of chapters 4-7. Unfortunately, the author does not explicitly return to the research question(s) formulated in chapter 1 (p. 10). Methodologically, I would expect that the data found in Augustine's letters would be used to answer the questions about Christian friendship posed in the introduction of the book.

Further, I wondered while reading the book: in his letters we see Augustine's loving engagement with other Christians, hoping for their loving response in return. I would call this: the communion of the saints, the friendship of believers. But is there room in Augustine for a friendship *within* the bounds of the church, based upon personal sympathy, shared interests, etc.? In other words, a relationship (other than marriage, non-sexual) that cannot be universalized, but which one only has with (a few) specific persons?

Notwithstanding the critical remarks in this review, I think Ford has produced a helpful introduction to Augustine's view of friendship as it appears in his letters. The book is readable and well organized. And especially chapters 4-7 give the reader an experience of Augustine's love in action. Those engaged in pastoral duties will particularly profit from this book.

Bart van Egmond

GRYSON, Roger (ed.), *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera. Pars I, Opera exegetica. 6, Commentarii in Prophetas minores. Commentarius in Zachariam. Editio altera* (Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina 76A bis), Turnhout, Brepols, 2024, 315 p.

This book is a replacement to (a part of) ADRIAEN, Marc, *S. Hieronymi presbyteri Opera. 1, Opera exegetica. 1/6, Commentarii in prophetas minores 1/6/2*, [Commentarii in Naum, Abacuc, Sophoniam, Aggaeum, Zachariam, Malachiam] (Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina 76A), Turnhout, Brepols, 1970. Providing a new (or renewed) edition of ancient works is laborious and requires detailed attention in numerous fields. The effort put into such a work can hardly ever be sufficiently lauded. On the other hand, editions tend to be those kinds of academic publications which – though almost never in the limelight – stay on stage for a long time and provide a foundation for works by people who may not even be born yet. One might say: They are among the most sustainable kinds of academic works.

This was my experience starting to work on *In Zachariam* by St. Jerome. The edition by Adriaen had been around for roughly 55 years already. It seemed to be a solid basis to explore the exegetical work by the bethlehemite monk. However, we now see the publication of a replacement edition in the renowned CCSL Series. Given the relatively long-lasting nature of edited works and the fact that many ancient Christian works are still only accessible via relatively old collections such as Migne and other much older collections or even manuscripts, the question arises as to what improvements the new edition by Gryson offers just half a century after his predecessor. This will be the main focus of my review.

Comparing two editions of the same work might be an unusual task, so I decided to approach this in concentric circles, starting from the outside. I will begin by outlining the more obvious physical and structural differences and then move on to a more in-depth comparison.

At first glance, the physical appearance of the volume is of very high quality, promising a long life for the book. Paper quality, binding, and impeccable printing make it a joy for the bibliophile to work with this fine product of printing craft, which even surpasses the physical qualities of its predecessor. Concerning the visual appearance of the text (layout, typefont, etc.) Brepols has improved readability significantly by increasing the line height and using small caps to differentiate the two lemmata (*Iuxta hebraeos* and *LXX*) at the opening of each commentary section.

The Greek text is rendered in majuscule, which helps to navigate and find occurrences but – at least to my mind – reduces readability, since Greek text is commonly rendered in minuscule.

The line numbering follows the same logic as in Adriaen: it restarts at every new biblical chapter. Since the line length is quite similar, references to specific lines are in roughly the same area as in the previous edition. Thus, although not 100% exact, references to the Adriaen edition are still usable with Gryson. In most cases, the line numbering diverges by only a handful of lines. Therefore, one only needs to search in the few lines before or after in order to find the referenced locus.

The decision to publish replacement editions separated by biblical books differs from the approach taken by the predecessor, which had produced a two-volume work on the *prophetas minores* as a whole. While the latter reflects, to some degree, the basic view of St. Jerome on this biblical corpus

– namely, as a cohesive literary corpus consisting of 12 separate books – the new focus on the single work proves helpful. In addition to practical considerations regarding the publishing process, such as consecutive publication and dividing the work between multiple scholars, the focus on each commentary as a separate unit helps to focus on their particular features, manuscript tradition, and historical background.

The new edition by Gryson starts with a brief introduction (in French), which accurately resembles the current scholarly consensus in a concise manner. His description of the situation that encompassed the writing of the commentary will prove very helpful for familiarizing oneself with the work and its context. Another major concern in his introduction is the relationship between St. Jerome's commentary and his predecessors' exegesis, especially that of Didymus Alexandrinus. This commentary, which Jerome explicitly lists as a source, was recovered in the last century. Some have been of the view that Jerome's commentary was a close copy of Didymus's work. This thesis is discussed and rejected by Gryson, who shows the independent nature of Jerome's work and his critical use of this source. Nonetheless, this discussion shows the importance of the relationship between these two works, since Didymus is Jerome's only extant source.

The last topic of the introduction is more technical, but foundational to the character of the new edition: the manuscript tradition. This is very helpful since it makes the complex manuscript situation transparent, so the decisions leading to the textual basis of this edition are traceable and verifiable. A thorough re-evaluation of the manuscripts is also at the heart of this edition. I will return to this later. At first glance, it is obvious that the critical apparatus provided by Gryson has multiplied in length compared to Adriaen's. This is the result of Gryson's having a much wider range and availability of manuscripts. In addition, he lists biblical references separately from those regarding other works, which helps navigation. Another helpful improvement is the more precise demarcation of the beginning and end of a citation or reference to a different work. While Adriaen only provides the line numbers of the reference, Gryson mentions the first and last words of the phrase in question.

One of the core tasks in producing an edition is to examine the manuscript tradition in order to arrive at an accurate representation of the original text. This is standard textual criticism one might think. However the problem is quite complex in this case. First, this commentary consists of three books, which is probably due to the practical requirement of the maximum length of a scroll. Consequently, this leads to a more diverse tradition of the text, since it circulated in separate parts. This fact is also reflected in the split stemma Gryson offers. He refuses to present a unified stemma since it would either not reflect the real situation or would render the stemma practically unusable.

Another difficulty is the hasty, unedited and uncorrected nature of the original publication by Jerome due to time pressure, which is lamented by Jerome several times and deemed plausible by Gryson and others. This makes it necessary to decide whether an error was introduced during the copying or existed already in the autograph. Some of the latter errors may also have been corrected by later scribes. Considering this complex situation, Gryson's general caution towards the use of conjectures without manuscript support seems very appropriate.

Therefore, all in all, the textual basis for this work is much more complex than is accounted for in the 1970 edition by Adriaen, who seemingly did not have access to all known manuscripts and does not place the same emphasis on the text-critical work as Gryson. Adriaen mostly bases his corrections of a previous edition (Vallarsi 1768) on one manuscript (siglum H in Gryson / N in Adriaen), which, according to Gryson, sometimes even introduced new errors. Gryson has a more nuanced approach, weighing the plausibility of multiple readings. This results in an entirely new diplomatic critical edition, which considers and evaluates all currently known manuscripts. This is probably the main

improvement of this new edition. As a theologian, I do not dare to make a final judgement on the quality of the text-critical decisions themselves, but nevertheless it seems to me that this edition will serve future generations of researchers well, especially due to the careful and transparent work and presentation.

Taking a closer look at some textual decisions, it seems that Adriaen tends to correct the text by conjecture, whereas Gryson tends to present the actual reading of a particular manuscript. For example, Adriaen corrects the second lemma in 1,109 from *dominus virtutum* to *dominus omnipotens* based on the LXX reading (παντοκράτωρ). While it is plausible that the reading attested by the manuscripts (*virtutum*) was a copying error that occurred sometime (or was even made by Jerome's secretary in the autograph?), Gryson refuses to print the conjecture in the main text, because it lacks proper manuscript support. This tendency might also reflect general trends in the field of textual criticism. A similar paradigm shift in textual decisions might, for example, be observed when comparing the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (1977) to the Biblia Hebraica Quinta (2004-today).

Both editions also provide several supplements, to support other scholars working with the text. Due to the nature of a biblical commentary, it is not surprising to find an index of biblical citations in both editions.

Adriaen also provides an extensive index of references to non-canonical writers. Gryson presents an index of references focusing only on Didymus's and Jerome's own works. This collection of references, however, has grown considerably compared to the relevant parts of Adriaen's index. This shows Gryson's keen focus on the intertextual relationship, especially with Didymus's commentary. References to other works, such as Roman classics etc., are only present in the apparatus. To my mind, this is only a minor deficiency, especially given the plan to publish the volume digitally.

Another valuable supplement is the *notes critiques*, where he discusses the major textual problems arising within the manuscript tradition. In this way, complex text-critical decisions are explained and made transparent.

An important step towards the accessibility of ancient texts in modern academia is their digital publication within online databases. Brepols plans to publish the new edition by the end of 2025 in its renowned database "Library of Latin Texts". This will enhance the possibilities of exploring and using the edition and even provide the basis for versatile IT-based analysis including the use of AI tools.

At first glance, the effort put into a new edition of Jerome's commentaries might seem questionable, but a closer look shows the contrary. A carefully crafted new edition is now available, which – for the first time – considers all available manuscripts. Careful improvements and adjustments around this core issue provide another layer of added value to forthcoming generations of Jerome scholars. One must be thankful for this work.

Jens Binfet

GRYSON, Roger (introd., éd., trad. et notes), CÉSAIRE D'ARLES, *Commentaire de l'Apocalypse de Jean* (Sources Chrétiennes 636), Paris, Cerf, 2023, 300 p.

C'est au sein du programme de publication dans la collection *Sources Chrétiennes* des œuvres complètes de Césaire d'Arles que paraît son *Commentaire de l'Apocalypse de Jean*, traduit et annoté par Roger Gryson. Cet ouvrage se présente comme un complément au travail de réédition du texte latin effectué plus tôt dans le *Corpus christianorum. Series Latina* 105, en raison des lacunes présentes dans l'édition de don Germain Morin. Du fait de cette complémentarité, le volume n'aborde pas la tradition manuscrite ni la démonstration de la paternité de l'œuvre, renvoyant ainsi à

l'introduction de l'édition en question, pour se concentrer exclusivement sur la lecture de l'œuvre à travers sa traduction et son annotation. L'avant-propos (p. 7-8) justifie les choix effectués pour cette dernière et présente les principes de lecture de l'œuvre : s'adaptant à la nature répétitive du commentaire de Césaire, Roger Gryson a établi une annotation plus fournie dans les premières pages, dans la perspective d'une lecture suivie de l'ouvrage.

Suite à la bibliographie (p. 9-12), l'introduction (p. 13-22) offre une présentation complète du *Commentaire* et de son histoire. Roger Gryson revient en premier lieu sur la genèse de cette œuvre à travers sa transmission. Présenté bien souvent dans les manuscrits, aujourd'hui au nombre de vingt-cinq, comme une série de dix-neuf homélies attribuées à Augustin, le *Commentaire* se révèle en réalité être un commentaire dont on doit la paternité à l'évêque d'Arles. L'absence de caractères homilétiques et liturgiques dans l'œuvre font en effet davantage penser à une série de cours ou de conférences organisés *a posteriori* en sections, présentées telles des homélies de manière « artificielle et pas très cohérentes » sous un « manteau littéraire » (p. 14). Roger Gryson reprend ici les termes de dom Morin pour parler d'un « fouillis inextricable », d'un « désordre inouï »⁵¹ (p. 15). Cette structure originale fait l'objet d'un deuxième volet de l'introduction, où Roger Gryson explique que le désordre est moins grand qu'il n'y paraît, dans la mesure où on aurait affaire, selon lui, à deux séries distinctes, A et B, d'un même exposé oral. La série A serait issue des notes de l'orateur alors que la série B proviendrait de notes prises au vol par un auditeur. Cette hypothèse s'appuie notamment sur le fait que la série A comporte des explications plus étoffées avec des citations directes des versets bibliques, alors que la série B se présente de manière plus sommaire et au style indirect. La composition de l'œuvre finale à partir de ces deux séries de notes parallèles sur feuilles volantes explique ainsi la structure répétitive et désordonnée de l'œuvre, qui n'offre pas une lecture suivie du livre biblique. Au contraire, Roger Gryson donne de nombreux exemples de ce caractère synoptique de l'œuvre et renvoie à l'introduction de l'édition du texte latin pour une présentation en synopse des passages parallèles. Le troisième temps de l'introduction revient ensuite sur les sources de Césaire, à savoir ses deux prédécesseurs connus dans le monde latin, Victorin et Tyconius. L'œuvre de Victorin présente une exégèse plutôt « datée » de l'*Apocalypse*, avec un propos millénariste, supplanté rapidement par une édition révisée par Jérôme. Césaire aurait, lui, disposé de l'édition originale de l'auteur. Le commentaire de Tyconius est, quant à lui, « politiquement correct, théologiquement acceptable et spirituellement utile » (p. 17). Roger Gryson l'identifie comme la source principale de Césaire. Enfin, l'introduction explique comment Césaire a repris ces sources en les adaptant à ses préoccupations d'évêque de la métropole d'Arles, où il se heurte à deux problématiques majeures : l'hérésie arienne ainsi que la médiocrité des « chrétiens de façade ». L'exégèse de l'ouvrage est ainsi colorée avec de fréquentes assimilations aux hérétiques ou aux mauvais chrétiens, avec de nombreux appels à la pénitence, qui soulignent également la paternité de l'œuvre.

Conformément à ce qui est annoncé en avant-propos, le texte et la traduction de l'œuvre de Césaire (p. 23-279) permettent au lecteur d'accéder avec aisance et fluidité à un propos de prime abord aride et complexe à suivre. Les dix-neuf sections s'enchaînent en suivant globalement l'ordre du texte biblique, revenant à plusieurs reprises sur les mêmes passages. Les visions de l'*Apocalypse* font l'objet d'une exégèse où les signes sont déployés et explicités à la suite les uns des autres. La typographie adoptée dans l'édition permet d'envisager avec clarté ce qui relève des versets de l'*Apocalypse* (en majuscules), de l'exégèse qui suit (en caractères romains), des autres citations bibliques (en italiques) auxquelles Césaire fait référence. Dans la lignée de Tyconius, Césaire n'envisage pas l'*Apocalypse* dans la seule optique du Jugement dernier, mais comme une révélation

⁵¹ G. MORIN, *Le commentaire homilétique de S. Césaire sur l'Apocalypse*, in *Revue Bénédictine* 45 (1933) 43-61.

qui a commencé depuis la Passion du Christ : « comprenez que tout cela se réalise dans le Christ et dans l'Église, et reconnaissez que tout ce qui a été annoncé la préfigure » (p. 27). L'Église et les problèmes qu'elle rencontre (hérésies et médiocrité des croyants) sont ainsi au cœur de l'interprétation de Césaire au cours des dix-neuf sections où s'enchaînent les versets bibliques et leur interprétation.

La lecture de cette œuvre est grandement facilitée et enrichie par l'annotation de Roger Gryson. Les notes sont de différentes natures : certaines effectuent des renvois aux passages parallèles et complémentaires au sein du commentaire, soulignant le caractère répétitif de l'œuvre ; d'autres reviennent sur des éléments de la tradition manuscrite ; d'autres encore explicitent les sources, les références ou encore la pensée de Césaire. Si l'avant-propos justifie l'absence de présentation sur la paternité de l'œuvre ou sur la tradition manuscrite, la seule lecture des notes permet néanmoins d'aborder ces questions avec beaucoup de précision. Roger Gryson revient de fait sur de nombreux aspects stylistiques propres à l'évêque d'Arles ainsi que sur l'adaptation originale qu'il fait des sources dont il dispose, en fonction de ses enjeux personnels. La lecture de l'annotation offre également une sorte de commentaire sur l'inscription de l'œuvre de Césaire non seulement dans l'exégèse patristique mais aussi historique du livre biblique, à travers de nombreuses références à sa tradition patristique et médiévale tout au long de l'œuvre. Deux appendices clôturent l'ouvrage : le premier présentant les *capitula* du manuscrit *Sangallensis* 181, le second rapportant le texte suppléé dans une famille à la place du premier folio perdu.

Le *Commentaire de l'Apocalypse de Jean* de Césaire se présente donc comme une exégèse minutieuse et en grande partie linéaire du dernier livre biblique, dont l'actualité est démontrée avec insistance à travers la place centrale qu'occupe l'Église dans les interprétations de l'auteur. Là où la composition de l'œuvre pourrait être un obstacle à sa lecture, le travail de traduction et d'annotation effectué par Roger Gryson s'inscrit dans la perspective de la collection des *Sources Chrétiennes*, permettant à tout lecteur d'accéder avec plus de facilité à la pensée de l'évêque d'Arles, tout en en soulignant la portée.

Léa Zéringer

HAINTHALER, Theresia – MALI, Franz – EMMENEGGER, Gregor – MOROZOV, Alexey (eds.), *Inherited Sin? Erbsünde? Forscher aus dem Osten und Westen Europas an den Quellen des gemeinsamen Glaubens. Studententagung Wien, 15.-19. September 2021 "Inherited sin?". Wiener Patristische Tagungen 10 (Pro Oriente 44), Innsbruck – Wien, Tyrolia Verlag, 2024, 400 p.*

In questo volume sono raccolti gli atti del convegno svoltosi a Vienna dal 15 al 19 settembre 2021 sul tema dell'eredità del peccato originale nel cristianesimo antico, che ha riunito 36 studiosi provenienti da 17 nazioni diverse. Come spiegato nell'introduzione del volume, il titolo riporta un punto di domanda dopo le espressioni "inherited sin" ed "Erbsünde" perché la dottrina del peccato originale, perlomeno così come si è formata nella tradizione latina, non rappresenta una caratteristica comune dell'intero mondo cristiano, né da un punto di vista geografico, né temporale. Si tratta di un argomento a lungo dibattuto ma che merita ancora di essere approfondito, come i risultati del presente volume evidenziano.

I 29 capitoli di cui si compongono gli atti del convegno sono divisi in tre sezioni: "Early Fathers", "Latin Tradition" e "Greek Tradition". Numerosi sono i teologi o le opere prese in esame: Ireneo di Lione (capitoli 1 e 2), Teofilo d'Alessandria (capitolo 1), la tradizione platonica (capitolo 3), Clemente alessandrino (capitolo 4), Metodio d'Olimpio (capitolo 5), il corpus macariano (capitolo 6), il *Liber graduum* (capitolo 7), Origene (capitoli 8 e 14), Tertulliano (capitoli 9 e 10), Agostino (capitoli 10, 14 e 15), Girolamo (capitolo 11), l'*Opus imperfectum in Matthaëum* (capitolo 12), Ambrogio (capitolo 13), Ambrosiaster (capitolo 16), Pelagio (capitolo 16), Cesario di Arles (capitolo

17), Eriugena (capitolo 18), Atanasio d'Alessandria (capitolo 19), Gregorio di Nissa (capitoli 20 e 21), Teodoro di Mopsuestia (capitolo 22), Cirillo d'Alessandria (capitolo 23), Diadoco (capitolo 24), Romano il Melode (capitolo 25), Massimo il Confessore (capitoli 26 e 27), Cirillo il filosofo (capitolo 28). L'ultimo capitolo (29) propone una visione d'insieme del concetto di eredità del peccato nella tradizione ortodossa. Considerata l'ampiezza degli argomenti trattati, non sarà possibile presentare ed esaminare tutti i capitoli del volume. Mi limiterò a selezionare quelli che ritengo più interessanti per i lettori della rivista.

Giuseppe Caruso ha dedicato il suo contributo a "Il peccato di Adamo in Girolamo" (capitolo 11), con l'intenzione di indagare se e fino a che punto la formulazione agostiniana del peccato originale trovi riscontro nell'opera di Girolamo. L'autore prende in esame, brevemente, ma in maniera efficace, numerose opere dello Stagirita, diverse sia per il periodo di composizione (dalle prime lettere alle ultime opere contro Pelagio), sia per il genere letterario (lettere, commentari esegetici, opere polemiche e sermoni). Nonostante i numerosi riferimenti ad Adamo e al suo peccato, Caruso individua soltanto due passi nel corpus di Girolamo in cui emergerebbe una posizione prossima a quella di Agostino: un passo al termine del *Dialogus adversus Pelagianos* e uno in *Tractatus in Psalmum* 89 (*series altera*). Se il passo del dialogo contro i pelagiani è ben noto, non altrettanto può dirsi per l'omelia sul salmo 89, la cui datazione, tradizionalmente fissata tra il 401 e il 410, secondo Caruso andrebbe posticipata al periodo della controversia pelagiana e al contatto avuto con la teoria del peccato originale di Agostino: "l'idea di un peccato trasmesso dal progenitore alla posterità – che compare molto tardi e raramente nei suoi scritti – sembra essere mutuata dalla riflessione dell'Ipponense" (p. 236). Non si può che condividere in pieno l'analisi di Caruso.

Il capitolo 14, a cura di Lenka Karfiková, (*Hereditary Sin? Augustine and Origen*), prende in esame il complesso rapporto tra Agostino, in particolare il suo primo trattato anti-pelagiano (*de peccatorum meritis et remissione*), e Origene, in particolare il suo commento ai Romani. L'influenza su Agostino del commento ai Romani di Origene nella traduzione latina di Rufino è già stata messa in luce da Hammond Bammel, come riconosce anche Karfiková. Tuttavia, un'approfondita, seppur breve, analisi di alcuni passi tratti dall'intero corpus letterario di Origene induce Karfiková a concludere che "none of the above-mentioned passages substantiates the suspicion that Origen understood the solidarity of the human race with its forefather as the transmission of referable guilt" (p. 283). In altri termini, secondo Karfiková non è possibile ritrovare in Origene la formulazione della dottrina del peccato originale propria di Agostino, benché lo stesso Agostino abbia beneficiato del commento ai Romani di Origene nell'elaborazione di questa dottrina. Si tratta di una conclusione che condivido e che rende questo capitolo molto utile e interessante. Meno condivisibile è la netta presa di posizione con cui si chiude il capitolo: "what I find entirely unacceptable in Augustine's theory of inherited sin is not only the transmission of sin by physical procreation (which, in its consequences, makes human sexuality feel guilty), but above all, the idea of inherited, i. e. collectively referable guilt, which casts doubt upon God's righteousness" (p. 284-285). Non è chiaro su quali presupposti si basi un giudizio così netto su Agostino e la sua teologia.

Vit Hušek è autore del capitolo 16 (*Inherited Sin in Ambrosiaster and Pelagius*). Ambrosiaster, interpretando il celebre passo di Rm 5, 12, difende la solidarietà dell'intero genere umano nel peccato di Adamo. La prima conseguenza di questo peccato è la mortalità, che Ambrosiaster distingue tra la morte fisica, comune a tutti gli uomini, e la morte spirituale, o morte seconda, dovuta ai peccati commessi personalmente da ogni uomo, causati dall'occasione (esempio?) del peccato di Adamo. Un'ulteriore conseguenza è la corruzione del corpo: anche se Adamo ha peccato con l'anima, è il suo corpo ad aver subito come conseguenza la corruttibilità, ovvero una maggiore inclinazione alle tentazioni e al peccato, che poi si è trasmessa per generazione ai figli. Per questo motivo è impossibile

per l'uomo non peccare. In Pelagio è assente la solidarietà del genere umano nel peccato di Adamo, che è interpretato come un cattivo esempio seguito dai peccatori, i quali si guadagnano con i loro peccati la morte spirituale. Nessun peccato è in grado di mutare la natura umana, ma l'abitudine al peccato rende sempre più difficile per i peccatori evitarlo. Nelle conclusioni, Hušek ha giustamente sottolineato le differenze tra le posizioni dei due interpreti. In particolare, la solidarietà del genere umano nel peccato di Adamo e l'eredità della corruzione del corpo umano sono caratteristiche proprie dell'Ambrosiaster ed assenti in Pelagio. Questa sottolineatura mi pare importante per evitare letture dell'Ambrosiaster troppo orientate in senso pelagiano, rischio speculare ad un'interpretazione dell'Ambrosiaster in chiave agostiniana.

Cirillo d'Alessandria e il suo insegnamento sul peccato originale sono analizzati da Michel Stavrou nel capitolo 23 (*“Héritiers de la malédiction survenue en Adam. L'enseignement de Cyrille d'Alexandrie sur le péché des origines”*). Stavrou intende mettere in evidenza le differenze che intercorrono tra Cirillo e Agostino sul peccato di Adamo e le sue conseguenze sulle generazioni successive. L'autore mette giustamente in primo piano il ruolo dello Spirito Santo nella teologia di Cirillo. Presente nell'uomo fin dalla sua creazione, in base ad una peculiare interpretazione di Gn 2, 7, lo Spirito Santo cessa di dimorarvi quando il peccato ha esercitato il suo dominio sull'uomo, per poi farvi ritorno, una prima volta, quando il Cristo risorto lo ha soffiato sugli apostoli (Gv 20, 22). Nell'interpretazione di Romani 5 Cirillo evidenzia, da un lato, la responsabilità personale dei peccatori che imitano il peccato di Adamo, dall'altro, l'eredità di Adamo che si concretizza nella mortalità, a cui tutti gli uomini sono soggetti. Questa si configura come uno stato di corruzione e d'inclinazione al peccato, senza tuttavia giungere fino alla colpevolezza personale ereditata da Adamo: “il est donc bien clair qu'il ne partage pas la vision augustinienne d'une faute collective commise lors de la chute ancestrale” (p. 424). La presentazione di Stavrou è chiara, corretta e precisa.

Georgios Mertzelos, nel capitolo conclusivo del volume, prende in esame il concetto di peccato ereditario nella tradizione ortodossa (*“The concept of inherited sin in the Orthodox Tradition”*). L'autore intende mettere in chiaro che la nozione di peccato ereditario formulata in ambito greco differisce in maniera sostanziale da quella elaborata in ambito latino, in particolare da Agostino. Nonostante le differenze tra i vari autori, Mertzelos evidenzia alcuni punti in comune all'interno della tradizione di lingua greca. Tra i vari aspetti presi in esame, mi pare importante l'assenza della nozione di ereditarietà del peccato nella tradizione greca. Ciò che le generazioni successive hanno ereditato da Adamo non è la colpa del suo peccato, ma una natura mortale e malata. La conclusione a cui giunge Mertzelos non è certamente innovativa, ma in linea con le conclusioni a cui è giunta la critica moderna. Tuttavia, i numerosi autori presi in esame rendono questo contributo un utile sussidio per lo studio di questa tematica in ambito greco.

Ritengo che il volume si presenti come uno strumento utile per quanti intendano approfondire il tema del peccato originale nelle diverse tradizioni ecclesiali che componevano il cristianesimo antico. Il principale punto di forza di questa pubblicazione è, a mio parere, avere raccolto in un unico volume contributi su un ampio spettro di autori, anche meno conosciuti e studiati dalla critica moderna. Segnalo, a questo proposito, il capitolo 5 di Alexey Morozov su Metodio d'Olimpo (*“La notion du libre arbitre dans l'héritage littéraire de Méthode d'Olympe”*), sia per l'acribia filologica che per l'analisi teologica proposta. Il volume non propone interpretazioni del tutto innovative, ma si pone in linea di continuità con quella parte della ricerca moderna che ha evidenziato le differenze presenti nel cristianesimo antico sul tema del peccato originale. Queste differenze non si possono in alcun modo uniformare al pensiero di Agostino, che diverrà dominante nella chiesa latina in epoca medievale. Trattandosi di un'opera collettiva, è inevitabile notare differenze di stile e di prospettiva nella redazione dei diversi capitoli. Tali differenze non sono di per sé una nota negativa, ma, in alcuni casi,

rendono evidente una diversa cura nella redazione dei capitoli, in alcuni dei quali ci si sarebbe aspettati una maggiore attenzione e un confronto più approfondito con la letteratura scientifica esistente sullo specifico autore preso in esame.

Giulio Malavasi

HALL, Thomas N. – RUDOLF, Winfried (eds.), *Sermons, Saints and Sources. Studies in the Homiletic and Hagiographic Literature of Early Medieval England* (Studies in Old English Literature 6), Turnhout, Brepols, 2024, 444 p.

Ce livre rassemble les articles issus d'un colloque de 2022 portant sur les sermons et les *Vies* de saints anonymes en vieil anglais ainsi que sur leurs sources, sponsorisé par le projet ECHOE (Electronic Corpus of Anonymous Homilies in Old English).

Dans l'introduction générale, Thomas N. Hall et Winfried Rudolf justifient l'association entre hagiographies et sermons, la frontière entre ces genres littéraires étant effectivement poreuse au Haut Moyen Âge. Rappelant à quel point le corpus en langue vernaculaire antérieur au XIII^e siècle est important en Angleterre, ils soulignent l'intérêt de se pencher sur la question des sources : peu de ces textes sont des compositions entièrement originales et l'intrication des hypotextes y est particulièrement complexe. S'ensuivent alors treize études qui éclairent divers aspects de ces croisements textuels.

Helen Appleton, dans « Our Spiritual Meeting Places: Regulating Liturgical Processions in Old English Homilies for Rogationtide », s'intéresse aux collections de sermons en vieil anglais associés au temps des Rogations, marqué par des processions extrêmement populaires en Angleterre et capables de dresser un parcours de la terre vers le ciel grâce aux différents sanctuaires visités dans les jours précédant la fête de l'Ascension. Elle montre que, en faisant appel aux émotions et en suscitant notamment la peur, les prédicateurs ont pour but d'inciter l'assemblée à conserver un comportement adapté et que ce sentiment, associé à l'image du Jugement dernier, invite les foules à imiter la cohorte des saints.

Cette notion de Jour du Jugement est aussi au centre de l'article de Charles D. Wright « Rogationtide, Doomsday, and Communitas in Bazire-Cross Homily III ». L'auteur explique que les processions des Rogations sont l'occasion de former une « *communitas* normative » (comme l'entend Victor Turner), brouillant temporairement les hiérarchies sociales et annonçant ce qui se passera après la mort. Cependant, le sermon Bazire-Cross III, tout en reprenant l'image courante à cette période de l'année liturgique qu'est l'entrée dans la Jérusalem céleste après le Jugement dernier, réintroduit une hiérarchie, entre clercs et laïcs en particulier, et présente une communauté qui exclut implicitement les non-chrétiens. Charles D. Wright complète cette étude en dévoilant, sous la forme de tableaux, des parallèles inédits entre ce sermon et plusieurs sources latines : la traduction latine du *De die iudicii* d'Éphrem, une version de l'*Homelia de die iudicii* hiberno-latine et plusieurs antiphonaires.

Claudia Di Sciacca s'intéresse à un autre sermon du temps des Rogations du XI^e siècle, transmis par un manuscrit du XII^e siècle, dans son article « The Rogationtide Homily *In vigilia Ascensionis* in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 303: An Eschatological Hodgepodge for Post-Conquest England ». Ce texte revient sur l'origine des Rogations, qui auraient été fondées par Élie, et expose les neuf cercles de l'Enfer qui attendent ceux qui refusent de marcher pieds-nus durant les processions, avant d'évoquer le Paradis. L'autrice montre que les *topoi* employés, hérités du milieu littéraire de Vercelli IX, sont donc parfaitement intégrés au répertoire des homélistes écrivant en vieil anglais, mais que l'homélie étudiée les convoque de mémoire, créant une orchestration originale des sources.

Winfried Rudolf, dans « ‘Quoting’ the Bible in Times of Trouble: Wulfstan and the Story of Saul and Jonathan in Napier Homily XXXVI », après avoir dressé un tableau de comparaison entre le sermon Napier XXXV et le sermon Napier XXXVI, met en parallèle ce dernier et deux de ses sources probables : le sermon 69 de Maxime de Turin et le sermon 6 de Wulfstan de York. Il s’arrête particulièrement sur l’*exemplum* de Saul et Jonathan, qui s’écarte du récit biblique. Au lieu de montrer que Jonathan, condamné à mort pour avoir goûté du miel pendant le jeûne ordonné par Saul afin d’avoir la victoire sur les Philistins, est finalement gracié, l’homéliste insiste sur le fait que, par la faute de Jonathan, beaucoup de soldats ont été tués. Cette variante est très proche de la vision du jeûne que l’archevêque Wulfstan développe, ce pourquoi il pourrait en être la source. Le changement dans l’*exemplum* biblique s’expliquerait de manière pragmatique : il fallait que le peuple reste uni dans l’effort pendant les invasions danoises. L’unique version conservée du sermon pourrait cependant être une retouche d’Ælfeath de Canterbury.

Stephen Pelle, dans « Revisiting Some ‘Stock Descriptions of Heaven and Hell’ in the Old English Anonymous Homilies », propose de revenir sur la notion de « stock descriptions », développée par Hildegard L. C. Tristram, pour qualifier des présentations récurrentes de l’Enfer et du Paradis dans les sermons en vieil anglais du Haut Moyen Âge. Pour cela, il met en évidence de nouvelles sources latines pour des motifs homilétiques anglais et irlandais, comme le *Sermo de timore* pour l’*exemplum* « Récit du Nouveau monde fait par le diable », des sermons d’Éphrem, du pseudo-Augustin et du pseudo-Isidore pour l’*Homélie sur Macaire*, ou l’*Homélaire du Saint-Père de Chartres* pour une homélie dans les marges du ms. CCCC 41. Stephen Pelle montre ainsi que l’identification de nouvelles sources permet d’élargir notre représentation des idées circulant en Europe développées par les auteurs anglais.

R.D. Fulk, dans « The *Old English Phoenix Homily* and its Congeners », s’arrête sur l’homélie du Phoenix, écrite en vieil anglais, transmise par deux manuscrits et qui rapporte une vision de saint Jean décrivant un paradis, lieu de vie d’un phoenix qui va en Égypte, en revient, s’immole par le feu et renaît le troisième jour. Une version en vieil islandais existe, conservée par deux manuscrits elle aussi. Max Förster avait émis l’hypothèse que ces textes dériveraient d’une source latine commune, une homélie de Lactance, mais, en s’appuyant sur le vocabulaire, les allitérations et les images poétiques, R.D. Fulk montre que cette supposition est improbable et que le texte islandais est plutôt issu du texte anglais.

Dans « Negotiating the Everyday Exegesis of the Homiliary of Angers », Aidan Conti s’intéresse à la collection d’homélies du IX^e siècle dite Homélaire d’Angers. Son originalité est de ne pas être organisée en sections et de contenir des textes courts presque dépourvus de remplois patristiques, pratiques pour un usage quotidien, ce qui les a amenés à être réutilisés et réorchestrés dans des manuscrits plus tardifs selon des buts variés suivant les contextes. Dans le cadre anglais, le fragment Taunton, bilingue, indique qu’ils ont servi de base pour de nouvelles prédications pour des laïcs, et le Sermon Lambeth 1, adapté d’un texte de l’Homélaire d’Angers, au XIII^e siècle, permet d’offrir une vue particulièrement modérée des juifs pour son époque. Certaines parties de la collection apparaissent aussi dans des cadres liturgiques.

Christopher A. Jones, dans « Early English Homiletic Treatments of Christ’s Passion : Generic and Liturgical Influences », s’intéresse au corpus d’homélies anonymes en vieil anglais, provenant de la Mercie du IX^e siècle et toujours bien vivant au XII^e, qui proposent un récit de la Passion du Christ combinant les versions des différents évangélistes et ajoutant peu de commentaires exégétiques. Il montre qu’on trouve des assemblages similaires en latin dans l’Homélaire Penbroke 25 et dans le *De passione Domini* de Candidus, l’élève d’Alcuin, ainsi qu’en moyen irlandais dans le *Leabhar Breac*. Cela correspond donc sûrement à une tradition du christianisme insulaire, antérieure à la diffusion

des formes liturgiques romano-franques, permettant de prêcher même pendant le *triduum* pascal, malgré les réserves d'Ælfric d'Eynsham.

C'est à un sermon encore inédit que se consacre Thomas N. Hall dans « The Earliest Latin Sermon for the Virgin's Conception at the Annunciation ». Le texte, transmis par le ms. Salisbury 223, fol. 19^v-20^r, a probablement été rédigé à Bury St Edmunds sous l'abbé Anselme le Jeune et date du XII^e siècle, ce qui fait de lui le plus ancien sermon sur la conception virginale de Marie. Thomas N. Hall analyse la composition de l'homélie, ce qui lui permet de mettre en lumière des parallèles avec différentes sources comme la *Passion de Barthélémy*, le sermon 123 du pseudo-Augustin, le sermon 2 de Grégoire le Grand sur Ézéchiël et la liturgie de l'Avent, et de pointer son influence dans le développement du culte marial au XII^e siècle. L'article comprend également l'édition et la traduction du sermon, ainsi qu'une description de la recension du *Cotton-Corpus Legendary* qui se trouve dans le ms. Salisbury 223.

Dans « Domesticating Translation in the Old English *Legend of the Seven Sleepers* », Hugh Magennis commence par rappeler les concepts de domestication et d'étrangéisation formulés par le théoricien de la traduction Lawrence Venuti. Il note que, si la plupart des traductions hagiographiques en vieil anglais s'efforcent de garder le caractère étranger du texte, la traduction de la *Légende des Sept dormeurs d'Ephèse* fait l'inverse. La cité méditerranéenne devient une ville marchande anglaise, les démarches entreprises contre Malchus, le dormeur qui s'aventure hors de la grotte, se transforment en des procédures légales contemporaines des lecteurs et la monnaie ancienne se mue en *penegas* anglaises. La *Légende* est ainsi un des rares exemples de domestication parmi les traductions d'hagiographies en vieil anglais.

Jane Roberts, dans « Some Differences between the Vercelli and Vespasian Prose Guthlac Texts », propose de se concentrer sur deux textes dérivant de la *Vita S. Guthlaci* de Félix du VIII^e siècle : une homélie figurant dans le manuscrit Vercelli XXIII, datable du IX^e siècle, et une *Vie*, dans le manuscrit London, BL, Cotton Vespasian D XXI, du X^e. En comparant le style et le vocabulaire des deux œuvres, Jane Roberts considère qu'elles dépendent d'un ancêtre commun, une première traduction en vieil anglais de la *Vita*, mais qu'elles présentent des choix de formulation différents : l'homélie contient plus de doublets, alors que la *Vie* a une syntaxe plus proche de la *Vita* latine. L'homélie ajoute également une scène où saint Barthélémy joue le rôle de psychopompe pour l'âme de Guthlac, ce qui prouve que son culte continuait à se développer après le VIII^e siècle.

Rosalind Love, dans « Starting to Write about the Saints of Kent », s'intéresse aux écrits en vieil anglais antérieurs aux dossiers hagiographiques latins sur les saints et saintes du Kent, notamment Mildthryth et Eadburh, rédigés par Goscelin et un hagiographe anonyme surnommé B. Elle analyse ainsi la *Légende royale du Kent*, le *Secgan* (« Sur les dernières demeures des saints »), une *Vie* fragmentaire de Mildthryth et une ordonnance partiellement conservée à propos des reliques de la sainte. Ces textes attestent donc qu'il existait des récits sur les figures de sainteté du Kent dès le VIII^e siècle, ce qui a pu pousser Stephanie Hollis à avancer que les premiers écrits hagiographiques sur ces saintes auraient pu être produits dans les monastères où elles étaient abbesses. Cependant, Rosalind Love souligne que c'est surtout aux X^e et XI^e siècles, quand il a fallu reconstruire les monastères et les églises après les troubles du IX^e siècle, qu'il a été important de structurer ces récits hagiographiques afin de donner une histoire aux lieux.

Finalement, dans « The 'Sanctification' of Agustinus in the *Old English Soliloquies* », Leslie Lockett montre que celui qui a traduit en vieil anglais les *Soliloques* d'Augustin, ne connaissant presque rien de la vie de l'auteur originel, a transformé celui qui n'était alors qu'un catéchumène en « Agustinus, évêque de Carthage », écrit sur le modèle des évêques anglais aux alentours de l'an 900 et doté des mêmes soucis et responsabilités : relations avec le roi, célibat du clergé, soins à son entourage... Pour

ce faire, le traducteur use des mêmes méthodes et des mêmes *topoi* que les hagiographes qui composent la *Vie* de quelqu'un dont on ne sait presque rien, comme cela a pu être le cas pour Swithun de Winchester ou Ecgvine de Worcester. Leslie Lockett pointe que certaines caractéristiques de cet Agustinus évoquent les *Vies* des évêques du X^e siècle Æthelwold et Dunstan, ce qui implique que le traducteur appartenait sûrement au même monde qu'eux.

Les contributions variées que propose cet ouvrage mettent donc parfaitement en valeur la richesse de la production homilétique et hagiographique en vieil anglais, l'abondance des sources ainsi que la grande variété des rapports que les auteurs anglais entretiennent avec ces hypotextes. Une étude large, comme l'ambitionne le projet ECHOE, est ainsi un jalon fondamental dans notre compréhension de l'Angleterre du Haut Moyen Âge.

Florence Bret

HARMON, Thomas P., *The Universal Way of Salvation in the Thought of Augustine*, London, T and T Clark, 2024, 238 p.

Dans cet ouvrage clair, Thomas P. Harmon propose une synthèse en treize courts chapitres sur un thème déjà fort étudié de la pensée augustinienne : le Christ comme voie universelle du salut, notamment en *De ciuitate Dei* 10, en débat avec Porphyre de Tyr. Une première partie (« Setting up the Argument about the Universal Way of Salvation ») présente le contexte de ce débat entre Augustin et Porphyre : le chapitre 1 évoque l'importance pour la civilisation romaine de cette question du salut universel, en se fondant sur les travaux de Pierre Manent... et le théâtre de Shakespeare ; le chapitre 2 présente la réflexion de Porphyre de Tyr sur le salut, dans le contexte romain de l'époque, marqué par le passage de la cité à l'empire ; le chapitre 3 traite très rapidement de la voie universelle de salut dans les premiers écrits d'Augustin, l'*Epistula* 1, le *Contra Academicos* et le *De uera religione*. La deuxième partie (« Christ's Mediation of the Universal Way of Salvation ») en arrive à l'œuvre centrale pour la question étudiée – le *De ciuitate Dei* : le chapitre 4 introduit le sujet à partir de réflexions de Pierre Manent et Leo Strauss ; le chapitre 5 rappelle la position platonicienne distinguant d'un côté les philosophes, en petit nombre, qui ont accès à la sagesse et au bonheur, et de l'autre la majorité des humains, non philosophes ; le chapitre 6 est consacré au débat d'Augustin avec Varron et Porphyre dans les premiers livres du *De ciuitate Dei* ; le chapitre 7 commence à aborder *De ciuitate Dei* 10 (sans en présenter malheureusement la structure ni l'objet propre), en particulier la réfutation par Augustin du point de point porphyrien sur la voie universelle de salut ; le chapitre 8 présente la thèse d'Augustin – le Christ médiateur comme voie universelle du salut ; le chapitre 9 intitulé « Charity, Justice, and Reconciliation in the Transpolitical City of God » aborde les caractéristiques de la Cité de Dieu en son pèlerinage sur la terre, à partir de *De ciuitate Dei* 19, pour montrer les conséquences sociopolitiques de la thèse augustinienne du Christ voie universelle du salut. La troisième partie (« The Universal Way of Salvation and Augustine Himself ») interroge enfin les *Confessions* : chronologiquement, cela semble au premier abord étonnant d'étudier les *Confessions* après le *De ciuitate Dei*, mais Thomas P. Harmon cherche par-là à mettre en valeur ce qui est peu apparent dans le *De ciuitate Dei* : les modalités de la médiation du Christ comme voie universelle du salut, non seulement pour l'humanité mais pour l'individu, pour tout humain mais aussi pour tout l'humain. Les chapitres 10 à 13 proposent une relecture du parcours de conversion d'Augustin comme découverte progressive du Christ comme voie universelle de salut : son adhésion au manichéisme (chap. 10), la lecture des *libri platonicorum* (chap. 11), l'influence des récits de conversion du philosophe Victorinus et du « non-philosophe » Antoine (chap. 12), et la conversion finale (chap. 13). Une très brève conclusion rappelle les acquis principaux, dont les plus intéressants nous semblent être l'insistance sur le caractère universel du salut par le Christ qui concerne tout

humain et tout l'humain, ainsi que l'importance dans l'anthropologie augustinienne de la double peine du péché – l'ignorance et la difficulté –, peine qui explique la division des humains, peine que le Christ vient guérir.

Si on apprécie le parcours construit et cohérent, on pourra cependant fort regretter que les textes soient rarement bien analysés et mis en contexte, qu'ils soient constamment lus à la lumière de lecteurs contemporains (notamment Pierre Manent) et que la bibliographie non anglophone soit totalement ignorée : sur le sujet, les recherches de Goulven Madec et d'Isabelle Bochet sont pourtant déterminantes.

Hugues Vermès

HOFER, Andrew, *The Power of Patristic Preaching: The Word in Our Flesh* (Patristic Theology 3), Washington, D.C, Catholic University of America, 2023, xxiii-389 p.

Through *The Power of Patristic Preaching: The Word in Our Flesh*, Andrew Hofer, OP has gifted the church and the academy with a delightful multicourse menu that will satisfy the appetite of those interested in the study of patristics, homiletics, and Christian formation. Between an illuminating introduction and fitting conclusion, Hofer provides a survey of seven important patristic preachers: Origen, Ephrem, Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, Augustine, Leo, and Gregory the Great. Each chapter also focuses on a theme or virtue present in the homilies of these preachers: holiness, repentance, purification and faith, hope of salvation, love, love of the poor and the weak, and acceptance of our weakness. Hofer ties together these chapters by demonstrating that each of these figures preached the “mystery of Christ’s life in us as preached by the power of the Spirit in the early Church” (p. 3). Hofer shows that the Word incarnate was also ‘enfleshed’ in the preacher who used his words so that the Word would dwell in the faithful listener and that they might grow in the virtue preached. Each chapter is strengthened by a biographical section that reveals how the chosen virtue percolated in the orator through their life and ministry.

Hofer sets up the plan for the book in the Introduction. He states that “we can discern essential elements of how the Word, who uniquely became flesh, takes the flesh of preachers so that those who hear them may experience in the sacramental life the power of the same Word in their own flesh” (p. 3). The survey that follows examines seven preachers from the third to the sixth centuries, spanning great geographical diversity as well. Chapter 1 examines Origen of Alexandria’s preaching on holiness through his *Homilies on Leviticus* and *Homilies on the Psalms*. In the second chapter Hofer presents the virtue of humility through Ephrem the Syrian’s *Commentary on Genesis* and *Homily on Our Lord*. The next three chapters focus on the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. Hofer utilizes Gregory of Nazianzus’ *Theological Orations* to show faith and purification as inseparable. For Gregory, as Hofer shows, the incarnation was for “cleansing like by like” (Or 38.13, quoted in p. 143). Perhaps this chapter best exemplifies Hofer’s skill in contextualizing each orator in their own time and concerns. For that reason, this chapter alone is worth the price of the book. Hofer shifts attention to the most well-known preacher of the early Church, John Chrysostom, to show the Word enfleshed as a hope of salvation. Through Chrysostom’s *On the Priesthood* and *Homilies on 1 Corinthians*, Hofer shows that “John wants those charged to preach to remind their people of everlasting salvation, an everlasting bodily reality that should give direction in the midst of the many problems and pleasures of this passing world” (p. 192). Hofer leaves the greatest virtue of love to Augustine (chapter 5). Hofer explores Augustine’s *On Christian Teaching* and the *Homilies on the First Letter of John* and concludes that “Because God is love, that love has been enfleshed so that we might live rightly” (p. 235). In the next chapter on Leo the Great, Hofer argues, “Leo’s preaching expresses that early Christians gave because they had received from Jesus, so almsgiving (or not) was

a test case for their orthodoxy” (p. 247). This chapter exemplifies Hofer’s strength as a patristics scholar who engages deeply with contemporary scholarship on each of the orators in this fine study. Through the preaching of Gregory the Great, the last of the seven studied, Hofer argues that preachers have to accept their own weakness.

For those interested in the study of early Christianity and Patristics, not only does Hofer shed light on a topic – early Christian preaching – that has been neglected, but he also excavates texts that haven’t received much scrutiny by scholars. Students of homiletics will be enriched by this fertile study of preaching in the ancient world. Those who are more familiar with more modern ideas of preaching and themes like “prophetic preaching” will find here different paradigms about the purpose of preaching and the self-implication of the preacher in the content and delivery of the homily. Finally, this is also a book about Christian formation. Hofer answers the question of how the preached word can help form the listener to be conformed to Christ and to grow in the virtues. This book will be a fitting addition to courses on early Christianity and patristics, homiletics, and Christian formation. Additionally, it will be a great asset to the library of both the preacher and the scholar.

Sujit T Thomas

KIM, Charles G. Jr., *The Way of Humility: St. Augustine’s Theology of Preaching*, Washington, D.C., Catholic University of America Press, 2023, XLVI-205 p.

In this meticulous and well-researched work, Charles Kim explores the way in which the virtue of humility is both exemplified and preached in Augustine’s sermons. Through a close rhetorical-theological analysis, he offers new evidence for humility as a fundamental aspect of Augustine’s theological thought, seen in action in the *sermones ad populum*. His examination is grounded in Augustine’s own rhetorical theorization, together with the implementation of the contemporary Speech Act Theory (SAT).

The book is evenly divided between two parts: contextual groundwork and textual analysis. The first part situates Augustine’s homiletic practice within its linguistic, cultural, and evangelizing context. The author starts, in the first chapter, with an examination of Augustine’s theory of language, which holds that the act of preaching must arise from meditative and prayerful engagement with scripture. The preacher then offers his speech to the audience as an imitation of the divine Word. The second chapter traces Augustine’s own rhetorical formation from Cicero to Ambrose, and how his imitation of these figures was “repristinated” or transformed in his Christian vocation. Finally, in the third chapter, careful attention is given to the composition of Augustine’s audiences in North Africa, and it is shown that Augustine’s homiletic approach was acutely responsive to the social and educational realities of his congregations. Kim takes the view that this audience comprised both uneducated, but not necessarily unintelligent, and educated individuals.

The second part is made up of three chapters of analysis, concerned with the *uia humilitatis* in Augustine’s Christology, ecclesiology and soteriology, as acted out in the sermons. These three theological themes are correlated to the three central terms of SAT, namely, locution, illocution and perlocution respectively. Kim finds in his fourth chapter that, for Augustine, the humility of Christ’s condescension, as attested by the humble writers of Scripture, exemplifies the *uia humilitatis* that leads all people from the *forma serui* of the Word made flesh to the hidden *forma Dei*. This chapter seems to be concerned with elements that arguably constitute illocution rather than locution, including Augustine’s educational background and his effort to apply his rhetorical skill to make his words accessible to his hearers (repetition, *tapinosis*, allegory, etc.). Nevertheless, Kim is concerned with the words that Augustine chooses for his sermons, and shows where he departs deliberately from classical rhetorical norms. Augustine adopts a “humble style” consistent with his theological

message, not merely to communicate in a clear manner, but to embody the humility of the Incarnate Word. The fifth chapter turns to Augustine's ecclesiology. Here, Kim focuses on Augustine's reimagination of the liturgical setting of the church as a classroom of Christ. Christ is the teacher, while preachers, preaching from the *cathedra Christi*, are fellow students along with their congregations, modelling the very humility they seek to cultivate in their listeners and moving attention away from their own acclaim to a love of Christ. Finally, Kim examines Augustine's soteriology through the perlocutionary effect of the sermons. He finds that Augustine knew that no rhetorical effort of his own could produce humility in his audience. Rather, this depended on God's internal work to bring about the desired response. Salvation is therefore not a product of human persuasion but of divine action. God "gives the increase" and only through "deified eyes" can the audience truly reach understanding.

A novel feature of the study is its application of Speech Act Theory as a framework for analysis. SAT allows Kim firstly to categorize preaching as a performative act which affects its hearers, and secondly to distinguish between the words used by the preacher and their source (locution); the speaker's articulation of those words, their intention and authority (illocution); and the audience's reception and response (perlocution). This tripartite model becomes the basis for interpreting Augustine's *uia humilitatis agendo*, the path of humility enacted through speech, in terms of action rather than merely a transmission of information. The employment of SAT as a framework raises some questions, however. While helpful in emphasizing the active and interactive nature of language, it is not always evident that SAT provides significant advantages over other interpretive models that similarly underscore the performative and contextual nature of language. Conversation with alternative theoretical frameworks, such as, for example, Paul Ricœur's threefold mimesis, could offer a more robust account of the notion of imitation in Augustine's homiletics (highlighted by Kim), and furthermore of how language functions from the level of source material to the active participation of the hearer in the (re)configuring act. The stage of perlocution seems to be where the SAT model proves least effective, especially in accounting for Augustine's understanding of divine grace working in both preacher and listener, 'completing' the communication. Rather than applying "a minimal condition of understanding" (p. 16, n. 43) in the hearer, a theory is needed to capture the dynamic nature of audience engagement (encompassing emotion, intuition, cultural norms, for example), with room too for Augustine's insistence on God's gracious action. In the end, Augustine's own rhetorical theory, in dialogue with classical models, might have more explanatory power.

That being said, Kim's work is an admirable piece of scholarship and a significant contribution to Augustinian studies, illuminating the theological dimensions of Augustine's preaching with clarity and rigor. His reading of the sermon as a sacramental encounter with the humble Christ offers a compelling avenue for understanding how theology, rhetoric, and ecclesial practice converge in Augustine's vision of Christian life.

Christina Turner

KNOTTS, Matthew W., *On Creation, Science, Disenchantment, and the Contours of Being and Knowing* (Reading Augustine), New York – London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2020, XXIII-174 p.

Augustine combined Christian faith with philosophical reflections and scientific knowledge to establish a comprehensive and complex theological framework. This book by Matthew W. Knotts delves into a range of themes, revealing to readers the intrinsic logical structure in Augustine's discussions. Knotts takes the creation as the origin and defines two terms as the axes of subsequent discussions: "principal" and "gradual". They come from Augustine's almost antinomic view on creation: Creation is both "in the beginning" and continuously happening in time. Knotts highlights

the source of Augustine's ideas in the Gospel of John and unearths the relationships between several concepts, including light, wisdom, reason, and eternity. On this ontological basis, Knotts then shows the tension between time and eternity and discusses the role of divine incorporeality in an epistemological dimension. To overcome the temporality of humans and see the eternal truth in the created world, intellectual vision is necessary. In the final part, the author turns to Augustine's natural theology, emphasizing the presence of God in the universe and the necessity of "reading the universe". Ultimately, we should acknowledge our finitude and transcend it to meet God. The work of Knotts excellently balances historical contexts and text, with extensive reference to the studies of international scholars. What I personally appreciate most about Knotts is that he remains faithful to Augustine's intentions while firmly grounded in the realities of our contemporary dilemma. This booklet is therefore beneficial to those interested in the relevant topics, especially for beginners in theological studies.

Zinan Zhang

LEPPIN, Hartmut, *The Early Christians. From the Beginnings to Constantine*, translated by Kathrin LÜDDECKE, preface by Jan N. BREMMER, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2023, XXVI-465 p.

Whenever significant change looms on the horizon, it is not uncommon for historians or intellectuals to turn to the early centuries of Christianity. Some seek refuge in what is often idealised as the golden age of the Church; others look for inspiration, guidance, or even for the origins of present-day crises. Edward Gibbon (1776) may have perceived the decline of the Holy Roman Empire and the stirrings of industrial transformation. Adolf von Harnack (1902) likely sensed the tensions of a new century dawning. Robin Lane Fox (1987) arguably anticipated both the arrival of Fukuyama's "end of history" and the emergence of a post-Christian society. Hartmut Leppin's *The Early Christians* appears to belong to this same tradition. Originally published in German (2018) shortly before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, and now issued in English (2023) amidst widespread military conflict, the book arrives at a moment of global uncertainty. Yet unlike some of his predecessors, Leppin is not drawn to the period for escapist or redemptive purposes. Rather, he focuses squarely on the period itself, examining the lives of early Christians with clarity, sympathy, and critical distance. Readers of *The Early Christians* will find neither idealised portrayals of a *belle époque* preceding the so-called "Constantinian turn", nor existential remedies for their own fractured lives, nor sweeping condemnations of Christians as destroyers of Roman civilisation. Rather, Leppin offers a meticulous, and at times ingenious, primer to the kaleidoscopic diversity of the earliest Christian generations. Crucially, although he addresses the processes of institutionalisation and the formation of ecclesial structures, his primary focus lies on lived experience. A further distinctive feature of his methodology is his refusal to write a history of a triumphalist, monolithic Church. Instead, he foregrounds the personal stories of individual Christians.

Moreover, as Leppin emphasises in the introduction, "I take anyone who considers themselves to be one, or is termed so by others, to be a Christian" (p. 7), thereby defining Christianity in terms aligned with Ludwig Wittgenstein's concept of "familial resemblance". While his taxonomical framework may not align with the strict definitional norms of the analytical tradition, it proves nonetheless productive. This approach enables Leppin to map the entire spectrum of religiosity emerging from the message of Jesus of Nazareth, bringing into view not only the dominant currents, but also those voices often left on the margins of church history narratives.

Leppin's occasionally creative engagement with ancient testimonies, frequently cited throughout the text, enables readers to appreciate the broader contours of the complex and often conflicted lives of

early Christians. His apparent trust in the sources, for instance, his acceptance of certain hagiological narratives at face value, may at times appear excessive or uncritical. Nevertheless, the sheer range of voices incorporated into his narrative allows readers to transcend these potential limitations and perceive a fuller historical texture.

The structure of the book adopts a dialectical framework, examining Christians in diverse and frequently liminal contexts, repeatedly navigating the tensions between two worlds. Leppin highlights how the solutions forged in such challenging circumstances contributed to developments within early Christian communities, developments that, as he emphasises, ought not to be perceived as a “linear evolution but a process of trial and experimentation” (p. 3).

The book is divided into four main chapters, each structured around a thematic opposition. The first chapter (p. 25-115) addresses the dual origins of Jesus’ followers – Jewish and pagan. As Leppin argues, early Christians were undergoing a gradual process of separation from their respective roots, striving to form a distinct identity while remaining in contact with their original religious and cultural backgrounds.

The second chapter (p. 116-222) explores the tension between two forms of authority, following Max Weber’s typology of personal charisma and institutional office. Leppin’s analysis illustrates how these competing sources of legitimacy interacted, often contentiously, to shape the developing ecclesial structures and the social dynamics of the early Christian communities.

In the third chapter (p. 223-304), Leppin turns to a further antinomy that still marks Christian thought: the contrast between the pursuit of personal salvation through ascetic withdrawal and the evangelical imperative to love and serve one’s neighbour. This tension appears to have been particularly acute among the first generations of Christians, for whom eschatological expectation was not a distant abstraction but a lived reality shaping daily choices and commitments.

The final chapter (p. 305-367) addresses what is arguably the most sensitive issue – the relationship between Christians and the Roman Empire. Building upon his earlier discussion of the partial social detachment of Jesus’ followers, Leppin examines their efforts to be both free from worldly allegiances and demonstrably loyal citizens. Given that religion pervaded nearly all aspects of life in the Roman world, such a dual aspiration was difficult to sustain. This difficulty might seem to be especially evident in the question of military service. Contrary to popular current assumptions, Leppin argues that “however much they disliked war, Christians were not consistently pacifist” (p. 354), and that their aversion to military service was primarily motivated by the fact that “it was punctuated by religious acts” (p. 356).

The book concludes with two brief chapters. The first, titled *Looking Back and Ahead* (p. 368-393), synthesises the various dimensions of the lived experience of the earliest Christians explored throughout the volume. The second concluding section, a *Postscript* (p. 394-399), offers a concise survey of relevant literature, addressing some of the limitations of the original German edition (*Die frühen Christen. Von den Anfängen bis Konstantin*, München, C.H. Beck, 2018; third revised edition, 2021) as noted by its reviewers.

Throughout the book, but especially in the first of the concluding chapters, Leppin reflects on the historical developments that culminated in Constantine becoming the first Christian emperor, and on how his personal convictions and political strategies shaped the structures of both the church and the Roman Empire. As Leppin observes, “knowingly or not, he [Constantine] selected a group in the episcopally led Christians that was particularly well suited to interlink with the power of the state” (p. 392). Despite such statements, and the seemingly foreboding subtitle of the book, it does not aim

either to explain or to justify the so-called “Constantinian turn”. Rather, it seeks to present a consistent and comprehensible account of the preceding epoch to a general readership.

Written in clear and accessible language, and in a style that engages with the sensibilities of the modern reader, the book remains highly approachable even for a non-specialist audience, while still offering much of interest to scholars of early Christianity. Despite, or rather because of, some inevitable generalisations and simplifications, it achieves its aim with considerable elegance, especially when one considers that it narrates the history of three centuries in fewer than 500 pages.

The most valuable quality of Leppin’s study is his pedagogical approach to the book’s structure. Each chapter is divided into sections that can be read within an hour and are concluded with an insightful summary. Such a structure not only aids the comprehension of individual parts but also facilitates the reading experience overall.

The translation by Kathrin Lüddecke is clear and highly readable. The volume contains only a handful of minor errors, and my sole complaint to the editors would be their decision to opt for endnotes rather than footnotes.

Athanase Bukin

LETTENEY, Mark, *The Christianization of Knowledge in Late Antiquity: Intellectual and Material Transformations*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2023, XVI-290 p.

In this volume, Letteney examines the process of Christianization in late antiquity, particularly in the 4th century, from an epistemic perspective (rather than political or religious). The eight chapters, organized in two parts with an appendix, join up in a neat circle around the question posed in Chapter 1 about the (pre)scriptural nature of truth. After a thorough analysis of what Letteney contends to be the novel and dominant epistemic practice, notably of Theodosian Age scholarship, Chapter 8 circles back to the question of an (im)possible authority of the written word with a study of the *Palestinian Talmud*.

The structure of the present study is engagingly fluid. Letteney skillfully guides his readers step by step and chapter by chapter, through his overarching thesis: the transfer of a Christian epistemology to other scholastic domains. Thus, the introductory chapter affirms the interconnectedness, or, to use the author’s term, “interimplication” (p. 8) of the different scholastic domains in late antiquity, which is one of the fundamental prerequisites for his argument. Part I of the book “New Readers” opens with “a History of Christian Fact Finding” where Letteney explores the epistemic methods of authors of the 2nd and 3rd centuries: Clement of Alexandria, Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian. Letteney aims to illustrate that textuality need not necessarily be the recognized tool in knowledge production it will become – this the argument of the subsequent chapters – in the 4th century. This rich overview of different, as it were, ‘alternative’ approaches to knowledge production usefully and convincingly illustrates Letteney’s point that “[...] the seeming inevitability of textual interpretation, even among Christians, is a mirage” (p. 60). The following chapter focuses on what Letteney contends to be the turning point in epistemic method: the Nicene controversy and the establishment of the Creed under Constantine. With Athanasius of Alexandria the study moves to its core concern: textuality as a scholastic method. The author shows how Athanasius’s canon constitutes the foundation of the three-tiered system of “(1) aggregation of a scholastic patrimony, (2) distillation of the patrimony into a creed, and (3) sublimation of further dispute to the newly minted creed” (p. 83). Taking his cue from *Concerning the Decrees*, which acts as an authoritative scaffolding to the Nicene Creed, Letteney underlines the relevance of aggregating sources in the forging of authoritative statements. This movement thus also stands at the centre of Chapter 4, “A New Order of Books in

the Theodosian Age,” where this Christian “epistemic operation” (p. 91) is traced not only in the works of Christian authors (notably Jerome and Sozomen) but also in the works of Aulus Gellius, Macrobius, and Martianus Capella. Here, Letteney shows how in the 5th century with Macrobius, the literary genre of the miscellany redirected its generic amassing of material into a varied work (as was the case for Aulus Gellius) towards an appropriation of the Christian method of aggregation and distillation of an authoritative truth. The reader is also given a first analysis, which will be expanded in the *Appendix*, of the *Theodosian Code*, a work that the author considers a prime example of the aggregative method of Theodosian Age scholarship, especially thanks to its proclaimed goal of providing, in a second movement, a distilled “guide to life”. In order to expose this epistemic operation as the “dominant scholastic mode”, Letteney provides examples of Traditionalists (Ammianus Marcellinus, Proclus, and the *Historia Augusta*) who he sees as openly refusing to follow this epistemic trend, thus, in a certain way, affirming its prevalence.

Part II, “New Texts,” opens with a dissection of the semantic and ideological nuances between the “code” and the “codex”, two results of the polysemic process of “codification”. This second part deals with the materiality of the epistemic process described in the first part, moving from the macrostructure, the book format, to more fine-grained aspects such as typography (chapter 6) and spelling (chapter 7). Having described the advent and dissemination of the codex format, from para-literary to often Christian texts, Letteney stresses the fact that codification – that is, the act of collecting Scripture between two book covers – does not equal canonization, even if the mere format does grant authority to Scripture. Again branching out from the codex of Scripture “as object of power itself” (p. 136), the author observes the same phenomenon for the *Theodosian Code*, the original exemplar (from 438) of which came to be considered “sacred” (p. 143). The subsequent two chapters, 6 and 7, discuss the use of typographical means such as layout, color, or symbols as a means to guide the reader in the reception of the different aggregated sources. This, together with the use of *nomina sacra*, Letteney sees as a Christian invention gradually seeping through into non-Christian writings. The preoccupation with the reliability of the aggregated sources leads into the final Chapter 8, where the author illustrates by virtue of the example of Jerome that “suspicion of documents” became a crucial aspect of the new epistemic process. He furthermore finds the same preoccupation in the *Palestinian Talmud* that claims an authoritative oral, rather than written, transmission.

In the Appendix, Letteney turns once more to the *CTh* 1.1.5 and the proclaimed scope of the second volume to serve as a *magisterium vitae*. The author contends that this term is an “importation of Christian vocabulary” (p. 232) that goes hand in hand with the larger epistemic structure of the work, i.e. aggregation, distillation, and dissemination. After the bibliography, there is a general index.

The thorough composition of this book convincingly illustrates the title’s argument of a transfer of epistemic method from the Christian realm to other scholastic domains. Letteney is careful and knowledgeable in the selection of his examples and succeeds in telling an engaging story. Only at times doubts about the claimed directness of influence between Christian and non-Christian scholarship shine through, for instance in Chapter 7, when the author leaves open the question of whether the importation of *nomina sacra* into classical literature and juristic texts is the expression of an ideological and textual, or merely of a technological Christianization. Far from taking away from his argument, such moments of doubt underscore the complexity of Letteney’s project which at times can appear all too smooth and linear.

Alongside some typographical errors, there is a problem with note 68 on p. 250 which should be a reference to Freu 2008 but instead cites Pietri’s 1983 article.

Laila Dell’Anno

LIZZI TESTA, Rita – MARCONI, Giulia – GIOMMA Alessandra (eds.), *The Collectio Avellana and the Development of Notarial Practices in Late Antiquity* (Giornale italiano di filologia, Bibliotheca 31) Turnhout, Brepols, 2023, 672 p.

Comme l'a souligné à juste titre son premier éditeur scientifique en 1895, Otto Günther, la *Collectio Avellana* forme un ensemble remarquable, un « corpus insigne », composée de 244 documents, ou même 248 si l'on distingue certaines pièces conjointes (2a, 116 a, 116b, 232b). Elle offre en effet une documentation pontificale et impériale tardo-antique de premier ordre qui s'étend du schisme ursinien sous le pontificat de Damase (367) au *Constitutum* du pape Vigile (553). Mieux encore, la *Collectio Avellana* donne accès à deux cents textes introuvables par ailleurs. Le nom qui lui a été attribué par deux célèbres savants ecclésiastiques, les frères Ballerini, au milieu du dix-huitième siècle, leur a été inspiré par le monastère de la Sainte-Croix-de-Fonte-Avellana (Marches, Italie), où, longtemps, l'un des principaux manuscrits la renfermant a été conservé. Souvent exploitée en fonction des lettres et traités qu'elle transmet, elle voit les recherches l'étudiant pour elle-même très significativement relancées depuis un peu plus d'une décennie, après qu'une première série de travaux fondateurs eut été menée par Günther à la fin du XIX^e s.

C'est ainsi que l'*Avellana* a suscité deux initiatives collectives associées, en un peu moins d'une quinzaine d'années, ayant pour objectif ultime de fournir une traduction commentée de la collection en langue moderne. La première de ces deux entreprises, engagée par Alexander Evers, s'est concrétisée par la tenue de deux colloques à Rome en 2011 et 2013, dont les actes devraient enfin venir à publication d'ici quelques mois. Plus dynamique, la seconde est depuis ses débuts pilotée par Rita Lizzi Testa, avec la collaboration assidue et efficace de Giulia Marconi. Nettement mis en perspective dès 2014 (« La *Collectio Avellana* e le collezioni canoniche romane e italiane del V-VI secolo : un progetto di ricerca », *Cristianesimo nella storia* (35-1), cette entreprise s'est spécialement distinguée depuis par l'organisation de deux temps forts. Le premier a consisté en une réunion scientifique tenue à Pérouse et Gubbio en septembre 2016, débouchant sur deux parutions se recoupant en partie, à savoir, d'abord, un numéro thématique de la revue *Cristianesimo nella storia* (39-1, 2018), puis un imposant volume autonome de près de 700 pages, intitulé *The Collectio Avellana and its Revivals* (2019). Prenant appui sur les résultats ainsi obtenus et tenant compte de nouvelles interrogations soulevées, l'équipe pérousane a donc lancé un deuxième événement d'ampleur, une nouvelle rencontre scientifique réunie, quant à elle, en septembre 2019 (Pérouse, Spello et le monastère Sainte-Croix de Fonte Avellana). C'est elle qui est à l'origine du présent ouvrage, publié quatre ans plus tard.

Cet ensemble est riche de 23 textes rédigés en trois langues (anglais, italien et espagnol) par des spécialistes d'histoire des textes tardo-antiques issus d'Italie, d'Espagne, de France, d'Allemagne et des États-Unis. Ces contributions, dont nous donnons ci-dessous la liste⁵², sont précédées par une

⁵² Partie I : 1) P. PORENA, « La seconda vita di Cassiodoro e la *Collectio Avellana* », p. 35-72 ; 2) P. PAOLUCCI, « Ritornando sulla *Collectio Avellana*. La *subscriptio* del *notarius* Sixtus nel *codex Berolinensis latinus* 79 », p. 73-84 ; 3) T. MARI, « The *Gesta de absolutione Miseni* of 495 as Synodal Minutes. A Formal Analysis », p. 85-100 ; 4) S. AMMIRATI, « Dal manoscritto medievale ai modelli tardoantichi. Indizi nel codice V della *Collectio Avellana* », p. 101-108 ; 5) G. MARCONI, « Pier Damiani e la *Collectio Avellana*. Storia di un'ipotesi », p. 109-131.

Partie II : 6) I. TANTILLO, « Alcune note sui *notarii* nella corte imperiale del IV secolo », p. 135-156 ; 7) M. RAIMONDI, « The *Notarii* of the Valentinian Emperors (AD 364-392). Social Profiles, Promotion in Rank, and Political Rise in the East and in the West », p. 157-179 ; 8) U. ROBERTO, « L'aristocrazia senatoria romana e la trasmissione di oracoli e prodigi sulla fine dell'impero tra Roma e Costantinopoli (sec.V-VI) », p. 181-212 ; 9) M. G. CASTELLO, « Archivi palatani tardo-antichi. Genesi e mitopoiesi », p. 213-231 ; 10) M. V. ESCRIBANO PAÑO, « Los *Constitutionarii* y *Exceptores* del senato ? », p. 233-258 ; 11) J. SZIDAT, « I funzionari dell'amministrazione civile al concilio di Calcedonia », p. 259-268 ; 12) M. VALLEJO GIRVÉS, « Archivos y *notarii* en las relaciones bizantion-visigodas », p. 269-284 ; 13) F. OPPEDISANO,

substantielle introduction évidemment composée par R. Lizzi-Testa, tandis que le propos du volume s'achève par des remarques conclusives (plus que par une conclusion à proprement parlé comme s'en explique l'autrice) énoncées par la même professeure et attachées à la vision idéale du travail des copistes formée par Cassiodore. Au terme de l'ouvrage figurent ensuite le catalogue des sources et usuels exploités (p. 571-582) ainsi qu'une très abondante bibliographie⁵³ (p. 583-657). Si l'on remarque la présence de quelques illustrations (p. 139, 141, 309) et de plus nombreux tableaux (contributions n°5, 6, 14 et 23), l'absence de cartes est à regretter alors même que la question des déplacements des courriers (objet et personnes) est volontiers abordée.

La thématique générale de l'ouvrage vise à articuler la poursuite de l'étude consacrée à l'*Avellana* avec une analyse détaillée portant sur l'évolution des missions confiées aux notaires, sténographes et *exceptores* au service de la cour impériale ou de la chancellerie pontificale. D'inégale longueur, quatre parties dont les intitulés sont indiqués en anglais sont donc délimitées : elles tracent comme une sorte de boucle partant de la *Collectio* pour mieux y revenir, en passant par des comparaisons et études de cas dont la nature et le fondement documentaire sont fortement diversifiés. Ils n'en procèdent pas moins d'un choix régulé par un triple rapport au temps, aux espaces et aux enjeux qui caractérise largement le contenu de l'*Avellana*. C'est ainsi que la première section (contributions 1-5, p. 35-131) porte sur la fabrication de la *Collectio*, depuis Cassiodore jusqu'à Pierre Damien, tandis que la deuxième (contributions 7-14, p. 135-322) s'intéresse « à un monde regorgeant de secrétaires et d'archives, entre aristocratie sénatoriale et cour impériale ». De façon analogue, la troisième partie (contributions 15-20, p. 325-473) prend pour objet les tachygraphes, notaires, en tant qu'ils participent de la formation de la chancellerie ecclésiastique cette fois. Enfin, on l'a dit, la quatrième section enquête sur les personnels désignés pour assurer le transport des messages et mener les négociations afférentes, tels qu'ils sont mentionnés dans l'*Avellana*. Souvent mais non pas obligatoirement, ils relèvent du monde des notaires. Précisons à cet égard que des trois catégories discernées par Teitler⁵⁴ dans son étude fondatrice – *notarii*, *exceptores* et *notarii ecclesiastici*, la deuxième n'apparaît nullement dans la *Collectio* (Evers, n°22, p. 500). Au terme de cette partie, un utile relevé des 67 porteurs de lettres mentionnés dans l'*Avellana*, présentés sous forme de notices prosopographiques, est proposé par N. Lensky (n°23, Appendice 1 p. 533-545).

« Lo *scriba* di Ravenna e la prefettura del periodo tardoantico », p. 285-296 ; 14) D. INTERNULLO, « Gli *exceptores* fra tarda antichità e alto medioevo. Aspetti istituzionali, sociali e culturali », p. 297-322

Partie III : 15) M.-Y. PERRIN, « *Abiectis ante iudicis pedes tabulis*. Stenografia e stenografi nelle passioni tardoantiche di martiri cristiani. Alcune osservazioni », p. 325-337 ; 16) T. CANELLA, « *Notarii*, decretali e apocrifi a Roma tra fine V e inizio VI secolo », p. 339-364 ; 17) J. VILELLA, « Los preceptos romanos en las primeras colecciones canónicas atestiguadas en *Hispania* », p. 365-400 ; 18) T. SARDELLA, « Committenti e 'tecnici' delle collezioni : i traduttori tra *notarii*, copisti, stenografi e altri. Dal caso delle *Dionysianae* », p. 401-425 ; 19) S. DESTEPHEN, « Ecclesiastical Bureaucracy at the Synode under Menas in 536 », p. 427-452 ; 20) E. CALIRI, « Da stenografi ad amministratori. I *notarii* nel *registrum epistularum* di Gregorio Magno », p. 453-473

Partie IV : 21) J. TORRES, « Los *notarii* y otros funcionarios en la *Collectio Avellana*. Formación, funciones y papel institucional », p. 477-491 ; 22) A. EVERS, « Don't shoot the Messenger ? Men of Power and Might – *Notarii et exceptores* in the *Collectio Avellana* », p. 493-506 ; 23) N. LENSKI, « Moving the Mail : the Status and Operations of Letter Carriers in the *Collectio Avellana* », p. 507-563.

⁵³Qui comporte, c'est inévitable, quelques lacunes. L'importance accordée au pape Vigile suggérerait d'intégrer la référence suivante : J. SPEIGL, « Leo quem Vigilius condemnavit », *Papsttum und Kirchenreform. Historische Beiträge. Festschrift für G. Schwaiger zum 65. Geburtstag*, in M. WEITLAUF – K. HAUSBERGER (eds.), St. Ottilien, EOS Verlag, 1990, 1-15. La prise en considération étroite du *Code théodosien* (contributions n°9 et 10 en particulier) aurait dû conduire à la mention de l'ouvrage magistral de P. RIEDLBERGER, *Prolegomena zu den spätantiken Konstitutionen. Nebst einer Analyse der erbrechtlichen und verwandten Sanktionen gegen Heterodoxie*, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, Frommann-Holzboog, 2020.

⁵⁴H.C. TEITLER, *Notarii and exceptores. An Inquiry into Role and Significance of Shorthand Writers in the Imperial and Ecclesiastical Bureaucracy of the Roman Empire (from the Early Principate to c. 450 AD)*, Amsterdam, J. C. Gieben, 1985. Une première édition de ce travail, en langue néerlandaise, avait été publiée dès 1983.

Réfléchi, l'ordonnancement général de l'ouvrage n'empêche pas certaines redondances entre contributions (notamment entre les n°22 et 23). Il aurait été utile de procéder plus systématiquement à des renvois entre contributions (ainsi de la n°10 qui aurait eu avantage à signaler la n°14, par exemple p. 234). À l'occasion, des thèses discordantes opposent deux contributions (ainsi entre P. Paolucci [n°3] et T. Mari [n°4]). La position de ce dernier est soutenue par D. Internullo à partir de ses propres observations (p. 321) quant à l'exacte tâche confiée au *notarius sanctae ecclesiae Romanae Sixtus*⁵⁵, qui est signalé au terme des *Gesta de absolutione Miseni* (495) dans le *codex Berolinensis* 79 ; en raison d'une lacune, ce renseignement ne nous est pas donné dans l'*Avellana*. En l'occurrence, la portée de la divergence entre Paolucci et Mari est considérable puisqu'elle engage à des interprétations contradictoires concernant le moment où l'*Avellana* fut formée (fin X^e s/milieu VI^e s). Il est vrai toutefois que dès l'introduction, R. Lizzi-Testa souligne (p. 15), contre Paolucci et à juste titre à notre avis, que la confection intentionnelle de l'archétype de la collection doit être située à l'époque tardo-antique.

Parfois, l'apport de certaines recherches reste modeste en dépit d'une enquête très poussée (p. 328-329), fondée sur un corpus dont l'enquête atteste la pauvreté, comme le concède M.-Y. Perrin à propos des sténographes dans les récits de passions (n°16). Au titre des remarques générales, on relèvera encore quelques coquilles⁵⁶ et on corrigera surtout certaines erreurs⁵⁷. L'ensemble n'en demeure pas moins de grande qualité. Plutôt donc que de toujours fournir un résumé des contributions, ce dont s'acquittent systématiquement les auteurs, dans leur langue de composition et en anglais, il nous semble préférable d'insister sur les apports principaux qui caractérisent à nos yeux leur contenu au sein de cet ouvrage collectif.

À cet égard, la première partie offre un morceau de choix car elle traite d'un enjeu majeur : mieux cerner l'identité du compilateur. Avec de bons arguments, R. Lizzi-Testa et P. Porena considèrent qu'il s'agit de Cassiodore. La première estime même qu'il a achevé son travail à Constantinople (introduction, p. 13), peut-être grâce à des *codices notarum* aisément transportables qui, amenés d'Italie, contenaient le recueil de ses copies précédemment faites sur les archives, en particulier celles du siège pontifical, au Latran sûrement (conclusion, p. 570). Le second, quant à lui, insiste sur la considération, révélée par la sélection de ses *variae*, que montre Cassiodore à l'égard de la famille du (futur) pape Vigile, dès 507-511. En retour, c'est sans doute grâce à l'intervention du pontife que l'ancien Préfet du Prétoire des rois ostrogoths (jusqu'en 538) parvient à quitter honorablement la vie politique et devenir *vir religiosus* sans s'exposer aux représailles byzantines (n°1, p. 43). Ainsi

⁵⁵ « Sixtus notarius sanctae ecclesiae Romanae iussu domni mei beatissimi papae Gelasi ex scrinio edidi die tertio id. maii Flavio Viatore u. c. cons. » (*Epistulae imperatorum pontificum aliorum inde ab. a. CCCLXVII usque ad a. DLIII datae, Avellana quae dicitur collectio* [CSEL 35], O. GÜNTHER [ed.], Vienne, F Tempsky – G. Freytag, 1898, p. 487).

⁵⁶ A savoir p. 15 Palucci pour Paolucci ; p. 64, n. 74 Bladeau pour Blaudeau ; p. 111 écrire da lei applicato p. 111 ; p. 116 écrire collectiuncula ; p. 120 manque le pronom relatif che ; p. 235 il manque la préposition por (devant Matthews) ; p. 250 écrire adclamatum ; p. 284 résumé : écrire in the ; p. 296 il manque la préposition di ; p. 399 la date de l'epistula 1 de Sirice est 385 et non 358 ; p. 515 écrire Cresconius.

⁵⁷ Introduction, p. 26 : le concile constantinopolitain de 536 n'a pas pour but de parvenir à la réconciliation avec les évêques monophysites les plus passionnés, Sévère d'Antioche et Pierre d'Apamée, mais bien de les condamner ; n°1, p. 59 : le patriarche de Constantinople se nomme Eutychius (en italien Eutichio) pas Eutychès (Eutiches) ; n°13, p. 278 : jamais Grégoire le Grand ne consent à se désigner lui-même comme patriarche d'Occident ; n°18 p. 413-415 et 422 : la *Collectio Avellana* ne fait pas figurer le texte grec de la fausse correspondance à Pierre le Foulon (CA n° 71-76, 78), ni celui de la lettre d'Hormisdas aux archimandrites de Syrie Seconde (CA 140) ou à Épiphanie : Günther a introduit les formes grecques disponibles dans d'autres *collectiones* pour faciliter la comparaison avec les traductions latines de l'*Avellana* ; n°22, p. 486 : les évêques Nicostrate et Thomas ne sont sans doute pas des Illyriens mais des Orientaux ; n°22, p. 488 : le formulaire de foi, dont le siège pontifical fait une condition indispensable pour mettre fin à ce que nous dénommons par convention schisme acacien, n'est pas de Symmaque mais d'Hormisdas ; les deux derniers voyages supposés de Begninus évêque d'Héraclée de Pélagonie et de Théodore, *decurio sacri palatii*, vers le siège pontifical de Rome (553 ; n°23, p. 562, items 88 et 89) doivent être retirés de la liste car Vigile se trouve alors à Constantinople.

Cassiodore apparaît-il sous les traits de l'homme de confiance de Vigile (n°1, p. 43, 54). Chalcédonien résolu, il se fait même le soutien fidèle du pape. Il partagerait donc pleinement les convictions du pontife, que P. Porena (n°1, p. 63, p. 68) comme R. Lizzi-Testa (introduction, p. 12), jugent seules véritables, par-delà ses atermoiements, à savoir le souci d'épargner les auteurs morts dans la paix de l'Église mais ensuite pris pour cibles durant ce qu'il est convenu de nommer la controverse des Trois Chapitres⁵⁸. Cette intention conduirait donc Cassiodore à verser le long *Constitutum* vigilien (mai 553⁵⁹), dans la *Collectio Avellana*. Celle-ci aurait été constituée comme une récolte de travail élaborée à Rome avant 545. Enrichie de cette ultime et ample pièce (le *Constitutum*), l'*Avellana* participerait de l'intention formée par Cassiodore, à savoir soutenir le combat de Vigile, et viserait à exalter la primauté du siège de Rome. Savante et étayée, cette reconstitution indique pourquoi, sans disparaître, la *Collectio* aurait ensuite été délaissée, en raison de la reddition de Vigile, rendue publique par le *Iudicatum* de la seconde indiction (appelé aussi second *Constitutum*, février 554) par lequel le pape fit connaître sa condamnation forcée des Trois Chapitres.

Résumons ici nos points d'accord et nos réserves, puisque nous avons souvent eu largement l'occasion de nous exprimer ailleurs sur le sujet⁶⁰ : nous pensons comme Porena qu'il faut placer la date de composition de la collection non pas après mai 553 (p. 70) mais avant et estimons comme lui que le *Constitutum* a été ajouté dans un deuxième temps. Nous considérons aussi que Cassiodore a joué un rôle majeur dans la réunion du recueil. Reste à évaluer le rôle dévolu au pape Agapet (535-536) dans l'opération (qui disparaît ici au profit de Vigile) et à interpréter l'exacte raison de la discontinuité, par-delà l'insertion du *Constitutum*, de la section correspondant aux pièces n°82-93. Car, comme le note Porena (p. 64), la séquence documentaire couverte par l'*Avellana* n'est pleinement cohérente que jusqu'en 536 et semble bouleversée ensuite par une aggravation brutale des rapports entre siège de Rome et pouvoir impérial. Bref, si l'hypothèse avancée dans l'ouvrage par Porena (soutenue par Lizzi-Testa et Marcone) a de nombreux mérites et doit même être considérée comme capitale, elle ne clôt pas définitivement le débat nous semble-t-il.

Un deuxième apport majeur de cette première section du livre réside dans la mise au point permise par l'examen minutieux des manuscrits, dont les caractéristiques principales en matière de formules de salut, d'interventions autographes des autorités émettrices, d'*inscriptiones* ou de datation reproduisent manifestement des modèles tardo-antiques (S. Ammirati, n°4, p. 108). Ainsi, tirant profit du travail mené par l'équipe de paléographes et d'historiens des universités de Pérouse et de Rome, dirigée par l'infatigable Rita Lizzi Testa, G. Marconi (n°5) retrace-t-elle l'origine et le parcours probable des *codices* principaux parvenus jusqu'à nous, en soulignant l'implication en la matière de l'entourage de Mathilde de Canossa (v. 1045-1115). Fondé sur un archétype, peut-être découvert par un des nombreux *causidici*, *iudici sacri palati*, *advocati*, *legis doctores* qui en fréquentaient la bibliothèque (p. 128), le plus ancien manuscrit de la *Collectio Avellana*, le Vaticanus Latinus 3787, paraît donc avoir été produit par le scriptorium de l'abbaye de Polirone (Lombardie) dans les années 80 du XI^e siècle (p. 112), à l'instigation de l'auteur de la *collectio canonum*, Anselme de Lucques (v.

⁵⁸ Rappelons que la crise des trois chapitres a été déclenchée par l'édit de Justinien (544 ?), condamnant *post mortem* Théodore de Mopsueste (mort en 428), certains écrits de Théodoret de Cyr (mort vers 461) et la lettre composée par Ibas d'Édesse à Mari le Perse (433). Cette décision, qui jette le soupçon sur la christologie diphysite antiochienne, est confirmée par le deuxième concile de Constantinople (553), mais elle suscite une résistance énergique, en particulier dans plusieurs régions latines comme l'Italie du Nord et l'Afrique.

⁵⁹ CA 83, p. 230-320. Ce texte a sans doute été inspiré par le diacre Pélage dont l'influence, au cours de l'ouvrage ici recensé, est trop peu examinée nous semble-t-il.

⁶⁰ Notamment dans l'article *Collections du schisme acacien*, in *Cristianesimo nella storia* 39 (2018) 177-196 et dans la recension de l'ouvrage *The Collectio Avellana and its Revivals*, R. LIZZI TESTA – G. MARCONI, Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars, 2019 pour la revue *Journal of Late Antiquity* 14 (2021) 168-169.

1035-1086). Ce même codex passe ensuite à l'abbaye de Nonantola. Il est alors copié, avec ses *marginalia*, dans le scriptorium du monastère, à la demande du neveu de Pierre Damien, l'abbé Damiano (1084-1107), également prieur du monastère de Fonte Avellana (1072-1102). Peu après, Damiano fait transporter ce second manuscrit (plus tard désigné comme le Vaticanus Latinus 4961) à la bibliothèque de Fonte Avellana : il y est enrichi de nouveaux *marginalia* qui dénotent, par le jeu de cette sorte de pré-rubrication, l'intérêt pour les mêmes thèmes sans doute inspiré par un même dessein canonistique.

Technique elle aussi, la deuxième partie du livre se détache en partie de la *Collectio Avellana* pour s'intéresser plus largement aux acteurs et aux pratiques scripturaires des pouvoirs séculiers à l'époque tardo-antique. C'est ainsi que, relevant plusieurs caractéristiques des modifications administratives engagées à partir des réformes tétrarchiques, la contribution d'I. Tantillo (n°7) place à juste titre le début de l'âge d'or du corps des *notarii* impériaux sous le règne de Constance II (p. 146). Il souligne aussi leur autonomie par rapport aux grands dignitaires de la cour et mesure leur progression hiérarchique, jusqu'à ce que la fonction devienne honoraire avec la désignation de *tribunus et notarius*. Précisant l'angle d'analyse, limité aux règnes des deux Valentinien, M. Raimondi (n°7) exploite la démarche prosopographique pour mieux mettre en évidence la rupture introduite en Occident à partir de 364 : très peu de notaires sont alors promus à des postes supérieurs qui rendraient leur carrière brillante. Dynamique et percutante, la contribution d'U. Roberto (n°8) s'avère plus éloignée aussi de la thématique dominante au cœur de l'ouvrage, même si elle informe les attitudes et pratiques sénatoriales attestées par l'*Avellana* (en se référant à la lettre de Gélase, visant le préfet de la Ville (?) Andromaque, contre les Lupercales par exemple, CA 100). Pointons donc l'intérêt de son article : il révèle la portée politique, sociale et intellectuelle du savoir, issu de la tradition païenne et détenu par l'aristocratie romaine (par le biais de ses bibliothèques notamment), en matière d'interprétation des signes divinatoires jusqu'au VI^e s. Il met aussi en évidence l'importance de ce transfert, de Rome vers Constantinople (p. 200 sq), renforcé lui aussi par les conséquences de la guerre déclenchée par Justinien contre les Ostrogoths, ainsi que son rôle sous-jacent dans l'énoncé de la critique impériale. Abordant quant à elle la question plus attendue des lieux de conservation des archives législatives impériales, M. Castello (n°9) fait efficacement valoir le rôle décisif joué par les *officia* des préfets du prétoire et moindrement des préfets de la Ville, en la matière (p. 223-224). Leur stabilité (au contraire des déplacements de la cour jusqu'au Ve s encore en Occident), conjuguée aux prérogatives de leur détenteurs, les désignent alors comme les dépôts le plus mobilisables de l'œuvre normative accomplie, avant que ne s'organise le véritable archivium impérial à Constantinople au V^e s.

Les deux contributions qui suivent portent réciproquement sur l'emploi, restreint et temporaire, de deux dénominations fonctionnelles : le nom de *constitutionarii* uniquement mentionné dans le rescrit éponyme de Valentinien (443) et dans les *Gesta amplissimi senatus* de 438 correspond, selon M. V. Escribano Paño (n°10), à une mission spécifique assumée par des *exceptores* issus du Sénat de Rome : produire des copies authentiques du *Code théodosien*. Quant à la tâche assurée au concile de Chalcédoine (451) par les deux *secretarii sacri consistorii*, Constantinus et Veronicianus, deux *agentes in rebus*, elle consiste dans le fait de lire et traduire les documents produits lors des sessions du synode et ensuite d'éditer les acta. Elle leur confère donc une importance supérieure aux exceptores (qui, pourtant bien présents pour consigner la teneur des débats, ne sont jamais mentionnés dans les actes) et amène J. Szidat (n°11) à considérer que les deux *secretarii* sont probablement les précurseurs des *asecretis* (secrétaires impériaux) attestés au siècle suivant (p. 263).

La deuxième partie du livre fait encore la place à trois contributions. Quelque peu distante, tant géographiquement qu'historiquement, celle de M. Vallejo Girvés (n°12), interprète à la lumière d'une

lettre de Grégoire le Grand adressée au Wisigoth Recarrède (IX, 229), les raisons de la perte de traités signés par son prédécesseur Athanagilde avec Justinien (à cause du transport des *archae* renfermant les archives en fonction des déplacements du roi germanique en Hispanie, avant l'organisation des *scrinia* à Tolède ?). L'autrice distingue aussi, d'après la correspondance entre Sisebut (612-621) et le patrice Caesarius, les compétences, linguistiques (maîtrise du grec en plus du latin) et morales, du *notarius* anonyme au service du gouverneur byzantin (p. 281-282). L'article de F. Oppesidano (n°13) en revient à Cassiodore et aux *variae* : il identifie le scriba Ravennas avec le responsable des archives municipales de la cité. Plus substantielle, la contribution de D. Internullo (n°14) marque un apport conséquent de l'ouvrage en traitant du cas des *exceptores*. Comme leur nom l'indique, ils sont chargés d'enregistrer par écrit, sur de petits *codices notarum* (p. 302), les paroles prononcées par les représentants des instances publiques. Une fois ces *gesta* transposés dans leur forme alphabétique complète, les *exceptores* peuvent ensuite en donner lecture puis, sur demande, établir un double (*editio*). Pour ce faire, ils mobilisent donc leur savoir et leurs capacités sténographiques, en exploitant les ressources procurées par la méthode tironienne. Aussi sont-ils indispensables aux différents échelons de l'administration et jusqu'aux curies des cités (dans le cas de Ravenne, étudiée grâce à une documentation papyrologique exceptionnelle, jusqu'au milieu du VII^e s.). Lorsqu'ils sont au service de l'État et apparaissent dans les sources normatives, organisés en *scholae* (V^e s.), ils ne peuvent prétendre à la même reconnaissance que les *notarii* et n'excèdent pas le rang de spectacles.

Préparée en quelque sorte par plusieurs observations de D. Internullo sur les notaires ecclésiastiques (p. 317) la 3^e section de l'ouvrage examine donc les parcours et activités des personnels spécialisés dans les tâches d'écriture au sein de l'Église. Spécialiste des *actus Sylvestri* et, plus largement, des faux (ou plutôt des *documenta*) symmachiens avec lesquels les *actus* entretiennent une réelle familiarité (p. 346-347), T. Canella enquête sur les mentions des notaires au sein de l'ensemble de ce corpus (n°16), en le comparant aux collections canoniques et récits historiographiques disponibles qui concernent de près le siège de Rome. Signalant au passage que ni l'*Historia tripartita* ni l'*Avellana* ne font de place à la figure de Sylvestre, sans pour autant en déduire nécessairement qu'il y aurait là matière à conforter l'hypothèse cassiodorienne de la *Collectio*, l'autrice retient surtout de l'activité du compilateur travaillant dans les archives qu'il a le pouvoir de donner une véritable légitimité aux documents découverts et sélectionnés. Plus indirectement rattachée à l'orientation générale de la partie, la contribution de J. Vilella (n°17) prend pour objet les trois premières collections canoniques ou recompilations antérieures, ici conventionnellement dénommées A, B et C, qui sont attestées dans l'*Hispana* et transmises par l'intermédiaire de la collection pseudoiliberitaine (formée avant la fin du VI^e s.). Son analyse de détail porte plus spécialement sur les canons 23 et 26, 22, 51, 61, 54 et 48. Elle montre que c'est donc dans la version C, et dans celle-ci seulement, que l'empreinte directe de documents pontificaux s'est imprimée : selon les cas en effet, on y retrouve en effet la marque des lettres et conciles romains depuis Damase (366-384), Sirice et Innocent I^{er} jusqu'à Gélase. En dépit de l'erreur signalée plus haut, la contribution qui suit, celle de T. Sardella (n°18) se distingue par la qualité de son contenu. Délibérément située dans le champ de l'histoire culturelle, elle est consacrée au travail de collection et de traduction du grec vers le latin (dont un exemple figure dans l'*Avellana*, CA 102) accompli par le moine bilingue, venu de la province de Scythie, Denys le Petit (v. 470 – ap. 537). Originale et alerte, la réflexion de l'autrice prend en effet appui sur des notions tirées des disciplines littéraire et linguistique, comme celle de micro-langue. De la sorte, T. Sardella caractérise la dimension sectorielle (selon le concept développé par W. F. Smelik) du langage de type théologique et juridique qui est usité par Denys (p. 409). Elle montre ainsi en quoi ce jargon contribue à réunir dans un espace de communication spécifique les *notarii*, *exceptores* et autres tachygraphes au service de l'Église. Enfin, elle souligne combien Denys

embrasse les conventions tardo-antiques qui régissent le travail de traduction : il va même jusqu'à signifier un respect révérentiel (p. 424) à l'égard de l'original grec comme en témoigne le format synoptique (texte et version) adopté dans sa deuxième collection canonique, destinée à Hormisdas.

La contribution de S. Destephen (n°19) est une des rares dans le volume à porter fondamentalement sur un ensemble de sources grecques. Usant de comparaison avec ce que l'on sait des réunions précédentes de la même instance – au nombre desquelles il fait figurer l'assemblée d'avril 449 (p. 446-447), ce qui ne convainc pas absolument faute d'attestation documentaire nette – l'auteur examine en effet les actes du synode permanent, ou comme il préfère le nommer, du synode résident de Constantinople tenu en mai-juin 536. À cette occasion en effet, l'appareil administratif de l'Église présidée alors par le tout récent patriarche Ménas, met en œuvre un programme préparé sur l'instigation de Justinien, même s'il n'est pas certain, quoi qu'en dise l'auteur (p. 429), que le synode ait été prévu de telle sorte que l'évêque de Rome, Agapet, mort inopinément le 22 avril, y siègeât. Les actes suggèrent aussi un contrôle a posteriori exercé par une chancellerie patriarcale au sein de laquelle la hiérarchie cléricale double la structure bureaucratique, les secrétaires sténographes (νοτάριοι) étant de rang diaconal, les représentants légaux de rang presbytéral (p. 439). Tout indique donc qu'en 536, le modèle impérial de production conciliaire a été copié par l'Église de la capitale tant en matière institutionnelle que procédurale, au point de fournir à son tour « le préambule organisationnel » (p. 452) du concile œcuménique de 553.

L'ultime article de la section, rédigé par E. Caliri (n°20), se conclut sur une remarque qui ne manque pas de sel : elle reconnaît à Grégoire le Grand d'avoir su, à certains moments, faire preuve d'une réelle « modernité de vue managériale » (p. 473), en sachant discerner les meilleurs parmi les membres de la *schola notariorum* de son siège (collège attesté dès avec le pontificat de Jean I^{er}). À des notaires sélectionnés pour leur intelligence et leur fidélité, en effet, il confie des tâches qui vont bien au-delà des missions habituelles, à avoir la rédaction de modèles-types ou formulaires ou encore la gestion archivistique. Choisis pour leurs aptitudes, certains mènent donc des inspections relatives à la discipline ecclésiastique, d'autres prêtent assistance aux *rectores patrimonii*, en Sicile particulièrement, et font preuve d'une compétence administrative telle que certains évêques locaux cherchent à les mettre à leur service. Aussi comprend-on que le pape ait pu même promouvoir l'un d'entre eux, Pierre, *rector* du patrimoine de Bruzio (Calabre) dès 591.

Élargissant la perspective aux courriers et de négociateurs pour mieux revenir vers la *Collectio Avellana*, la 4^e partie s'ouvre avec les contributions de J. Torres (n°21) et A. Evers (n°22), dont on a dit qu'elles se recoupent assez largement. La première, repérant neuf noms propres de notaires et autres fonctionnaires de chancellerie (mais aussi deux *primiscrinii* restés anonymes, p. 478) dans l'*Avellana*, décrit leur mission et insiste sur l'une des qualités qui devait le plus distinguer leur professionnalisme, la discrétion (p. 490). La seconde prend appui sur les enseignements tirés de la conférence de Carthage (411) présidée par le *vir clarissimus, tribunus et notarius* Marcellinus, pour rappeler à son les différences tant en matière de statut que de tâche, qui prévalent dès le début du V^e s. entre notaires et *exceptores* civils. Puis il traite des cas déjà abordés dans la contribution précédente pour distinguer entre *notarii* et *notarii ecclesiastici*, entre simples sténographes (tel Dulcitius envoyé au concile d'Éphèse en 449) et figures d'autorité, capable de négocier par lui-même tel Eulogius, *agens in rebus* puis *notarius et tribunus*, envoyé par Justin I^{er} à Rome en 519-520. Plus détaché des questions relatives aux professionnels de l'écrit, N. Lensky (n°23) dénombre 67 porteurs de lettres signalés dans l'*Avellana* (dont 70 % d'opérateurs ecclésiaux. Aussi s'intéresse-t-il à la nature et à la fréquence de leur désignation fonctionnelle (*portitor, perlator* ...). Rejoignant J. Torres ou A. Evers, il relève qu'ils ont aussi mission de délivrer des informations orales, d'amener des cadeaux voire, comme cela a déjà été signalé par d'autres, de conduire des pourparlers. Il s'emploie

encore à retracer les itinéraires suivis, calcule les vitesses moyennes de voyage, fait valoir les performances des courriers les plus rapides (celles d'Euloge, déjà mentionné, ou du sous-diacre Pullio par exemple) qui emmènent parfois de véritables lots de lettres (jusqu'à neuf). N. Lensky emploie à cet égard le mot de dossier (p. 530), là où J. Hillner récemment a utilisé le terme peut-être plus approprié de *batch* pour bien en souligner la cohésion et la puissance spécifique de l'intention persuasive, comme amplifiée par la variété des destinataires⁶¹. Bref, exploitant à bon droit ses deux annexes déjà évoquées (liste prosopographique des courriers et classement des voyages répartis par espace et ordonnés chronologiquement), N. Lensky met en évidence la diversité des talents réunis par les messagers étudiés : au sommet de ces aptitudes se place la fiabilité dont les plus aguerris ne cessent de faire preuve.

Conclu, on l'a dit, par les remarques de R. Lizzi-Testa, l'ouvrage ici recensé s'impose donc par sa richesse et le détail de ses analyses : de la sorte, il contribue grandement à resituer la production des pièces de l'*Avellana* comme leur réunion en tant que collection dans les différents contextes de l'élaboration documentaire tardo-antique. Dès lors, c'est bien leur valeur performative, son ampleur et ses limites que ce bel ouvrage collectif, par-delà ses quelques imperfections, permet efficacement de cerner.

Philippe Blaudeau

MARTI, Liliane, *Konflikt und Konzil. Der Donatistenstreit in der Spätantike* (Schweizerische Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft 58), Basel – Berlin, Schwabe, 2023, 344 p.

This book was first released as a Doctoral Thesis within the research collaboration entitled «Religious Conflicts and Coping Strategies». In 2022, it was presented at the Institute of History of the University of Bern, where it was chosen as best thesis of the year. The publication looks at the Donatist movement, a rigoristic movement in Roman Africa, and presents a fresh interpretation of the schism of 312 based on five councils recognized during the 4th century.

The first part deals with the Catholic Councils of Rome in 313 (ch. I), Arles in 314 (ch. I) and Carthage in 348/49 (ch. II), alongside the Donatist Councils of Cabarsussa in 393 (ch. III), and Bagai in 394 (ch. IV), focusing on the settings of these councils (I.1; II.1; III.1; IV.1), the negotiations (I.2; II.2; III.2; IV.2), the processes after these councils (I.3; II.3; III.3; IV.3), and the definition of the Donatist dispute (I.4.1; II.4.1; III.4.1; IV.4.1); and it analyses the formation of power groups within and outside the African church (I.4.2; II.4.2; III.4.2; IV.4.2).

The second part deals with the Constantinian (V.1.1), the Valentinian (V.1.2), and the Theodosian dynasties (V.1.3). It presents the work of local officials Eusebius (V.2.1), Celer (V.2.2), and Gildo (V.2.3). It discusses the role of two figures of the local aristocracy, Lucilla (V.3.1) and Firmus (V.3.2), also dwelling upon the lay components of the church population (V.4.1) and the *seniores laici* (V.4.2).

Therefore, Marti restricts her investigation to five councils convened between 312 and 411, which corresponds to the period between the Maiorinus schism and the Conference of Carthage. The author considers them a representative sample of the 19 councils that Jean M. Maier includes in *Le dossier du donatisme*⁶². However, instead of the Donatist Councils of Cabarsussa in 393 and of Bagai in 394, which have been passed down to us in the Catholic version of Augustine (p. 26), and are inevitably biased (p. 24), she could have chosen for example the Catholic Councils of Carthage in 397, 401,

⁶¹ Voir son article *Empresses, Queens and Letters: Finding a 'Female Voice' in Late Antiquity*, in *Gender and History* 31 (2019) 353-382, p. 356.

⁶² Cf. J.M. MAIER, *Le dossier du donatisme: Des origines à la mort de Constance II (303-361)* (Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, Band 135), Berlin, Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1987.

403, 404, 405, 408, and 410, which are found in the *Registri Ecclesiae Carthaginensis Excerpta* and which I made the object of my analysis, when I dealt with the reintegration of the converted Donatists⁶³, or the Council of Hippo in 393, appearing in the *Breviarium Hipponense* and investigated in two specific publications by Jane E. Merdinger⁶⁴.

The last section of the book contains a rich bibliography, including sources and studies. In addition to these, I would add a number of important studies, including the works on African councils of Jane E. Merdinger, *Rome and the African Church in the Time of Augustine*⁶⁵, and Charles Munier, *La tradition littéraire des canons africains*⁶⁶. Furthermore, on the Council of Arles in 314, I would particularly refer to the articles of Charles M. Odahl, *Constantine's Epistle to the Bishops at the Council of Arles: A Defence of Imperial Authorship*⁶⁷, and John L. Boojamra, *Constantine and the Council of Arles: The Foundations of Church and State in the Christian East*⁶⁸; on the Council of Carthage, probably in 348/349, I would mention the article of Paolo Mastandrea, *Per la cronologia dei Tempora Macariana*⁶⁹, mentioned by Brent D. Shaw in *Appendix C of Sacred Violence*⁷⁰; and on the Councils of Cabarsussa and Bagai, I would refer to Matthew A. Gaumer's article, *The Election of Primian of Carthage: The Beginning of the End of Donatist Christianity?*⁷¹.

Konflikt und Konzil attributes the immediate cause of the Donatist schism to events in North Africa, during the "great" persecution of 303–305 (p. 54), when many clergy members obeyed the imperial authorities and handed over copies of the Bible. In the eyes of those who had resisted, they were considered *traditores*, "traitors" and apostates, unworthy of the clerical state. The dispute emerged within the context of the election held for the bishop's see in Carthage, following the death of Mensurius (311). Deacon Caecilian, who was appointed, supported his predecessor's critical opinion on the exaggerated enthusiasm of some Christians seeking to become martyrs at all costs. Caecilian had been consecrated in great haste, and in particular without the presence of the bishops of Numidia, whose primate had obtained the privilege of consecrating every new bishop of Carthage; moreover, one of the consecrating bishops, Felix of Aptunga, was suspected of being a *traditor* (p. 89). In 312, the primate of Numidia, Secundus of Tigisis, called a council of 70 bishops and declared Caecilian deposed. A lector named Maiorinus, chaplain to Lucilla, a rich Spanish matron whom Caecilian had once deeply offended, was elected in his place (p. 291-292). Constantine supported Caecilian from the start, but his opponents appealed to him (15 April 313). In that circumstance, Constantine delegated the case to bishop Miltiades of Rome, who pronounced in favour of Caecilian during the

⁶³ Cf. P. MARONE, *Le deliberazioni conciliari della chiesa occidentale del IV e V secolo relative ai donatisti convertiti al cattolicesimo*, in *I concili della cristianità occidentale [secoli III-V]. XXX Incontro di studiosi dell'antichità cristiana [Roma 3-5 maggio 2001]* (Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 78), Rome, Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 2002, 269-287.

⁶⁴ Cf. J.E. MERDINGER, *On the Eve of the Council of Hippo, 393. The Background to Augustine's Program for Church Reform*, in *Augustinian Studies* 40/1 (2009) 27-36; Ead., *Defying Donatism Subtly: Augustine's and Aurelius' Liturgical Canons at the Council of Hippo*, in *Studia Patristica* 98 (2017) 273-286.

⁶⁵ Cf. J.E. MERDINGER, *Rome and the African Church in the Time of Augustine*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1997.

⁶⁶ Cf. C. MUNIER, *La tradition littéraire des canons africains*, in *Recherches Augustiniennes* 10 (1975) 3-22.

⁶⁷ Cf. C.M. ODAHL, *Constantine's Epistle to the Bishops at the Council of Arles: A Defence of Imperial Authorship*, in *Journal of Religious History* 17/3 (1993) 274-289.

⁶⁸ Cf. J.L. BOOJAMRA, *Constantine and the Council of Arles: The Foundations of Church and State in the Christian East*, in *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 43 (1998) 129-141.

⁶⁹ Cf. P. MASTANDREA, *Per la cronologia dei Tempora Macariana*, in *Koinonia* 15 (1991) 19-39, p. 34-39.

⁷⁰ Cf. B.D. SHAW, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine*, Cambridge, CUP, 2011, p. 820-821.

⁷¹ Cf. M.A. GAUMER, *The Election of Primian of Carthage: The Beginning of the End of Donatist Christianity?*, in *Zeitschrift Für Antikes Christentum* 16/2 (2012) 292-310.

Council of 2-5 October 313 (p. 67). He recognized the election of Caecilian, rejected the appointment of Maiorinus, and condemned the Donatist practice of re-administering the sacraments to those who had received them from fallen clergy. Dissatisfied with these decisions, the Donatists continued with their controversy. Wanting to end these disputes permanently, Constantine summoned a council at Arles, bringing together 40 bishops from the West. On 1 August 314, the Council of Arles fully endorsed the decisions of the Council of Rome in 313, recognized Caecilian's innocence, and condemned his accusers (p. 84-86). According to this Council, Caecilian's ordination was valid, because the validity of a sacrament is not found in the worthiness of the celebrant but in the mysterious work of Divine Grace.

The book then explores the central years of the 4th century, which saw a forced reunion with the Donatists. Constans hoped to achieve the reconciliation of bishops in Africa and delegated Paul and Macarius to go to Carthage, under the pretext of supervising grant distribution, but Donatus reacted harshly, criticizing the emperor's intervention (p. 144-145). Thus, in 347, Constans promulgated a law against the Donatists, ordering the dissolution of those schismatic communities, the transfer of their property to the Catholics, and the exile of the recalcitrants (p. 278-280). Between 348 and 349, the Catholic bishops of the African provinces met at the Council of Carthage, under the presidency of bishop Gratus, Caecilian's successor. They rejoiced at what they thought was the end of the Donatist schism. They prohibited the rebaptism of heretics and schismatics who returned to the Church (*can.* 1) and the worship of false martyrs (*can.* 2) (p. 174-175).

Lastly, this book analyses the last years of the 4th century, when the Maximian schism occurred within the Donatist Church. Maximian was a deacon of Parmenian and a Donatist bishop of Carthage. He was excommunicated with three other deacons by Primian for unclear reasons. A group that surrounded Maximian gathered 43 bishops to hold a council in Carthage (p. 203). They summoned Primian to a second Council held in 393 at Cabarsussa in Byzacena, where around 100 bishops agreed to overthrow Primian for various disciplinary infractions and elected Maximian to replace him (p. 204). Primian replied by convening a council of 310 bishops in 394 at Bagai, in Numidia. Maximian was again excommunicated, together with those who had consecrated him, and the Maximianists were given a deadline to end the schism. Failure to submit before the prescribed dates would result in them being admitted to penance only and being denied all honours (p. 231). Over the next three years, Primian's supporters won a series of legal actions against the Maximianists. A reconciliation with some of the Maximianists took place in 397, after the intervention of the Circumcellions, led by Count Gildo (p. 287-289).

The historical analysis of the sources reveals the actual use of violence during the Donatist controversy. As Brent D. Shaw correctly pointed out⁷², this book observes that the Donatists resorted to violence only in exceptional circumstances, whereas the Catholics often appealed to the emperor to use force to restore the unity of the African Church (p. 162). Consequently, the Council that met at Carthage in June 404 sent a legation to the court of Ravenna to ask for imperial protection against the Donatists (see *Registri Ecclesiae Carthaginensis Excerpta* 93).

It certainly would have been interesting to compare the Council of Cabarsussa in 393 to the Council of Carthage in 311 chaired by Secundus of Tigisis, because Augustine himself had linked these two Councils which had multiple affinities (absence of the accused, absence of the bishops of Numidia, hostility of the *seniores laici*, etc.), so much so that Gaumer thought that "Augustine worked prodigiously, perhaps obsessively even, at gradually interpreting the narrative of the Maximianist

⁷² Cf. SHAW, *Sacred Violence*, p. 52-54.

schism in his early years as a priest, and then bishop, to the advantage of the Catholic party in Africa”⁷³.

On the other hand, Marti emphasizes that the study of the conciliar texts is also a study of sociology and psychology, where conflict theory and coping strategies can be applied. In this context, she refers to Georg Simmel (p. 14) and Katharina Heyden (p. 27). In sociology, Georg Simmel believed that conflict could help integrate and stabilize a society⁷⁴. He said that the intensity of the conflict varies depending on the emotional involvement of the parties, the degree of solidarity within the opposing groups, and the clarity and limited nature of their goals. He also showed that groups work to create internal solidarity, centralize power, and reduce dissent. Resolving conflicts can relieve tension and hostility and pave the way for future agreements. In psychology, Katharina Heyden defined coping as a concept describing “individuals as active beings”, who can “deal with stressful situations on emotional, factual, and interpretative-evaluative levels”⁷⁵. Moreover, Katharina Heyden and Martino Mona used coping strategies for religious conflicts, with the belief that disputes “involving religion often intensify, [elude resolution, or] lose their constructive and socializing potential, because strong emotional, factual, and interpretive aspects”⁷⁶ are interwoven. Such conflicts often exceed the limits of established conflict resolution strategies⁷⁷.

In this perspective, the five councils examined in *Konflikt und Konzil* were not necessarily convened to end the Donatist controversy, but rather to make it visible, identify it, address it, and document it within a framework involving several actors (Empire, churches, lay people). These five councils identified the parties involved (traitors, martyrs, *pars Caeciliani*, *pars Maiorini*, Catholics, Donatists, Primianists, Maximianists), the subject of the controversy (the true church), and the legitimate party (Christianity legalized by the emperor). Moreover, these five councils triggered the processes that shaped the controversy and how it was perceived, influencing the arguments discussed (Caecilian’s ordination, the validity of the sacraments administered by sinners), and providing new points of discussion for the parties involved (the true martyrs, the repetition of baptism). As a result, the councils generated common interests (religious, political, economic, and social interests) and they fostered new forms of cooperation (between Lucilla and Maiorinus, between *seniores laici* and *pars Maiorini*, between *seniores laici* and Maximianists, between Circumcellions and Donatists, between the Donatist bishop Optatus of Thamugadi and Count Gildo).

Regarding the Council of Rome in 313, Marti notes that the definition of *pars Donati* replaces the definition of *pars Maiorini*, but does not take into account the fact that the schismatics also called themselves *catholici*, as Optatus testifies (see *Adversus donatistas* II,1) and as emerges from the proceedings of the Conference of Carthage (see *Gesta Collationis Carthaginiensis* III,102). “During that Conference, the Donatist bishop Gaudentius saw the preservation of the law in a hostile world as a sufficient way to recognize their Catholicity, not in a geographic extension, but in the holiness of

⁷³ M.A. GAUMER, *Augustine’s Cyprian: Authority in Roman Africa*, Leiden, Brill, 2016, p. 91.

⁷⁴ Cf. G. SIMMEL, *Soziologie. Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung*, Berlin, Dunker & Humblot, 1908.

⁷⁵ Cf. K. HEYDEN, *Interfakultäre Forschungskoooperation (IFK) Religious Conflicts and Coping Strategies. Struktur, Ziele, Konzepte und Methoden*, abstract, online <https://www.religious-conflicts.unibe.ch/>.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁷ Cf. K. HEYDEN – M. MONA, *Coping with religious conflicts. Introducing a new concept in conflict research*, in *Zeitschrift für Religion, Gesellschaft und Politik* 5 (2021) 371-390.

their believers. Consequently, Gaudentius ascribed the *nomen catholicum* to the religious community as separate from the so-called *traditores*” (see *ibidem*)⁷⁸.

Starting from the five councils mentioned above, Marti certainly addresses various issues in a decidedly original way. For example, she reminds us that Georg Simmel distinguished between three forms of brokerage in the social conflict: the non-partisan broker who reduces conflict in the triad, the *tertius gaudens* broker who benefits from the lack of connection between the others, and the *divide et impera* broker who actively creates or sustains conflict (p. 59-63), and she claims that, during the Donatist controversy, Emperor Constantine assumed the role of impartial judge and mediator (p. 64-69), while Emperor Julian assumed the role of *tertius gaudens* and *divide et impera* (p. 280). Constantine, who had been summoned by the Donatists, commissioned Bishop Miltiades of Rome to solve the case of Caecilian. To facilitate a better understanding of the reality concerning the controversy within the African Church, the emperor sent the incriminating letters he had received to the Pope, through Proconsul Anulinus. He wanted to restore peace within the African Church, without interfering directly. By contrast, Julian allowed all the exiled Donatists to return to their African communities, aiming to destroy the Christian church through internal confrontation. The return of the Donatists in Africa saw the start of a cruel revenge: cities were plundered, Catholic basilicas destroyed, and many bishops and priests abused.

Paola Marone

MATSANGOU, Rea, *The Manichaeans of the Roman East: Manichaeism in Greek Anti-Manichaica and Roman Imperial Legislation* (Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 105), Leiden – Boston, Brill, 2023, XXII-580 p.

The Greek anti-Manichaica were the only source of information on Manichaeism, alongside testimonies from Augustine, accessible to researchers in the 19th century and earlier. Isaac de Beausobre, while writing the foundational publication for Manichaean studies in the first half of the 18th century, primarily focused on Greek sources and the *Acta Archelai*, which survived in Latin. Despite lacking access to authentic Manichaean sources, he recognised the biased nature of these works. In the 19th century, additional anti-Manichaean sources, such as Arabic and Syrian texts, were compiled and studied. However, the status of the anti-Manichaica movement did not change significantly for an extended period. In 1914, a group of German archaeologists made a significant discovery in Turfan, Western China, revealing the first genuine Manichaean text, translated into Sogdian, Turkic languages, and Chinese. This discovery revolutionised the field of Manichaean studies. Shortly thereafter, other genuine Manichaean texts were uncovered in Egypt, specifically the Medinet-Madi library, located near the Fayum Oasis. These discoveries advanced the study of Manichaeism and pushed the Greek anti-Manichaica into obscurity.

Until recently, the Greek anti-Manichaean corpus was largely overlooked by scholars, and often regarded as biased in nature, although it remains a subject of research in certain contexts. However, Rea Matsangou has reintroduced this corpus into the study of Manichaeism. Her dissertation, defended in 2021 at Leiden, was slightly revised and published by Brill in 2023. In addition to offering a nuanced approach to Greek anti-Manichaica, the work provides readers with a comprehensive overview of the existing texts from the eastern Roman Empire. Matsangou aims to demonstrate the significance of Greek anti-Manichaean writings in understanding the realities of Manichaean

⁷⁸ On *nomen catholicum* in Optatus of Milevis see P. MARONE, *The Use of the Term “Catholic” in the Donatist Controversy*, in *Pomoerium* 6 (2007-2008) 81-91, p. 87; and on *nomen catholicum* in the Conference of Carthage see E. ZOCCA, *L'identità cristiana nel dibattito fra cattolici e donatisti*, in *Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi* 21 (2004) 109-130.

communities in the eastern regions of the Roman Empire. Focusing not only on the content but also on the work's external presentation, the publisher has skilfully transformed this monumental research into a user-friendly book. Despite spanning nearly 580 pages, the text remains accessible in size, the paper quality is commendable, and the font is conducive to reading. No critical or minor flaws have been identified in this work, despite a slight misspelling on page 491, where one may read "Mr. Leon had named it...", while he is referred to as Mr. Lion everywhere else.

Matsangou's work is organised into eight chapters, along with an introduction and a conclusion. This structure reflects her reliance on her dissertation. Adopting a classic problem-solution framework, she begins with the status of research on the question, methodology, and a historical overview of the research in the introduction. She then presents the research material and progresses through the subsequent chapters before concluding. The text features extensive citations from the sources, provided in their original language and translated form. While this is a significant strength of the publication, it also necessitates a particular reading mode and affects the overall reading pace.

Regarding the book's structure, the introduction outlines its topic, the history of Manichaean studies, and its purpose, aims, focus, and methodology. In the first chapter, Matsangou outlines the most significant Greek anti-Manichaean works. Given the extensive nature of the Greek anti-Manichaica, she restricts her sources to works from the 4th to the 6th century, merely indicating influences on later authors. In this chapter, Matsangou summarises the key anti-Manichaean works and authors: the *Acta Archelai*, Titus of Bostra, Alexander of Lycopolis, Cyril of Jerusalem and Epiphanius of Salamis. Furthermore, she includes the Seven Chapters and Abjuration Formulas in the corpus. Additionally, she describes the network of connections between specific works and authors, highlighting the transmission of particular motifs and ideas. Chapter 2 examines the arrival of Manichaeism in the Roman East during the 3rd and 4th centuries. Matsangou presents and analyses the accounts of the Manichaeans' arrival in the Empire, as illustrated in the anti-Manichaica. The chapter also addresses the issue of access to genuine Manichaean literature among authors and Christians, and to what extent specific authors could have had access to it.

Chapter 3 provides an in-depth analysis of Eastern Roman legislation regarding Manichaeism. The study focuses on legal texts from the early Byzantine period and earlier. Among the analysed texts are the *Codex Theodosianus* and *Codex Iustinianus*. Furthermore, Matsangou addresses various dilemmas regarding the legal problem of Manichaeism. She also emphasises the tension between religious tolerance and discrimination. Chapter 4 continues the exploration begun in Chapter 3 by addressing the question of how to classify Manichaeism. Based on ecclesiastical and legal texts, Matsangou analyses the difficulty that church and state authorities and Eastern Roman society had in how to perceive the sect. Chapter 5 addresses the Manichaean belief system and religious practices. In the analysis, Matsangou starts with a doctrinal examination of Manichaeism, pointing out two critical currents that impacted the ritualistic and ascetic landscape of the sect. She focuses on the practice of the 'seal of the mouth', 'the seal of the hands', Solar and Lunar Worship, the 'Ritual of the dried fig', and Sacred Meals. The social implications of this ritualistic landscape are also covered in this chapter.

In chapters 6 and 7, Matsangou analyses the social aspects of the Manichaean sect, providing fascinating insights into the social structures of the group. First, she studies the potential targets of the sect. Then she focuses on the relationship with other extreme ascetic movements such as the Messalians and Saccophori. Finally, she turns her attention to the implications of Manichaean doctrines on the political discourse. Chapter 7 focuses on the social structure of the sect. By analysing Cyril of Jerusalem's catechetical texts and John Chrysostom's sermons, Matsangou reconstructs the image of the Manichaean communities in Jerusalem and Antioch. The second part of the chapter

focuses on individuals associated with the sect, who are mentioned in various Greek texts of an anti-Manichaean nature. Among them are Sebastian, the *dux* of Egypt, Aphthonius, Heracleides, Philoxenos of Hierapolis, and many anonymous figures. The last chapter is devoted to the problem of Manichaeism's dissolution in the early Byzantine times. In this part of the work, Matsangou introduces an entryistic approach to the problem, claiming that the Manichaeans willingly anathematised their beliefs to infiltrate the region's dominant religion and spread their beliefs among the faithful. The chapter also discusses the relationship between the Manichaeans and later sects, such as the Paulicians and Bogomils. The conclusion gathers the findings presented in the work and answers the research questions in the introduction.

The reading of Matsangou's book left a very positive impression on me. During my reading, I observed a twofold audience for it. First, the work is innovative, reintroducing Greek anti-Manichaean texts in the study of Manichaeism, and provides new perspectives for future studies, which will satisfy more experienced and mature researchers. However, based on the large number of cited sources in translation and original languages, the many summaries of patristic and legal texts, and an extensive description of Manichaean doctrine, ethics, ritual, and church discipline, the book serves as perfect introductory reading for students and novice researchers looking to gain an overview of the discipline, its material, methods, and sources. Matsangou's work establishes a bridge between patristics and Manichaean studies that was previously lacking, as she justly states in the book's introduction.

Among the most interesting aspects of the study, I highlight the motif of Manichaeism-accusation, which appeared in various heresiological discourses. Matsangou, drawing on patristic sources, demonstrates that accusations of Manichaeism were prevalent in discussions among "noble heretics". Different authors viewed the sect as the fundamental source of all christological and triadological controversies that troubled Christianity in the early centuries. Athanasius accused Arius of Manichaeism most notably, claiming that his opponent's teachings drew from their doctrines. Furthermore, Matsangou accurately observes that the term 'Manichaean' functioned as a slur in the Roman East. This observation naturally prompts questions about Julian's accusation toward Augustine and its derogatory functions.

Moreover, her analysis of the social context in which Manichaean communities operated deserves attention. Matsangou accurately portrays Manichaeism as a movement that appealed to youth by its radicalism and to women by the prospect of emancipation and the dissolution of social roles. These conclusions are drawn from Augustine and Greek authors, with Augustine recounting the Manichaean period in his youth, while the latter reference the Manichaean Julia and other women. Additionally, Matsangou's summaries of the Manichaean doctrine and ethics are among the most engaging parts of the reading. She emphasises the crucial relationship between the macrocosm and the microcosm in their teachings. She contributes to the interpretation of the "Ritual of the dried fig" and Sacred Meals among Manichaeans; the former being mentioned only by J. van Oort when analysing Augustine's *De Haer.* 46,9-10. Her study addresses the gap in existing accounts of the ritual in Greek literature and enhances the understanding of the roles that fluids such as semen and menstrual blood played in the Manichaean sect. Matsangou also highlights the misinterpretation and oversimplification of the Elects' meal in the anti-Manichaica.

In the context of Manichaean doctrine, Matsangou's analysis of the approach to martyrdom deserves the reader's attention. Drawing from both genuine and anti-Manichaean sources, she points out that participants of the sect were encouraged not to sacrifice their lives for their faith. The doctrinal foundation of that practice lies in the behaviour of the Father of Greatness, who produces the First Man as bait for the Darkness. By sacrificing part of his realm, the Father rescues the rest. The motif

of the shepherd leaving behind a sheep to keep the herd safe illustrates this practice. It helped Manichaean elects and hearers survive persecution, as they were encouraged to anathematise their beliefs. This strategy was commonly employed during Justinian's persecution and often assisted the Manichaeans in gaining immunity while secretly practising their earlier beliefs. Matsangou also emphasises the importance of this 'cowardice' in missionary endeavours, where it facilitated the infiltration of societies. In the conclusion of her book, Matsangou notes how the study opens up potential future projects examining the influence of crypto-Manichaeism on Orthodox Christianity. Since the sect dissolved into Byzantine society, the question of its members exerting influence on Eastern Christianity is quite valid. I look forward to observing future projects and publications in this field.

In conclusion, I highly recommend the book *The Manichaeans of the Roman East: Manichaeism in Greek Anti-Manichaica and Roman Imperial Legislation* by Rea Matsangou to the academic community.

Marc-Thilo Glowacki

MEYERS, Jean (éd.), *Les Sermons du Manuscrit de Vienne (ÖNB MS Lat. 4147): Interrogations sur leur unité, leur datation et leur origine avec une nouvelle édition critique et une traduction annotée des vingt-deux sermons Leroy (Instrumentum Patristica et Mediaevalia 95)*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2024, 451 p.

In the early 1990s, a Belgian Jesuit's discovery in the Vienna National Library promised to revolutionize our understanding of North African Christianity. François-Joseph Leroy had found what he believed to be an extraordinary witness to an early fifth-century collection of Donatist homilies, preserved in a fifteenth-century manuscript (ÖNB MS Lat. 4147). The collection of 60 sermons included 28 sermons known from the Escorial collection (published under the name "Latin Chrysostom"), ten published under pseudo-Augustine and pseudo-Fulgentius in the *Patrologia Latina*, and 22 previously unknown sermons. These 22 newly discovered texts, provisionally edited by Leroy, now receive their first critical edition in this volume, accompanied by eight conference papers from a 2019 Montpellier gathering that subject Leroy's dramatic claims to careful scrutiny.

The original discovery sparked considerable excitement. Here, potentially, was one of the largest surviving late ancient homiliaries, and more intriguingly, one that might give voice to Christianity's losing side in North Africa. Leroy's dating of the collection to 411-429 rested on three key pieces of evidence: a line echoing a Donatist bishop's argument from the Conference of 411, the complete absence of any allusion to the Vandals or Arianism, and a direct reference to Pelagianism in Sermon 48. His strongest argument for Donatist attribution rested on Sermon 39, which advocates for ecclesial separatism and contains three references to *traditores* – a clear marker of Donatism. Noting the near total absence of polemical language and the predominance of Old Testament texts, Leroy also claimed the collection was a pre-baptismal catechesis. If his assessment proved true, these sermons would offer an unprecedented window into the pastoral voice of a community known primarily through the hostile polemics of its Catholic opponents.

This new volume suggests a more complex reality. The interdisciplinary Groupe de Recherches sur l'Afrique Antique (GRAA) challenges most of Leroy's initial hypotheses while opening new avenues for investigation. Through careful philological and rhetorical analysis, contributors such as Mickael Ribreau reveal a text that bears the marks of multiple authors or extensive redaction in his essay on the preacher and his audience. The absence of personal references and oral markers – characteristic features of Augustine's and Chrysostom's preaching – indicates substantial editorial intervention. Etienne Wolff, writing on the language and style of the sermons, identifies shifting rhetorical features,

such as alternation between tricolon and binary rhythm in different sermons, that further undermine the unity hypothesis. Meyers's own contribution reframes the debate by proposing a Carolingian context for the collection's compilation. He argues, not without precedent, that the single reference to Pelagianism (*cave pelagianus errorem*) is a scribal interpolation. (Elena Zocca concurs in her article but includes a longer section of text.) The precise phrase *pelagianus errorem* appears multiple times in the theological context of the double predestination controversy of 840-870 (specifically in the work of Florus of Lyon), a period in which patristic sermons were routinely being packaged and edited as models or even scripts for undereducated clergy. More radically, some contributors suggest these texts may never have been delivered orally at all. Caroline Michaud's close reading of Sermon 13 on Gideon reveals an eight-chapter progression from biblical narrative to philosophical reflection more suited to private meditation than public preaching. Her analysis could not be applied to all the homilies, but it does support the claim that the collection is mixed.

While Meyers's Carolingian thesis offers an explanation for the compilation of the collection, other evidence points decisively to late antique origins. Philippe Blaudeau's analysis of administrative vocabulary, particularly the word cluster around *ensoria potestas* in Sermon 8 on the patriarch Joseph, points to the early 5th century. The sermon's description of Joseph's authority in Egypt using this distinctively Roman terminology aligns with Emperor Honorius's renewed interest in the ancient title of censor. Blaudeau, who assumes Donatist authorship, suggests a date of 400-405 for this sermon (slightly before Leroy's timeframe). Similarly, Meyers notes in his commentary on Sermon 27, a sermon comparing civil and ecclesiastical courts, that the civil judges are assumed to be predominately pagan. This situation fits the social landscape of early fifth-century Africa.

As several contributors note, the collection's theological framework also has an archaic quality that resists easy periodization. The sermons are expository, with only a single reference to the liturgical calendar. There are no clear theological indicators here, such as references to the christological controversies or the debates over grace and free will. In the only essay to focus exclusively on a theological issue, Michel Marin characterizes the sermons' treatment of original sin as "pre-Augustinian" or "non-Augustinian," echoing earlier North African writers such as Tertullian, Cyprian, and Arnobius of Sicca rather than the sophisticated theological distinctions of the Augustinian age. Elena Zocca similarly observes the simplistic moral rigorism and the straightforward biblicism of the sermons.

The Donatist question proves equally nuanced. Most scholars agree that this collection has African roots, though little attention is given to that question here; Ribreau notes in passing that the frequent use of the second-person plural more closely resembles African practice than Italian. While there is broad consensus that Sermon 39 is Donatist, Zocca offers a devastating critique of the collection's supposed Donatist character as a whole. She agrees with Fraïsse and others that there are recurring motifs, such as "fratricidal hatred and occult persecution". Yet these seemingly Donatist notes never develop into the anti-Catholic polemic one might expect. One could respond that not all sermons – catechetical, for example – are necessarily polemical; however, other African homilists such as Augustine, Quodvultdeus, and Fulgentius never cease addressing controversial subjects. Additionally, after observing the pervasive biblicism of the sermons, she points out the complete disconnection from known patterns of Donatist biblical exegesis. As she vividly concludes, to accept these as straightforwardly Donatist texts would require imagining an author who "has undergone a lobotomy!"

On the other hand, Anne Fraïsse, through careful attention to recurring motifs, suggests these texts might still reflect broader patterns of Donatist thought, even if they lack its characteristic polemical edge. She traces consistent themes of separatism, true faith demonstrated through actions, and

spiritual combat throughout the collection. As others have suggested, the polemical sections of these sermons may have been removed in later editions. Or perhaps, as I think more likely, we are glimpsing here a more nuanced spectrum of North African Christian identity than the stark Caecilian/Donatist divide suggests. We are left with the question: are “non-Augustinian” African sermons from the Augustinian age necessarily Donatist? The answer has implications beyond these specific texts, challenging our understanding of the diversity of African Christian thought in this period.

The edition itself represents a significant improvement over Leroy’s provisional work. The GRAA’s collaborative approach described by Meyers in the Foreword – increasingly rare in an age of rapid publication and individual achievement – has produced a more reliable text that respects manuscript readings while carefully documenting editorial interventions. Unlike Leroy, they preserve the manuscript’s orthography and provide a positive apparatus that records all significant variations from the provisional edition, avoiding his tendency toward unnecessary emendation and conjectural restoration. If the accompanying notes are sometimes sparse, particularly regarding homiletic precedents, historical context, and biblical citations, the text itself is handled with admirable philological care.

Much work remains to be done. As Meyers acknowledges, fundamental questions about the collection’s organization and transmission history await investigation. While this volume offers valuable individual interventions, it lacks both a systematic analysis of the 22 newly edited sermons and a comprehensive study of the sixty-sermon Vienna Collection as a whole. Like the similar *Collectio Armamentarii* (brilliantly analyzed by Shari Boodts and Nicolas de Maeyer in IPM 94, another volume in this series), this collection demands a careful codicological study of the transmission history of the texts, as well as a more thorough comparative study of the individual sermons in the context of late antiquity. New digital tools such as the PASSIM project will undoubtedly speed this along. Until then, the Vienna Homilies remain a fascinating puzzle – one that reminds us how much of late antique and early medieval sermon literature still eludes our neat categories of authorship and orthodoxy.

Alden Bass

MILES, Margaret R., *Beautiful Bodies: Augustine, nunc et tunc*, Eugene, OR, Cascade Books, 2024, XXVI-124 p.

Augustine in his old age has not had a good press. He suffered particularly in 1967 with the publication of Peter Brown’s *Augustine of Hippo*, a book sent to the press in 1966 by a preposterously, or rather wonderfully, young scholar. It was to Brown’s credit that he took the works of the 420s seriously and judiciously, even the endless slanging match with Julian of Eclanum that breaks off in the surviving text with the two men each accusing the other of being closet Manichees, in a tone not unreminiscent of some of our contemporary political social media abuse. But I have always thought that some part of Brown’s problem, a problem I see elsewhere in biographical literature, is that biographies of the old written by the young suffer from generational incomprehension. What can a thirty year old know of either the glories or the trials of advanced age?

Neither the author nor the reviewer of the present volume can reasonably be accused of harboring the callow insensitivity of youth, and for the book at least, that is a great and defining strength. Margaret Miles has been a patient, sensitive interpreter of Augustine, always with a fresh eye, since the appearance of her dissertation, *Augustine on the Body*, in 1979. Here she makes an explicit turn to focus on “The Old Augustine” in order to explore the ways in which his thinking changed, and when his thinking did not much change, the ways in which his expression of his thinking changed, in the last years of his life. It is a slender volume, and a beautifully written, delightful one.

The five chapters each explore one dimension of the old Augustine's growth and maturation. Most conventionally scholarly is the initial exploration of just *how* he came to abjure his earlier resistance to the idea of Christian miracle (as something needed in apostolic times to get attention, but now in the age of the mature church no longer necessary) in favor of frank patronage of the reception of relics of Stephen the protomartyr in his church in Hippo. Other chapters explore his long practice of meditation (and so approach his engagement with Julian of Eclanum from a fresh direction), get under the skin of his teachings on grace and predestination by showing how he embodied and proclaimed that these teachings – rebarbative to many – brought him closer to a God that he and those who read or heard his words could love, and in a last chapter his attention as he drew near the end to the meaning of Christian teaching on resurrection.

Her treatment, finally, of Augustine's last days, vividly recorded in Possidius's *Vita*, when Augustine took to his bed, had 'the penitential psalms' (just which remains a topic of discussion, given that the formal category we know is not recorded before the sixth century) posted on placards on the wall, and asked to be alone with his thoughts, prayers, and tears, is entirely successful. She nuances our easy modern stereotypes of men and tears (nothing unmanly about fifth-century weeping) and offers a generous and persuasive reading of the way in which on that deathbed there is a real sense that Augustine was finishing the work he had begun with writing the *Confessions* thirty years before, with a continuo of reflection on the psalms running straight through from 392 until his death. (She does not mention, but I wonder if she was thinking, of a parallel I had never noticed before, between deathbed Augustine seeking privacy for his meditation on Scripture and the famous scene in *Conf.* 6.3.3 where the much younger Augustine felt implicit rebuff from intruding on the similar meditative and prayerful privacy of Ambrose.) She concludes (p. 96), "St. Augustine's deathbed tears were richly complex: penitential certainly, but he was also powerfully moved by seeing his life as a whole, by recognizing God's utterly trustworthy leading in 'both the bad and the good that I did.' And the beauty was overwhelming."

The *Confessions* and their success have guaranteed that Augustine's powerful intellectual achievement would become and remain tied up with his life story and the remarkably clear and memorable self-portrayal of the man himself. I found myself doodling a list of other figures in our tradition who have done something similar. Relatively static self-portraits are not uncommon (I think of Montaigne, Rousseau [though I cannot bring myself to read more than a few pages of him], Nietzsche), but animating that self-portrait in narrative is at least much rarer and perhaps not ever quite matched. (Marcus Aurelius? Not quite . . .) What I take away from this volume with most satisfaction is the understanding of how all of the works of the middle-aged and older Augustine live in complementarity with the *Confessions* and strikingly sustain their success, not as an act of rhetorical posturing, but as a genuine gift.

James J. O'Donnell

NOVOKHATKO, Anna A., *A Guide to Classics and Cognitive Studies: Reviewing Findings and Results*, Berlin – Boston, De Gruyter, 2025, 221 p.

Novokhatko's *A Guide to Classics and Cognitive Studies* serves as an explanatory introduction to the way in which cognitive science has shaped various disciplines of classical studies, including cognitive archaeology, literary criticism, and linguistics. By synthesizing the current state of research, the book makes accessible the complex relationships and differences between the various cognitive approaches to the study of the ancient world, a timely resource for both students and scholars interested in this burgeoning field. Novokhatko does not present her own argument as such, but shows how cognitive science has offered new understandings of antiquity and of how people in the ancient world perceived

and interacted with their surroundings. The book presents many avenues that can be picked up and explored further by the interested reader, with the guidance of an extensive bibliography.

In the introductory chapter, Novokhatko offers an overview of the history and main currents of cognitive science as applied to classics. She sets out by defining key terms, where ‘cognitive’ is taken as a broad term for the mental mechanisms and operations through which we make sense of human thought and behaviour, and ‘cognitive studies’ as the scholarly domain that links together multiple disciplines by common questions, perspectives, and sources. Looking to the history of the discipline, Novokhatko shows how some ancient rhetors anticipated the insights of current cognitive science, presenting Fronto’s theory of metaphor as an example, before outlining the emergence of the discipline in the 20th century with the ‘first-wave’, computational models of the mind, followed by ‘second-wave’, embodied models. The latter has roots in philosophical theories of mind and especially the paradigm known as ‘4E cognition’, which holds that the mind is embedded, embodied, enactive and extended. From this paradigm, numerous areas of research have emerged. Novokhatko focuses very much on the ‘second wave’ model, and approaches rooted in embodiment prevail throughout the book. Indeed, she asserts that when we speak about ‘cognitive’, we move beyond first-generational accounts to one in which ‘cognitive’ implies “an embodied, judgemental discovery of the world” involving a dynamic relationship between the embodied mind and its environment, and encompassing the faculties of perception, intuition and emotion (p. 28).

The first chapter begins with a discussion of the discipline of cognitive archaeology, which attempts to understand not what ancient people did based on material evidence but rather what the evidence can tell us about how they thought. Novokhatko mentions two strands of cognitive archaeology, namely evolutionary and ideational approaches, as well as landscape, symbolic and sensory archaeology. A key concept introduced is that of “common ground”, which connects material artefacts to linguistic abilities and assumes a shared knowledge space between communication partners. The discussion of this extends to the role that early forms of representation (such as units of measurement and weight systems), as well as material objects (such as textiles, armour or theatre masks), have been shown to play in shaping social relations and the collective cognitive structures of a particular culture.

Another important concept that is introduced in this chapter, and reprised throughout the book, is a notion of matter derived from the New Materialisms movement, a field of research which concentrates on the primacy of matter and the ‘entanglement’ of matter in human discourses. Matter is conceived of here as an active force and “creative impulse” (p. 41). It is an agent in itself, involved in the creation and facilitation of forms of expression and experience. While the New Materialisms movement is not ‘cognitive’ – indeed it endeavours to rescind itself from associations with cognition – numerous strands of cognitive research based in the 4E-paradigm have apparently taken up the idea of material agency. As such, mental activity is seen to depend on or be partly conditioned by the body’s interaction with its physical environment. The author points out the importance therefore of not isolating any study of cognition from the body or material world.

The notion of material agency is, however, adopted and used by the author without a definition or discussion about what agency is taken to mean. If understood in a broad sense as material objects’ effect on courses of action, it becomes too diffuse to have much significance, but if understood in terms of awareness or intentionality, the term contains conceptual ‘baggage’ that needs to be unpacked if it is to be assumed. Possible objections as to whether the dependence of cognition on the body and environment necessarily means that matter itself has agency not conferred upon it by the mind are not raised by the author. That is, it is unclear whether material agency means that material objects have agency beyond what the mind grants them or beyond interaction with the mind. It seems

possible to argue that there would be no cognition without the material, without ascribing agency to matter. Indeed, the author herself states later on that material objects become “cognitive projections of the human body” (p. 41). For such an important concept, used in every subsequent chapter, space needed to be afforded to nuancing its parameters.

In the second chapter, Novokhatko transitions from the ‘material turn’ to the so-called ‘spatial turn’ in current scholarship. She explores space as a cognitive entity with agency rather than a static external domain, where bodily experience is framed as a feedback cycle with the surrounding world. People organize their beliefs and knowledge based on the places they reside in or visit, such that ‘landscapes’ can be seen as constructs of historical, cultural, and aesthetic significance. Examining ancient theatre as a case study, the chapter discusses how the walls and perimeters of sanctuaries, theatres, and stadiums may have influenced audience engagement, shaping dynamics of emotion and persuasion. It would be interesting to extend this to a context of colonization, both in the ancient world and today, and how violations or disruptions of space, as well as the reimagining of space after trauma, might shape the cognitive structures of a society.

The third and fourth chapters are concerned with cognitive approaches to perception, the imagination and experience. Chapter three begins by outlining current neuroscientific and cognitive approaches to an audience’s multi-sensory experience of theatre, followed by an excellent synthesis of the ancient philosophical and rhetorical discussions on communication, the readerly imagination and metaphor. Novokhatko shows how the ancients stressed the link between perception and the imagination, and between language and knowledge. Many of their concepts have been adopted in contemporary communication studies, such as ‘immersion’, ‘presence’, and ‘accommodation’. Furthermore, the embodied, context-dependent nature of image-making, advanced by the increasingly popular cognitive theory of enactivism, was already posited by ancient theoreticians and encapsulated in their sophisticated discussions surrounding the quality of *enargeia* (“vividness”). What’s more, Novokhatko identifies the roots of conceptual metaphor theory in ancient treatments of metaphor (from Seneca, Fronto), where concrete vocabulary of one ‘source domain’ might be used to speak about or clarify an abstract concept or ‘target domain’. This conceptual ‘mapping’ is a crucial part of conceptual metaphor theory. In ancient *enargeia*, the same notions of ‘image-schema’ and common ground manipulation from cognitive linguistics can be found in the recognition of dynamic patterns of perception (motor-engagement, emotion, cultural background) which give coherence to our experience.

Chapter 4 considers experientiality and evidentiality as applied to ancient sources and especially to religious experience. The choruses in theatre are also examined as vehicles of social, political and religious life. When it comes to texts and readerly experience, Novokhatko discusses evidentiality, on the one hand, as the linguistic marker of the sensory experiences of the author or narrator, not directly related to their perspective, that include semantic embodiment, deictics and spatial metaphors. The main point of significance of evidentiary markers concerns the source of information, whether something is directly observed, inferred, suspected or reported. Here it would have been interesting to hear more about the ancient theories on this matter, for example Stoic theories of “sayables” and their relation to *evidentia*. On the other hand, experientiality is taken as the inclusion of the perceptions of the author or narrator of a text – which can be used as a means of persuasion and of bolstering the credibility of their position as a witness to certain events. Experientiality can also refer to the way in which a narrative exploits their audience’s familiarity with certain experiences, by activating their cognitive construal of the text, their understanding of intentional acts, temporality and affective evaluation.

The fifth and final chapter moves from a discussion of current research to an interview style conversation with leading researchers in emotion and the classics: David Konstan, Angelos Chaniotis and Douglas Cairns. Important questions about the field of cognitive classics and its future are put forward, including what the word cognitive means in the context of classics; why certain classicists are sceptical of cognitive approaches; the longevity/durability of the cognitive turn; how ancient sources can inform cognitive science and not only the other way around; and, finally, how contemporary cognitive data can effectively be applied to the ancient world and to societies so far removed from our own. While there is not much content concerning research on emotion, the interviews allow valuable insight into how leading academics are thinking about the discipline. The format is of cognitive interest in itself, where each interviewee showcases unique perspectives and emphases in response to the questions posed. Overall, the interviewees may differ on what ‘cognitive’ means, but there is consensus that it is here to stay and offers much to our understanding of the ancient world.

With a critical eye, a reader might find that the target audience of students would benefit from clearer and more concrete phrasing. One sometimes wonders why a certain concept or school of thought is mentioned when it is not elaborated on. For example, spatial primitives (p. 99), the Constance School (p. 109), or Big Data sites (p. 115) are spoken of but not explained. Terms such as “human ambience” (p. 44) are used, but the reader is left unsure as to whether or not it is a technical term, and what precisely it means. In a similar way, the structure and reasoning behind the presentation is not always clear. For example, the mention of the “theatrical landscape” of the Sanctuary of Dionysus on the Akropolis in the section on literary sources seems out of place. Relatedly, the rationale behind the shift to the subject of orality and cognitive linguistics (embodiment at a lexical and syntactic level in Latin) in the first chapter on cognitive archaeology is not articulated. Finally, the author at times falls short of bringing the unique insights of certain studies mentioned to the fore, beyond recapitulating the general principle. This is understandable given the enormous scope of research to address, and it is without question admirably synthesized. Indeed, the aim of an introduction should not be to mention or treat every different tract of research, and it is more important that what is presented is clear. Despite its occasional confusing phrasing or structure, by the end of the book, the reader feels that they have gained a very good sense of the field of cognitive classics and how the often only subtly different parts fit together and relate to one another. This is exactly what one would hope for from an exploratory introduction. Thus, the book is overall successful in its aims and is sincerely recommended to students, educators and academics interested in exploring this new and exciting field of study.

Christina Turner

PANAJOTOV, Stanimir – JUGĂNARU, Andra – THEOLOGOU, Anastasia – PERCZEL, István (eds.), *Soul, Body, and Gender in Late Antiquity. Essays on Embodiment and Disembodiment*, Abingdon – New York, Routledge, 2023, xvi-421 p.

Issu du colloque « Dis/embodiment and Im/materiality : Uncovering the Body, Gender and Sexuality in Late Antiquity – In Memoriam of Marianne Ságui (1961-2018), Central European University, Budapest, 6-8 juin 2019 », cet ouvrage collectif rend hommage aux travaux de l'historienne hongroise Marianne Sághy. Initialement organisatrice de cette manifestation scientifique, cette spécialiste de la culture et des religions de l'Antiquité tardive est décédée avant la réalisation de ce projet : un appendice (p. 397-408), élaboré par la médiéviste A. Jugănaru, propose une bibliographie complète de ses travaux. Le volume réunit les contributions de 22 chercheurs qui s'intéressent à des textes de l'Antiquité tardive pour mettre en exergue le caractère complexe, non toujours figé, des discours sur

le corps et la matérialité, le sexe et le genre, dans des écrits philosophiques et religieux de différents contextes et espaces géographiques. En rassemblant ces études, les éditeurs proposent de renouveler et questionner une forme de critique contemporaine, notamment féministe, qui, assumant l'assimilation aristotélicienne entre féminité et matérialité ou corporéité, lie nécessairement la défense de l'une à celle de l'autre.

La première partie « India » est constituée d'un chapitre « Celibacy, Sexuality and Monasticism in Early South Asia – A Personal Dialogue With the Past » rédigé par l'historienne indienne Uma Chakravarti (p. 15-27). L'auteur s'intéresse au développement du monachisme selon les plus anciennes sources bouddhistes, et en particulier à la question de l'acceptation des femmes dans le monastère, malgré les réticences initiales du Bouddha. L'altérité et la proximité des sexes appelle une réglementation spécifique dans le contexte de l'institution d'une vie de sagesse et de retrait qui se définit par opposition à la vie du chef de famille, lequel pourvoit aux besoins du corps et se donne une descendance.

La deuxième partie « Through the Late Antique Mediterranean » est constituée de 18 chapitres encadrés par deux études élargissant le questionnement au-delà de l'Antiquité tardive, vers l'époque présocratique d'une part (contemporaine des textes de la première partie) et vers le Moyen-Âge occidental d'autre part.

Les quatre premiers chapitres abordent la réflexion sur l'être et la vérité dans la philosophie grecque. Spécialiste de la Grèce ancienne, Emese Mogyoródi s'intéresse à la place des figures féminines dans le poème de Parménide, et dans le parcours du protagoniste masculin en quête de Sagesse, dans « Light, Knowledge, Incorporeality and the Feminine in Parmenides » (p. 33-56). Il s'agit de nuancer la lecture assez négative de ce texte par les auteurs féministes, en montrant que le féminin n'y est pas seulement associé à ce qui est matériel et corporel, mais aussi à la connaissance et à l'incorporéité. Après cette incursion dans les débuts de la philosophie grecque, trois chapitres sont consacrés au néoplatonisme des IV^e et V^e siècles. Dans « Plotinus, Seeing the Self in Unity » (p. 57-76), Anastasia Theologou questionne l'assimilation du « soi » plotinien à la partie intellectuelle et immatérielle du composé. Cette interprétation intellectualiste de l'identité personnelle plotinienne est nuancée au moyen d'une investigation sur la description du sujet comme vision complète qui a sa source dans le *Théétète* de Platon. Philosophe tourné vers les études de genre et le féminisme, Stanimir Panayotov (« Sexless Henology, or, Is Plotinus' One Neutral to Sex and Gender? », p. 77-105) revient sur la nature de l'Un plotinien en tant qu'il est au-delà du genre comme de toute qualification, au principe d'un monde où la dualité des sexes est intrinsèquement liée à la matérialité. Ce chapitre présente et discute les conclusions variées que les spécialistes de Plotin et les auteurs féministes ont tirées d'une approche de l'ontologie plotinienne dans la perspective des rapports entre masculin et féminin. Continuant à approfondir les liens entre genre, hiérarchie et corporéité dans le néoplatonisme, Chiara Militello s'intéresse à la déesse Aphrodite comme figure féminine porteuse d'une double valeur et une double identité (« The two Aphrodites. Plotinus, Proclus and the Sublimation of Bodily Desires », p. 106-130). Par une lecture attentive des passages de Plotin et Proclus relatifs à la déesse de l'Amour et de la Beauté, elle montre que ces textes permettent de nuancer conjointement, sans toutefois les écarter, les thèses classiquement attribuées à ces auteurs de la négativité du corps et de la supériorité du masculin. Ce premier panel sur le monde grec païen se termine par une étude plus littéraire sur un texte du IV^e s., l'*Aethiopica* d'Héliodore (« In/violability as Evidence in Heliodorus », p. 131-138). Dans ce récit d'un voyage mouvementé où les personnages sont menacés par diverses atteintes physiques, Nathalie Schuler identifie une mise en jeu du corps, de sa beauté, de son intégrité, notamment sa virginité, qui implique un certain rapport avec l'état de l'âme et la vérité qu'il manifeste dans la temporalité d'une histoire vécue.

Un deuxième ensemble de trois chapitres porte sur des discussions théologiques chrétiennes qui mettent diversement en jeu le corps, le genre et le sexe : l'Incarnation, la Résurrection des corps et la Trinité. György Geréby, historien de la pensée médiévale et tardo-antique, s'intéresse à un texte du II^e s., le *Protévangile de Jacques*, qui reprend le récit de l'Incarnation à partir de la naissance de Marie dans une perspective anti-gnostique (« Male and Female in the *Protevangelium Jacobi* », p. 141-160). Il souligne en particulier l'importance des personnages féminins, non dans une perspective féministe, mais au service d'une doctrine qui s'oppose au rejet du corps. Le chapitre suivant se tourne vers la destinée eschatologique du corps chez un auteur cappadocien du IV^e s. : « Identical, but not Alike. The Resurrection of the Body according to Amphilochius of Iconium » (p. 160-171). Spécialiste de la théologie patristique grecque, István Pásztori-Kupá montre comment le thème de la résurrection favorise une assimilation entre personne et corps, dont le Christ ressuscité est le modèle. La troisième contribution de ce panel apporte un éclairage sur une phase plus tardive des réflexions sur les dogmes fondamentaux du Christianisme en présentant un ensemble de discussions sur la Trinité et la génération divine chez des auteurs arabes du IX^e s.. Le chapitre s'intéresse à la manière dont la paternité, la filiation, la génération sont appliquées à Dieu dans un rapport et un effort de différenciation avec la génération sexuée animale, et avec cet autre mode de filiation par lequel le Fils naît de Marie.

Un troisième groupe de trois chapitres ressaisit ces thématiques du corps, de l'Incarnation, et du sexe chez un auteur chrétien du IV^e-V^e s. qui a particulièrement travaillé l'interaction de ces notions dans une perspective chrétienne irriguée par des éléments néoplatoniciens, Augustin d'Hippone. Le chapitre 10 met en perspective l'interprétation augustinienne de Gn 3 avec celle du grec Didyme : « Man, Woman, and Serpent as the Inner State of One Person. Anthropology Based on the Interpretation of Genesis 3 in Didymus the Blind and Augustine of Hippo » (p. 197-209) est le fruit d'une collaboration entre deux spécialistes respectifs de chaque auteur, Peter D. Steiger pour l'Alexandrin and Makiko Sato pour le Latin. Ils établissent des parallèles entre ces deux auteurs dans des écrits où ils interprètent le récit de la chute dans une perspective anti-manichéenne. Le rapprochement concerne en particulier le rôle que jouent l'homme et la femme dans ce récit, le masculin et le féminin étant rapportés à des dimensions de l'âme qui se trouvent chez les hommes comme les femmes. La philosophe Isabelle Koch se tourne vers une autre controverse importante dans la carrière intellectuelle d'Augustin et la mise en exergue de la sexualité comme problème non seulement pour la morale, mais pour la théologie, à savoir la controverse pélagienne (« From Matter to History. Toward a Disembodied Interpretation of Human Sexuality in Augustine », p. 210-235). Si dans le cadre de cette controverse, l'évêque d'Hippone a été accusé par ses adversaires d'adhérer au dualisme manichéen condamnant le corps et le sexe, l'auteur montre qu'Augustin élabore en fait une nouvelle anthropologie, distante du manichéisme et incomprise des Pélagiens qui restent tributaires des conceptions classiques des sociétés et des écoles philosophiques gréco-romaines sur l'homme, la vertu et les passions. Le désir sexuel est à la fois une thématique importante et un révélateur de cette évolution : il fait l'objet du chapitre suivant « Augustine and the Uniqueness of Sexual Desire among the Passions and on the Ambivalent Character of Sexual Life within a Christian Marriage » (p. 236-264). Le patristicien Gábor Kendeffy observe l'évolution de l'évêque d'Hippone depuis les premiers traités sur le mariage jusqu'à la controverse pélagienne qui l'occupe à la fin de sa vie. Il nuance et précise la conception augustinienne de la sexualité qui ne se réduit jamais entièrement à ses éléments négatifs et aux conséquences de la chute.

Un quatrième ensemble comporte cinq chapitres qui analysent la conception du corps et du genre dans la littérature hagiographique tardo-antique, avec une incursion dans une forme de culture matérielle intégrant représentations et croyances sur le corps sexué. Spécialiste de littérature

bizantine, Ana-Maria Răducan propose une analyse sur le motif de la honte dans les récits des actes des martyrs chrétiens dans « Shame in the Development of Christian Identity in the Acts of the Christian Martyrs » (p. 267-275). Si l'apparition de la honte pudique appartient selon la *Genèse* aux conséquences du premier péché, cette forme de rapport au corps est mise à l'épreuve dans le cadre des persécutions s'exerçant sur les fidèles chrétiens, en particulier les femmes. Au cœur de ses recherches sur le genre et ses représentations historiques, l'article de Mariana Boidnaruk « Historicizing Trans Saints. Gender, Sexuality and Agency in the *Life of Pelagia* » (p. 276-299) dresse un état de l'art des travaux sur le corpus des vies d'ascètes féminines qui dans leur démarche de pénitence sont amenées à se travestir en hommes. Elle expose et met en dialogue les discussions qui abordent ces *Vitae* sous l'angle du genre et de la transidentité. Jonathan Cahana-Blum (« The im/materiality of the Will? The *Life of Dositheus* and *Delicia* Children in Late Antiquity » p. 300-310) s'intéresse à une vie du VI^e s. qui suggère l'idée que la sainteté n'implique pas nécessairement de dépasser un corps « féminin » ou efféminé et devenir un « esprit » purement masculin. Dans le chapitre suivant, Jordan Pool ouvre une perspective sur des pratiques où se croisent la culture matérielle, les discours médicaux et les croyances (« Menopause and Agency in Late Antiquity. A case for Magical Gems », p. 311-330). L'auteur montre, à partir de l'exemple des gemmes associées à la ménopause, qu'au-delà des discours savants ou religieux, ces pierres trouvent leur sens dans un certain rapport de leur propriétaire avec sa propre identité et les stades de sa vie. Andra Jugănaru revient pour finir sur un récit de vie qui met en lumière le rapport entre conversion, pénitence et incarnation dans le cas d'une sainte femme, Marie l'Égyptienne (« From the Depths of Sin to the Highness of Hominess. The female Body as Witness of the Journey to Sanctity in the Life of Mary the Egyptian », p. 331-344).

La cinquième section de cette deuxième partie est composée de deux chapitres portant sur la littérature profane romaine du IV^e et V^e s.. L'historienne Suzanna Elm s'intéresse à la représentation de la masculinité dans l'usage tardo-antique du motif alliant virilité et vertu : « “Neglegentissimus Vernula”. Manliness and Imperial Legitimation in Pacatus' Panegyric in Praise of the Emperor Theodosius' Civil War Victory » (p. 347-365) aborde ce motif à partir du genre de l'éloge d'un empereur victorieux. Elle montre que la partition entre ce qui est viril ou efféminé fait l'objet d'une définition et d'une qualification politique. Enfin, David Rollo propose une incursion dans un texte rédigé en Afrique du Nord au début du V^e s. dans le chapitre 19 : « From Inanity to Ideology. The Allurements of Narrative in Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Philologiae and Mercurii* » (p. 366-378) et présente sa postérité au cours de la « renaissance XII^e », témoin de la résurgence et du prolongement de cette culture intellectuelle fondée sur le système des arts libéraux.

La troisième partie de ce volume est constituée d'un unique chapitre, dans lequel la sociologue indienne Susan Visvanathan propose une comparaison entre le livre biblique du *Cantique des Cantiques* (qu'elle situe au XI^e s. av. J.-C.) et un écrit attribué à un maître spirituel hindou du VIII^e s. de notre ère « Solomon's Songs of Songs and Adi Shankara's Soudarya Lahari. A comparison » (p. 381-394). Le parallèle met en perspective la manière dont ces deux textes poétiques mobilisent les images masculines et féminines en liant la beauté physique à la spiritualité.

Par sa construction générale comme par la variété des champs disciplinaires et thèmes représentés, cet ouvrage prend le parti de décloisonner les domaines d'études de différents spécialistes pour approfondir la question du genre, et ses liens avec celle de l'incarnation et du dualisme de l'âme et du corps, qui dépassent souvent la simple assimilation d'une question à l'autre. La mobilité des catégories de féminité et de masculinité, dont les contours peuvent être perçus comme l'objet d'une élaboration intellectuelle et littéraire plus que d'une simple évidence n'est pas seulement un résultat ou une intuition commune de ces auteurs : c'est un postulat, qui montre toutefois sa fécondité pour

renouveler la lecture et introduire de nouvelles voies de comparaisons entre des textes de diverses importance et notoriété. Au cœur de ce volume, la figure d'Augustin prend une importance particulière, lui dont la pensée peut être mise en lien avec tous les autres objets d'études : le corpus néoplatonicien, l'hagiographie chrétienne, la rhétorique latine, la culture ascétique, la poésie sacrée. Il est en outre représentatif d'une pensée où corps, âme, sexe, sont les données d'une équation qui engage une conception du monde ou de la condition humaine. Telle est l'épaisseur de sens et la complexité que se proposaient de mettre en lumière les éditeurs de ce volume dans circulation dans le monde méditerranéen (élargi à l'Inde) et cette période de mutation que représente l'Antiquité tardive.

Pauline Rates

POHLÉ Éric, *Crucifixa Lux. Voir le Christ en croix selon saint Augustin prédicateur*, Münster, Aschendorff Verlag, 2024, 684 p.

Il poderoso volume, quasi enciclopedico, di Éric Pohlé, sessantunesimo nella collana *Paradosis* della ben nota casa editrice Aschendorff, offre al lettore un prezioso contributo, frutto di una tesi dottorale in teologia che l'autore ha conseguito nel 2021 presso l'Università di Friburgo, in Svizzera. L'intento, come indica chiaramente il titolo, *Crucifixa Lux. Voir le Christ en croix selon saint Augustin*, è di esplorare la complessa rappresentazione della crocifissione di Cristo nel pensiero di Agostino, ponendo in dialogo la dimensione visiva del vedere Cristo in croce con la dimensione uditiva della voce del predicatore. L'indagine è condotta attraverso una ricognizione delle fonti agostiniane, lette alla luce anche di autori pagani e cristiani del tardo antico, con aperture sulla teologia medievale latina, evidenziando in tal modo le peculiarità dell'esegesi e della teologia di Agostino di Ippona.

Dopo l'Introduzione (p. 27-87), il volume si articola in quattro parti, per un totale di diciassette capitoli. Nella prima parte, "Lieux de naissance de la prédication agustinienne sur le Christ en croix" (p. 89-214), l'autore pone attenzione al senso della vista, alla quale si accede grazie all'udito. Infatti, è proprio in virtù di questo senso che è possibile accedere veramente al contenuto della predicazione e, quindi, alla presentazione agostiniana della croce. Tale prospettiva richiede che la ricerca si apra con un primo capitolo, dal titolo "Résonances latines du mot *Crvx* au cours du IV siècle" (p. 89-114), dedicato allo studio delle occorrenze del termine croce in Agostino, per mostrare un'eventuale evoluzione della predicazione riguardo la croce. L'indagine tiene conto del particolare contesto che è il IV secolo e la sua importanza anche per la storia della croce (cap. II). Il terzo capitolo analizza il significato della croce in autori come Cicerone, Seneca e Virgilio. La prima parte termina con il quarto capitolo, intento a mostrare il legame tra il mistero della croce e quello dell'umiliazione (cap. IV).

La seconda parte, dal titolo "La figure du serpent d'airain 'celui qui le regardera sera guéri (Nm 21.8)'" (p. 215-307), analizza il tema dello sguardo nel commento di Agostino alla *Lettera ai Galati* (cap. V), per poi soffermarsi, nel cap. VI, su tre testimonianze che precedono la predicazione di Agostino. Dal settimo capitolo, dedicato alla predicazione agostiniana sul serpente di bronzo, si passa all'esempio di Zaccheo che si arrampica sull'albero per vedere Gesù (cap. VIII), per chiudere la seconda parte con il riferimento alla crocifissione di Cristo analizzata a partire dall'espressione "pendere dalla croce" (cap. IX).

"Ils ont compté tous mes os (Ps 21, 18a)" è il titolo della terza parte (p. 309-393), nella quale l'autore si sofferma, in primo luogo, a studiare il testo del *Salmo* 21, anche con riferimento ad altri scrittori antichi (cap. X). Nei capitoli undici, dodici e tredici pone attenzione all'analisi dei testi nei quali si fa riferimento al versetto 18 del *Salmo* 21, utilizzato dal vescovo di Ippona in riferimento a tematiche

differenti. Chiude la sezione un'analisi del rapporto tra l'espressione "contare le ossa" e la tematica della redenzione (cap. XIII).

Il titolo della quarta e ultima parte, "Ils verront celui qu'ils ont percé", riprende *Giovanni* 19, 37 (p. 395-548). Qui viene mostrato come Agostino provi, nella predicazione, a rendere visibile a sé e ai fedeli il mistero della morte del Signore. L'autore ricorda l'impegno da parte del predicatore di proporre un discorso concreto, in grado di rendere immaginabile lo scandalo della morte in croce, avvalendosi anche di *Isaia* 53 "senza splendore né bellezza" (cap. XIV). Altro aspetto trattato è il tema del sangue e della nudità di Gesù, il crocifisso (cap. XV). Nel breve capitolo sedicesimo l'attenzione è posta sul vedere la croce, con l'intenzione di evidenziare la prospettiva specifica di Agostino rispetto a quella che sarà la predicazione del XIII secolo. Il contesto offre anche l'occasione per analizzare in che modo si è posta attenzione, nella predicazione, alla sofferenza del Verbo incarnato. L'ultimo mosaico di testi che l'autore propone evidenzia due aspetti particolari di Cristo in croce, ovvero, da una parte l'essere sfigurato e il sangue e, dall'altra il tema della pace e della speranza come redenzione (cap. XVII).

Dopo la quarta parte segue una Conclusione generale (p. 549-561), cinque "Annexe" (p. 563-602): "Contexte de la prédication antique *De cruce*"; "Un unique *De cruce* agustinien: *Divers. Quaest.* 25: presentation du texte"; "Exemples d'un pseudépigraphe *Sermo S. Augustini De cruce* (IX-XV)"; "Genèse d'un thème et d'une image: Augustin au pied de la croix"; "*Vergiliana*". Segue un breve repertorio di immagini (p. 602-608). Chiude il volume l'elenco delle abbreviazioni (p. 609-610), un Index bibliographique (p. 611-650), un Index biblique (p. 651-655), un Index agustinien (p. 657-666), un Index des sermons pseudépigraphes (p. 667-668), un Index des auteurs et textes anonymes antiques et médiévaux (p. 669-674), un Index des auteurs moderna et contemporains (p. 675-679) e, infine, un Index crucis (p. 681-684).

Complessivamente, l'articolazione della ricerca riesce bene nell'intento di mostrare il progressivo passaggio di Agostino di Ippona da una iniziale reticenza rispetto alla "materialità" della croce, a una sua sempre più importante presenza nella predicazione. Il cambiamento corrisponde allo sviluppo della teologia del Dottore di Ippona, il quale, progressivamente, si affranca dalla tradizione platonica e manichea per recuperare il valore della carne e, con essa, l'importante tema dell'umiltà di Cristo. In questo senso, l'autore mostra bene come sia proprio l'esigenza di prendere le distanze dai Manichei che permette ad Agostino di recuperare un tema già caro a Tertulliano, ora arricchito con una prospettiva cristologica, nella quale la chiave di lettura della soteriologia è la centralità del Mediatore, ovvero del Verbo incarnato e morto in croce.

Il lavoro offre un'analisi stimolante e ben documentata del pensiero agostiniano sulla crocifissione, mettendo in luce l'originalità del suo approccio alla sofferenza di Cristo, il ruolo cruciale della predicazione nella trasmissione dell'immagine di Cristo e la profonda teologia del corpo di Cristo. Stimolanti e da approfondire, in un'ulteriore ricerca, i riferimenti a quella che possiamo indicare come "la storia degli effetti" della predicazione di Agostino di Ippona.

Andrea Bizzozero

PONESSEE, Matthew (introduction and edition) – LEPRE, James (translation and notes), SMARAGDUS OF SAINT-MIHIEL, *Via regia* (Dallas Medieval Texts and Translation 30), Leuven – Paris – Bristol, CT, Peeters, 2023, XI-239 p.

Il volume offre la prima edizione critica della *Via regia*, uno dei più antichi *specula principum* dell'Europa occidentale, opera di Smaragdo, abate di Saint-Mihiel tra l'816 e l'826. Prima della pubblicazione del presente studio, il testo era leggibile esclusivamente nell'edizione di Luc d'Achery

(*Spicilegium*, t. 5, Paris, 1661, p. 3-59), ristampata nella *Patrologia Latina*, ad esclusione del prologo, che, nella versione del codice *G*, è edito da Ernst Dümmler (*MGH, Epistolae 4, Epistolae Karolini aevi 2*, Berlin, 1895, p. 532-3⁷⁹).

L'edizione si apre con la prefazione della curatrice della collana, Kelly Gibson, cui segue un'introduzione che si articola in sei capitoli. Dopo un inquadramento generale della biografia e delle opere di Smaragdo, Matthew Ponessee affronta il tema fondamentale del rapporto tra la *Via regia* e le sue fonti, esaurendolo in tre sole pagine e mezzo. Mentre l'*auctoritas* biblica è costantemente richiamata in maniera esplicita dello *speculum*, i precedenti patristici sono leggibili solo in filigrana. Il debito maggiore è contratto da Smaragdo nei confronti di Cipriano, mentre il modello strutturale sono le *Sententiae* di Isidoro e quelle di Taione di Saragozza. Pur seguendo a grandi linee il percorso tracciato dai due autori iberici, Smaragdo si sente libero di apportare il proprio contributo personale alla discussione sulla condotta del *rex*, incorporando di fatto una porzione ridotta del materiale presente nei modelli. L'influenza di Agostino, soprattutto il *De civitate Dei*, il *De trinitate* e il commento al Vangelo di Giovanni, è chiara, ma non massiccia, e per lo più indiretta.

Oggetto del secondo capitolo sono la datazione della *Via regia* e il suo destinatario immediato. La critica dibatte da tempo sull'identità di quest'ultimo, se si tratti di Carlo Magno o Ludovico il Pio. Ponessee, dopo aver ripercorso le posizioni della critica, si pronuncia a favore del secondo. In particolare, Smaragdo avrebbe pubblicato il testo tra l'811 e l'814, dedicandolo a Ludovico ancora re d'Aquitania (ciò che spiega il titolo di *rex* con cui designa il destinatario) ma ormai unico erede superstite al trono imperiale (ciò che rende intelligibili alcuni cenni alla futura eredità terrena che lo aspetta). Il terzo capitolo riguarda il pubblico più generale di lettori della *Via regia*, al di là delle circostanze specifiche in cui venne allestita; Ponessee sottolinea come, nelle intenzioni di Smaragdo, dall'opera possa trarre profitto chiunque eserciti il potere in qualsivoglia contesto. In questa prima sezione del volume, Ponessee dimostra grande padronanza dell'argomento e del metodo di indagine, fornendo spunti originali e convincenti per l'inquadramento storico del testo.

Nel capitolo quarto, dopo una breve rassegna delle edizioni precedenti, Ponessee presenta i testimoni superstiti (tre integri, *G A* e *M*, e due parziali, *v* e *e*, che contengono i medesimi estratti) e quelli perduti (*R*, impiegato come *codex unicus* da d'Achery⁸⁰), e ne illustra le relazioni stemmatiche. Tutto il capitolo dipende in maniera evidente dallo studio di Otto Eberhardt apparso nel 1977⁸¹, che in alcuni punti Ponessee si limita a tradurre o a parafrasare. Lo stemma a p. 34 ricalca pedissequamente quello tracciato dallo studioso tedesco, che ripartisce i testimoni in due famiglie, Ψ e Φ ⁸². Tale configurazione, benché plausibile, non è adeguatamente giustificata da Ponessee, che lo studioso presenta a sostegno della sua ipotesi varianti il più delle volte adiafore e/o reversibili, almeno in

⁷⁹ Una trascrizione di *G* si legge anche in M. DENIS, *Codices manuscripti theologici Bibliothecae Palatinae Vindobonensis latini aliarumque Occidentis linguarum*, vol. 1, pt. 1, Wien, 1793, p. 1050-1051. L'altra redazione del prologo poteva essere consultata in D. DE BRUYNE, *Manuscripts wisigothiques*, in *Revue bénédictine* 36 (1924) 5-20, p. 15, nella versione del testimone *M*. La versione di *A*, la stessa trasmessa da *M*, è trascritta in sinossi con le altre in F. RÄDLE, *Studien zu Smaragd von Saint-Mihiel*, München, W. Fink, 1974, p. 63-64 e O. EBERHARDT, *Via regia: Der Fürstenspiegel Smaragds von Saint-Mihiel und seine literarische Gattung*, München, W. Fink, 1977, p. 105-106.

⁸⁰ Non è chiaro se la correzione degli errori patenti di tradizione e l'espansione delle citazioni bibliche sia da Ponessee attribuita al copista di *R*, come sembrerebbe dalla dichiarazione a p. 31 "the copyist of *R* was known to bring biblical citations in line with the conventional reading of the Vulgate" o, come è più probabile, a d'Achery (in sigla *r*), per cui cfr. p. 27-28 "A comparison of d'Achery's print edition of the *Via regia* with other manuscript witnesses reveals significant differences in text, as the editor often replaced ninth-century biblical variants with conventional Vulgate readings... The print edition also lacks many of the grammatical errors and contextual irregularities pervading the manuscript tradition, suggesting that the editor emended his text in the move from manuscript to print."

⁸¹ EBERHARDT, *Via regia*, p. 88-104.

⁸² Per inciso, la forchetta di datazione di *v* andrebbe ridotta in conseguenza della sua posizione stemmatica, che però, come vedremo, non è sicura.

apparenza. Affinché il testo sia scientificamente fondato, i *loci critici* – a maggior ragione se non parlanti di per sé – andrebbero discussi alla luce dell'*usus scribendi* di Smaragdo⁸³ e dei *loci paralleli*, ossia della *lectio* delle fonti, idealmente esaminate secondo il ramo di tradizione cui appartenevano gli esemplari transitati sullo scrittoio dell'autore.

In particolare, le innovazioni elencate come distintive di Ψ (*M A v e*) producono tutte un testo ammissibile e in certi casi sono assolutamente equivalenti alla lezione concorrente. Viceversa, Ponessee non commenta l'innovazione – questa sì convincente – che Eberhard adduce⁸⁴ a dimostrazione della parentela tra *M* e *A*, ossia la caduta di un sintagma per salto dell'occhio, confortata da luoghi paralleli nel *Diadema monachorum* e del commento smaragdiano alla *Regula*. Nemmeno la configurazione stemmatica interna della famiglia Ψ non è discussa; Ponessee rimanda allo studio di Eberhard, che, a questo proposito, è tutt'altro che conclusivo. La discendenza di *v* da *M* è dedotta da quest'ultimo in base all'aggiunta posteriore in *M* di un carne ascritto a Vigila, lo stesso nome dello scriba di *v*: è evidente che questo dato di per sé non prova nulla rispetto alla relazione reciproca tra i due codici. Ponessee sottolinea alcune innovazioni comuni, piuttosto deboli, e alcune lezioni *potiores* di *v* a fronte di corrotte reversibili di *M*. Interessante la variante *vero* per *valde* a testo in *v* e in forma di alternativa - poi espunta – *supra lineam* in *M*. Non necessariamente la *varia lectio* è da interpretare nella direzione data da Eberhardt: potrebbe difatti indicare anche contaminazione di *M* sulla base di *v*, se l'alternativa nell'interlineo è di mano diversa dalla prima. Anche la dipendenza di *e* da *v* non è discussa: Ponessee rimanda a Eberhardt, il quale ne sostiene la plausibilità facendo leva genericamente sul contesto codicologico analogo e sulle varianti comuni (nessuna delle due condizioni, com'è noto, è prova che la dipendenza di un codice da un altro)⁸⁵.

Anche a dimostrazione dell'esistenza di Φ (*Gr*) sono addotte varianti per lo più adiafore, ad eccezione di alcune *faciliores* (per es. *clamat* per *clamitat* o *multipliciter* per *centupliciter*) e della caduta del sintagma *in aeternum* dalla citazione biblica (Prov 29,14), questa sì discussa da Eberhardt⁸⁶. L'unico punto in cui Ponessee supera lo studioso tedesco è la dimostrazione dell'archetipo: i primi due errori adottati sono sicuri⁸⁷, mentre quelli elencati da Eberhardt⁸⁸ non hanno valore stemmatico.

Punto nodale per la definizione delle famiglie è la profonda variante nel prologo, che mi propongo di discutere in altra sede. Ponessee, dopo aver ripercorso le ipotesi degli studiosi che lo hanno preceduto, dichiara di propendere per l'"autenticità" della versione di *M A*, anche se nell'edizione non si comporta di conseguenza, pubblicando le due forme in sinossi. Egli inoltre offre un'ulteriore prova della supposta originalità di *M A*, vale a dire la frequenza della *iunctura recondere thesaurum/recondere in archano* (cfr. Mt 6,20) nella produzione di Smaragdo⁸⁹. Chiude il capitolo una brevissima esposizione dei criteri editoriali, in cui Ponessee si sofferma esclusivamente sugli aspetti ortografici e di interpunzione e manca di chiarire quale sia stato il comportamento dell'editore a fronte di varianti del tutto adiafore che oppongono i due rami dello stemma.

⁸³ Operazione in questo caso particolarmente agevole, dato che, come è illustrato nella tabella che occupa l'Appendix A, Smaragdo reimpiega nel *Diadema monachorum* molti dei brani già inclusi nella *Via Regia*, adattati al nuovo contesto; non mancano inoltre sovrapposizioni con l'*Expositio in Regulam Benedicti*.

⁸⁴ EBERHARDT, *Via regia*, p. 99.

⁸⁵ Per inciso, in quanto supposto *descriptus* di secondo grado, il codice *e* pare scartato da Ponessee per la *constitutio textus*, anche se compare nell'elenco dei *sigla codicum* a p. 55. Tale decisione non è esplicitata, come non è esplicitata e motivata la scelta di editare la forma di *G* in 34 capitoli, contro quella di *M A* in 36 e quella di *r* in 32.

⁸⁶ EBERHARDT, *Via regia*, p. 99.

⁸⁷ Il terzo luogo discusso da Ponessee è un caso di diffrazione e il quarto esibisce una (supposta) innovazione poligenetica e pertanto non vale a dimostrare l'archetipo.

⁸⁸ EBERHARDT, *Via regia*, p. 100.

⁸⁹ Si noti che EBERHARDT, *Via regia*, p. 117 aveva già portato a raffronto il passo da *Via regia* 1 citato da Ponessee, peraltro con un errore di battitura (*recondita* va corretto in *recondit*, come nel testo critico).

Nel quinto capitolo, James LePree espone i principi che lo hanno guidato nella traduzione inglese del testo, in ordine allo stile adottato e alla questione dei passi biblici, che si è risolto a tradurre ex novo. Chiude la parte introduttiva un'ampia bibliografia.

Il testo critico con traduzione a fronte è preceduto dall'elenco dei *sigla codicum* e delle abbreviazioni. La traduzione inglese è corredata di note di commento, che sottolineano i paralleli con le altre opere di Smaragdo e le fonti patristiche dei passaggi rilevanti. I riferimenti biblici sono introdotti a testo e disposti tra parentesi quadre. Gli editori marciano in corsivo il testo che trova corrispondenza in una versione biblica attestata (non sempre la Vulgata), lasciando in tondo i passaggi e le singole parole prive di riscontro, in modo da segnalare a colpo d'occhio al lettore le discrepanze per citazione a memoria o da imputare al testo biblico a disposizione dell'autore. Come giustamente rivendica la curatrice della collana nella prefazione, la traduzione inglese è un importante passo avanti per la storia della ricezione del testo, dato che ne garantisce l'accesso a un pubblico vasto e non allenato alla lettura dei testi in lingua originale.

La lettura del testo critico latino risulta invece difficile, penalizzata com'è dalla scelta di strutturare l'apparato in forma di note a piè di pagina, i cui esponenti spezzano la continuità testuale. Tale configurazione, tra l'altro, comporta anche l'assenza di un sistema di riferimento di righe, ciò che rende poco agevole la citazione precisa dei passaggi per la discussione delle varianti testuali. Infine, nel testo latino mancano sia i riferimenti biblici, che il lettore deve cercare nella traduzione inglese a fronte, sia un *apparatus fontium*; del resto, come abbiamo visto, lo studio dei modelli di Smaragdo è stato affrontato in maniera cursoria nell'introduzione e questi non sono stati adeguatamente sfruttati per la *recensio* e la *constitutio textus*.

Completo la recensione del volume con alcune osservazioni del tutto asistematiche ricavate da una superficiale lettura del prologo, su cui, come già detto, ho intenzione di soffermarmi in altra sede. Innanzitutto, constatando che in *G* la dedica iniziale è intitolata appunto *prologus*, e nel ramo Ψ *praefatio*, Ponesse opta per una soluzione che dovrebbe essere di compromesso, ma che risulta evidentemente incongrua: il passo si apre con la rubrica *incipit prologus* e si chiude come *explicit praefatio*. Similmente, la lettera che segue è tradita senza titolazione in tutta la tradizione superstite, ad eccezione dei manoscritti frammentari, in cui è presentata come *exhortatio ad principem*, ma Ponesse scrive a p. 35 che essa è “transmitted under the title *epistula nuncuparia*” – ripetendo *nuncuparia* (!) ancora poche righe più in basso. Questa era forse la rubrica del perduto *R* (ma non si può escludere un intervento arbitrario di d'Achery), non certo il titolo con cui è trasmessa nel testimoniale superstite. Da rilevare poi l'errore di trascrizione *nostrorum* per *vestrorum* di *G* tra la prima e la seconda riga dall'inizio dell'impaginazione bicolonnare a p. 60, dove peraltro *nostrorum* non dà senso, e l'errata punteggiatura tra *munerum* e *amplexus*, cui consegue un'errata traduzione e interpretazione – ribadita nell'introduzione a p. 35 “caresses of multiple gifts”. Tra i due sostantivi è chiaramente necessaria una pausa forte, come del resto sapeva Dümmler, che li ha separa con un punto e virgola. *Munerum* è infatti ovviamente l'oggetto di *obliviscimus*, e *amplexus* di *depinximus*: il punto tra *porrexit* e *in* deve essere pertanto eliminato. Insomma, se la collazione del testimoniale completo ha certamente portato a un avanzamento nelle conoscenze relative alla trasmissione del testo e alla sua resa editoriale, l'edizione Ponessee del prologo rappresenta un regresso rispetto alla versione già edita negli MGH.

Al testo critico seguono le note di commento e due appendici, la prima contenente la cronologia della vita di Smaragdo e la seconda con una tabella di corrispondenze tra le *Sententiae* di Isidoro, di Taione di Saragozza, il *Diadema monachorum* e la *Via regia*. Chiudono il volume l'indice biblico e dei passi citati.

Marina Giani

PUCHKOVA, Sofia, *Re-envisioning Theodore: Theodore of Mopsuestia's Biblical Exegesis in His Catechetical Homilies* (Vigiliae Christianae Supplements 185), Leiden – Boston, Brill, 2024, xv-291 p.

Cet ouvrage présente la recherche de doctorale de la Dre Sofia Puchkova (désormais : l'A.) sur les citations bibliques et les passages exégétiques contenus dans les *Homélies catéchétiques* de Théodore de Mopsueste. Cette étude cherche à réviser la vision moderne d'un Théodore « historique » et à dépasser la vision réductionniste des « écoles » d'Antioche et d'Alexandrie, en resituant l'exégèse de Théodore dans des traditions plus larges. Après un état de la question, la recherche est organisée en quatre chapitres.

Dans son état de l'art, l'A. reconnaît une opposition réelle dès l'Antiquité entre deux « écoles ». Elle déplore cependant une approche moderne uniquement fondée sur l'étude des méthodes herméneutiques des commentaires et des homélies exégétiques, et propose trois solutions pour dépasser cette approche réductrice (l'étude de traditions plus larges, l'étude des traditions propres à chaque « école » et la proposition de nouvelles catégories de méthode interprétative pour nuancer l'opposition allégorie-lettre). Elle présente ensuite la vision moderne d'un Théodore « historique » et les lacunes modernes concernant l'étude l'exégèse dans les *Homélies catéchétiques*.

Le premier chapitre propose une biographie de Théodore de Mopsueste ainsi qu'une description de son œuvre conservée. Divers événements attestés par les sources antiques y sont relatés. L'A. y montre notamment des réserves au sujet de la prédication de l'évêque devant Théodose I^{er}. Les méthodes exégétiques des commentaires du Nouveau Testament font l'objet d'un examen particulier. La dernière section de ce chapitre se concentre sur l'étude des *Homélies catéchétiques* : l'A. y présente les traductions modernes⁹⁰ de l'œuvre et discute sa datation et son public cible. Théodore aurait prononcé ces homélies durant son épiscopat, car, selon l'A., à Antioche, seul l'évêque enseignait sur le credo. Ensuite, la pédagogie des *Homélies* est exposée : elles décrivent le credo mot à mot et les sacrements, rite après rite. Enfin, si l'on regarde le contenu, le public, bien que peu connu, devait être composé, entre autres, d'anciens païens et d'hérétiques.

Le deuxième chapitre fait ressortir l'exégèse « invisible » des *Homélies*. Pour ce faire, divers types de marqueurs d'introduction des citations et des passages exégétiques sont identifiés. Ensuite, l'A. présente les différentes manières de citer les Écritures (un seul verset, un verset composite, plusieurs versets suivis ou séparés, un épisode). Puis, les citations (180) sont distinguées entre citations principales (qui soutiennent l'argument), auxiliaires (qui soutiennent l'exégèse d'une autre citation), celles qui ont les deux rôles et les citations regroupées en soutien à un seul argument. Les passages exégétiques (215) sont aussi classés selon leur finalité : renforcer la théologie de Théodore, justifier les formules des pères conciliaires ou expliquer des rites. Chacun de ces développements est illustré par des exemples tirés des *Homélies*.

L'A. s'attache ensuite à comprendre le rôle des citations selon leur provenance. L'Ancien Testament est surtout employé pour justifier le monothéisme. L'Évangile de Jean est largement repris pour appuyer l'argumentation sur la divinité du Christ et du Saint Esprit. Les autres Évangiles et les Actes apparaissent peu, excepté l'oraison dominicale dans la version de Matthieu et le dernier commandement (Mt 28, 19). Quant aux Épîtres de Paul (Hébreux compris), elles sont l'étai principal

⁹⁰ A. MINGANA (ed.), *Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Nicene Creed* (Woodbrooke Studies 5), Cambridge, Heffer, 1932 ; A. MINGANA (ed.), *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer, on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist* (Woodbrooke Studies 6), Cambridge, Heffer, 1933; R. TONNEAU – R. DEVREESE (eds.), *Les Homélies catéchétiques de Théodore de Mopsueste: reproduction phototypique du Ms. Mingana Syr. 561, traduction, introduction, index* (Studi e Testi 145), Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica vaticana, 1949.

de l'argumentation théologique de Théodore. L'A. conclut que Théodore, dans ses *Homélies*, a un usage sélectif des Écritures, privilégiant l'Évangile de Jean et les épîtres pauliniennes.

C'est précisément aux commentaires de Jean et de ces épîtres que le chapitre 3 confronte les passages exégétiques des *Homélies catéchétiques* de Théodore. Cette étape de la démonstration démontre le biais dû à l'étude d'un seul genre (le commentaire exégétique) qui est à l'origine de la conception d'un Théodore « historique ». L'A. discerne, dans les *Homélies*, un Théodore docteur, qui pratique une exégèse « doctrinale » basée sur une méthode déductive : le prédicateur fournit un appui scripturaire à son argument théologique en déduisant un sens général de la citation, à partir d'un donné doctrinal préalable.

En outre, si Théodore, dans ses *Homélies*, fait attention au développement narratif du texte, comme c'est le cas généralement dans les commentaires, c'est ici par intérêt pédagogique : les « interlocuteurs ignorants » des Évangiles exposent en fait les méprises des catéchumènes et le prédicateur y répond. Cet intérêt pastoral propre au genre homilétique peut aussi ignorer le cadre textuel d'une citation dans le but de produire un effet rhétorique, notamment par l'emploi d'une prosopopée où Satan reprend des paroles du Christ. Cette richesse stylistique propre à l'oralité permet aussi de mettre l'accent sur l'un ou l'autre point de doctrine. En confrontant les *Homélies* aux commentaires, l'A. démontre les particularités génériques des *Homélies* en matière d'exégèse et nuance ainsi le portrait d'un Théodore « historique ».

Le dernier chapitre situe Théodore dans les traditions théologiques et liturgiques, et examine ses liens avec Origène et Jean Chrysostome. Étudier l'exégèse à partir de ses contenus doctrinaux et liturgiques dépasse l'approche basée sur la seule méthode herméneutique des commentaires, à l'origine des « écoles » d'Antioche et Alexandrie. En se fondant sur l'étude du contenu de dix passages exégétiques, l'A. prouve l'appartenance de Théodore à la tradition théologique pro-nicéenne. Elle montre aussi les influences de la tradition liturgique locale greco-syrienne, notamment dans l'interprétation des charbons ardents d'Isaïe 6 comme les dons eucharistiques.

De la comparaison avec les interprétations de Jean Chrysostome, il ressort que l'exégèse de Théodore et de son ami partagent une tradition commune, mais n'ont pas de lien direct. Quant à la comparaison avec les interprétations d'Origène, elle révèle une proximité due à la tradition pro-nicéenne notamment.

La conclusion de l'ouvrage reprend les objectifs atteints par la démonstration. Suit un catalogue complet des citations bibliques des homélies. On y trouve chaque citation accompagnée d'une description et d'une analyse de son interprétation, le tout bien replacé dans son contexte. Figurent aussi deux appendices présentant les différentes citations et mettant en vis-à-vis les références des passages exégétiques dans les homélies et dans les commentaires.

En conclusion, cette étude est pionnière. Outre le fait qu'elle nous propose dans son état de la question une revue actuelle et de qualité sur la question des « écoles » et de Théodore, elle offre un relevé exhaustif de l'exégèse des *Homélies catéchétiques*. C'est un formidable outil pour tout chercheur qui veut traiter l'exégèse de Théodore à l'avenir. Si étudier un auteur à travers différents genres et resituer son œuvre dans des traditions exégétiques plus larges ont déjà été réalisés par ailleurs, c'est la première étude qui propose ces démarches pour Théodore et ses *Homélies* en particulier. Il faut relever en outre l'originalité de cette recherche quand elle traite l'exégèse à partir de son contexte liturgique peu connu : quitter la poussière des livres pour l'encens des célébrations change aussi les perspectives. Ainsi on suit l'A. qui affirme sans détour : « Being the first – and in this way introductory – study of Theodore's exegesis in his *Homilies*, this book offers a direction for more detailed studies » (p. 145).

Nicolas Rixhon

RAMSEY, Boniface (ed.) – DEIGHAN, Gerard (trans.), *New Testament III (The Works of Saint of Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century I/17)*, Hyde Park, NY, New City Press, 2024, 405 p.

The immensity of Augustine's corpus of writings, and the profound impact he has had on the Western world gives legitimacy to the quip that there are two types of Early Church scholars: Patristics scholars and Augustine scholars. As numerous as are those who study Augustine, the analysis of his person and writings is far from exhausted. The series, *The Works of Saint Augustine*, published by New City Press is a gift to Anglophone readers. This new volume, *New Testament III*, contains four treatises, Augustine's two works on Romans (*A Commentary on Some Statements in the Apostle's Epistle to the Romans*, and *An Unfinished Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*), the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, and *The Mirror*. The translations are all based on the texts in the respective volumes of the *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* series. An appreciated contribution to the scholarship of this volume is Eric Plumer's involvement in the introductions and notes, since his volume, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians* (Oxford University Press, 2003) is the only other English version of Augustine's Galatians Commentary. This volume, now completing the collection of Augustine's works on the New Testament, will spark greater development in Augustinian scholarship in years to come.

The first treatise, in order from front-to-back cover, is Augustine's *Expositio quarundam propositionum ex epistula Apostoli ad Romanos*, or, *Commentary on Some Statements in the Apostle's Epistle to the Romans*. The introduction (like the other three) is quite short, but this allows for quick reference to then jump into the primary material. The editors note the historical setting and specify the contrast between Augustine's engagement with Romans 9 here and its later shift with his correspondence with Simplicianus in *Epistle* 37 (p. 14-15). The notes are concise and helpful, with Plumer's comments identified with "(E.P.)" (e.g. p. 30, n. 50), which is consistent throughout the volume. The treatise itself is not a typical commentary. Rather, it is akin to Augustine's *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum*, in that he addresses various topics and questions that arose in discussion with the clergy in Carthage (cf. *Retr.* 1.23.22; p. 16). Hence, the Latin title: *Propositionum*, and Deighan's translation: "Some Statements." Augustine was driven by the concerns of the time and thus left many issues undiscussed that became prominent later. For example, even though he does cite Romans 5:12 once (p. 27), he does not discuss the ἐφ' ὃ issues, although he does give substantial attention to Romans 7-9 (nearly half the treatise). Despite the fact that this treatise is not the commentary we wish Augustine had completed, it is a helpful snapshot into Augustine's engagement with Romans as a whole in this early period.

The next treatise is Augustine's *Expositio Epistulae ad Galatas*, or, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*. This is "Augustine's only complete formal (as opposed to homiletic) commentary on any book of the Bible" (p. 57). This commentary was composed contemporaneously with his two works on Romans and his *Miscellany of Eighty-Three Questions*, as well as *Epistle* 28, to Jerome, in which Augustine discussed his disagreement with Jerome on Galatians 2:11-14 (p. 57; *Ep.* 28.3-4). According to the editors, Augustine likely consulted the commentaries by Victorinus and Ambrosiaster as well as Jerome's (p. 57). Overall, this commentary "is more pastoral than dogmatic or polemical" and Augustine took Galatians as primarily "a guide to building community" (p. 57-8). Augustine engages with questions such as what Paul was doing in Arabia (Gal. 1:17-18) or how James could be "the brother of the Lord" (Gal. 1:19) if Mary maintained her virginity (p. 68). Also, considering Paul's rejection of the Jewish traditions, Augustine wrestles with the purpose of Christian

liturgical rituals, arguing that “the benefit of these [works] lies in understanding them, for all of them are explained to Christians When observances are not understood, however, they constitute nothing but slavery, such as characterized the Jewish people and continues to do so to this day” (p. 79; cf. p. 83). His discussion on the Law as a pedagogue for the Jews (Gal. 3:24) in conjunction with Paul’s exhortation about the absence of ethnic or gender differentiation in Christ (Gal. 3:28), leads Augustine to interpret Galatians 4:1-3 as suggesting that Nature (*elementa mundi*) was the Pedagogue for the nations (p. 93). In this commentary we find the earliest form of an oft-quoted line, “love and do what you wish” (*Ep. Io. Tr.* 7.8), here it is “love and say what you wish” (p. 121). Augustine’s *Commentary on Galatians* provides a view into his theological stance on many questions that would become major issues later.

Augustine’s short *Epistolae ad Romanos inchoata expositio*, or, *An Unfinished Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* is another perspective on Augustine’s views on some unexpected issues. Regarding its scope, he only commented on the first seven verses of Romans, being diverted to an excursus on the sin against the Holy Spirit in section 14. Augustine abandoned this project due to being overwhelmed by the potential length and thus its demand on his attention. As he said, “If it were complete, there would be many books in this work” (*Retr.* 1.25.24). Section 13 shows a surprising side of Augustine’s views of women, which perhaps stands in tension with his later (seemingly) misogynistic comments (e.g. *Trin.* 12.7.9-12). Augustine aims to show that the Trinity is clearly presented in the text of Romans and looks to the interaction between Jesus and the “Punic woman” in Matthew 15. According to Augustine, the woman “asked for *salus* for her daughter” (p. 147). Then Augustine connects the Latin *salus* with the semitic root for “three,” שָׁלוֹשׁ (*S-L-S*). So, argues Augustine, the Punic woman was the first gentile to proclaim the Trinity, and he notes “that the Canaanite woman represents the gentiles” (p. 147). This translation misses the significance of Augustine’s use of *caput*, as he identifies the woman as *caput gentium* here. This is one minor point of critique of this volume, i.e., the phrase *caput gentium* translated as “representing the gentiles,” in my opinion, misses the nuance of Augustine’s discussion. Immediately afterwards, Augustine shifts into the question about the sin against the Holy Spirit as mentioned in Matthew 12:32, which consumes his focus until the end of the treatise. His final conclusion is that it is “nothing else but perseverance in wickedness and maliciousness along with despair of God’s clemency” (p. 159). He then closes this (supposed) first book of his commentary with noting the satisfactory answer to this difficult question.

The final treatise is *Speculum*, or, *The Mirror*, which is “a collection of biblical passages that Augustine made after completing his *Revisions* in 427” (p. 165). This treatise is not really a treatise, rather it is more of a handbook, or an abridged Bible. It is a collection of the most important passages on moral commands and exhortations to holy living. Thus, it is a *Speculum* by which the reader can assess their holiness. In the introduction, the editors provide a helpful discussion on the history of doubting the authenticity of this work’s Augustinian authorship, starting with Erasmus in 1528 based mostly on the notion that the work uses the Vulgate and not the *Vetus Latina* (p. 166). They then show that the Vulgate could not have been the base text due to various anomalies in the citations. For example, Augustine cites Proverbs 9:18, a verse not in the Vulgate (p. 166-167). As a whole, in this volume, the treatise comprises 190 pages, with Augustine’s own words filling approximately five of those pages. These include a brief introduction wherein he gives the purpose of this work, specifying that it is not meant for “bringing unbelievers to faith Rather, we urge those who are already believers . . . to examine themselves in this mirror and to judge to what extent they have made progress in good morals and actions” (p. 174). In his selections from Song of Songs, Augustine provides his own theological interpretation of the book, seeming to encourage doctrinal understanding rather than

moral improvement (p. 224-225). Interestingly, this is the *only* instance of interpretive comments in this entire work. Most of the rest of his comments are noting that certain books (e.g. the Historical books) do not include moral exhortations. Also, most of the quotations are introduced with a word or phrase along the lines of “and a little later” or “a few verses later” (etc.). Augustine intended that this catalogue could function as a list of passages worth memorizing. “I shall exercise what restraint I can, lest this work, which is ideally to be memorized, should grow excessively long” (p. 192).

This new volume in *The Works of Saint Augustine* series is a great contribution to Anglophone Augustine readers. Even those well versed in Latin find great benefit in being able to read the text in their native language. These works in particular present points of Augustine’s life and theology that are important aspects for engaging with topics such as his views on sin, faith, salvation, and grace, as well as some surprising points that perhaps should impact our perspective on Augustine’s overall attitude, for example, toward women. This volume is an excellent addition to the series, and it will benefit Augustinian scholarship for years to come.

Nathan Alexander Scott

SIMONS, Jonatán, *Divine Simplicity in the Theology of Irenaeus* (Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 180), Leiden – Boston, Brill, 2023, x-223 p.

This highly interesting work is the publication of a doctoral thesis defended in 2021 at *the Australian Catholic University*. The author comes from a dual American and Hispanic culture, which opens up for him both English-language and Spanish studies on Irenaeus, both of which have been highly developed since the beginning of the 21st century. His basic premise, shared by the reviewer, is that in the work of Irenaeus there is a theology as such, in the sense of a search for God, jointly with and prior to the economy linked to the biblical history of salvation. In the same vein, JS defends the related thesis that the second book of *Adversus haereses* is not only destructive and negative in scope, but that the polemic is in fact based on “positive” theological convictions, which appear at times in the exposition. According to JS, the central idea of this theology opposed to Valentinianism is the fundamental simplicity of God, in accordance with a perspective that is found later in Irenaeus’s great work. As a result, even though JS’s book is divided into two parts: “Divine simplicity in AH II, 13” (chapters 1 and 2) and then “Theological implications of divine simplicity” (chapters 3 to 6), we can also see two successive moments: the study of the theology of the simple God in Book II of *the Adversus haereses* (chapters 1 to 4, studying II, 1-6; 2, 12-13; 17-18), followed by the perceptible echoes of this theology at the end of Book II and in Books III and IV of the same work (chapters 5 and 6, focusing on II, 30, 9; 35, 3-4; III, 6, 1 and 18, 3; IV, 17, 6; 20, 1 and 4-5, 38).

Following E. Osborn, A. Briggman and others (including the author of these lines), JS sees no contradiction between the “rule of truth” derived from the apostolic tradition rooted in a scriptural context on one hand, and more philosophical theological formulations on the other. He writes from the outset: “Irenaeus’ definition of divine simplicity describes God in a way similar to the rule [of truth] through philosophical terminology” (p. 25), or again: “in my reading, the Rule of Truth and the Scriptures provide the terminology for speaking of God (creator, containing but not contained, One, Word, Light), and the [philosophical] notion of divine simplicity clarifies how the scriptural language can be used and what it can mean” (ch. 2, p. 72). After a brief reminder of the “rule of truth” as set out in Book I (in 10 and 22), he then discusses a few “areas” of positive theology which, in his view, emerge in the course of Book II and concern God as Creator (II, 1-2)⁹¹, the simple God in himself (II,

⁹¹ We should note in particular p. 32, which contains a very interesting table listing a complex set of scriptural references associated in Irenaeus with the idea of creation through the Word – a kind of *testimonium* – bringing together Jn 1:3; Gn 1:1 and 3; Ps 32:9 and Eph 4:6, not forgetting the theology of the Shepherd of Hermas (Mand 1:1).

12-13) and, at the end of the book, the harmony of the Scriptures referring to a single God (II, 25-28). JS then addresses – and this is the core of his argument – what he calls, somewhat inaccurately, the Irenaean “definition” of divine simplicity (ch. 2). In reality, the development of AH II, 13, 3-4, which he refers to, is a particularly remarkable passage, in which divine simplicity is strongly affirmed. It does not constitute a “definition” in the strict sense, such as can be found in Irenaeus, for example, with regard to “emission”, defined as follows in a nearby passage: “emission is the manifestation of that which is emitted outside the emitter” (“*emissio enim est eius quod emittitur extra emittentem manifestatio*”, AH II, 13, 6). Despite the inadequacy of this terminology, JS seeks to highlight the dual background, scriptural and philosophical (in particular the reference to Xenophanes), of this section. He shows how the notion of a “simple” God, at least in theory, was widespread in the second century, in Mesoplatonic philosophy as well as among Christian authors, including the Valentinian Ptolemy (cf. *To Flora* 7, 7). The opposition between the uncreated, which is simple by nature, and the created, which is generally composite, implies for Irenaeus (who according to JS rejects apophatism and is concerned with the adequacy and correctness of language about God) on the one hand the absence of opposites in God, and, on the other hand, the unity and simultaneity of designations which, while expressing distinct divine faculties (“powers”, “δυνάμεις”), refer to the same being, since they are inseparable and complementary (“mutually entailing”, according to the author’s terminology): “they say different things about the same God” (p. 91).

Following this first part, which lays the foundations for the study, Chapter 3 returns to the beginning of Book II of *Adversus haereses*, which considers the relationship between God and the world and focuses on the motif of the one God “containing everything and being contained by nothing”, present in Greek philosophy but also suggested by the Bible and already formulated in the Christian corpus by the Shepherd of Hermas (Mand. 1, 1 cited by Irenaeus in AH IV, 20, 2). After what may look like a step backwards, JS’s argument returns in chapter 4 to what is undoubtedly his main theme, namely the polemical development that Irenaeus devotes to the Valentinian Pleroma and its relationship to the First God and Father, in AH II, 12 to 18. This fourth chapter is the heart of the study and addresses the delicate question of fruitfulness in God, approached through the model of the Valentinian Pleroma. JS’s presentation of Irenaeus’s major theoretical text (AH II, 17, 2), which he unfolds on pages 125 to 136, is masterful and very accurate. In this text, Irenaeus uses comparisons to illustrate four possible modes of unity or distinction. Based on recent analyses by A. Briggman (*God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 2019) and P.H. Ip (*Origen and the Emergence of Divine Simplicity before Nicea*, 2022), JS’s interpretation has the merit of highlighting the complexity of Irenaeus’s argument, which is not to choose one comparison over another, but to study the conditions of the possibility of an emission without affecting the unity of the original substance. Through this reading, JS endeavors to show how Irenaeus maintains a balance between, on one hand, the insistence on unity and, on the other, the effectiveness of distinctions, without the danger of pre-modalism. The two chapters that follow demonstrate, in a sense, the consequences of this analysis, with chapter 5 pointing to the economy of creation, in particular through the comparison of God’s efficiency through his “two hands”, which are the Son and the Spirit, and chapter 6 by returning to the question of divine names, where we see the complementarity of designations that refer simultaneously (“simul”, “ὁμοῦ”, IV, 38, 1) to the same object.

This study is, on the whole, very solid and filled with analyses and detailed remarks of impressive subtlety, yet this attention to detail doesn’t distract from the coherence of the whole: in fact, although the work explicitly considers only about fifteen texts (of varying length) taken from the first four books of *Adversus haereses*, all studied with great insight, it is clearly based on an overall consideration of Irenaeus’s thought, at least in its positive theological dimension. It should also be

noted that, although JS frequently refers to the recent edition with English translation by Unger and Dillon⁹², he generally provides his own translation of the passages studied (p. 23, n. 18).

However, the reviewer has two regrets. On the one hand, although JS distinguishes, in theory, between the polemical emphasis of Book II and the more constructive continuation of *Adversus haereses*, in practice he does not seem to differentiate between Irenaeus's developments, and presents a doctrine of divine simplicity as seen '*sub specie aeternitatis*', without taking into account the unfolding of Irenaeus's work. In particular, he does not sufficiently, and at times not at all, place Irenaeus's reflections on divine simplicity and unity of substance in the context of Irenaeus's endeavour to 'invest' the Valentinian Pleroma in order to rectify it from within (*AH* II, 12-18). In these pages of Book II in fact, Irenaeus defers recourse to the Scriptures to a later controversial phase (although he cannot resist making a few references to them), and always remains within the framework of Valentinian thought, even if he offers powerful corrections to it. JS, following other readers less judicious than himself (who include in their errors allowing themselves to be misled by certain statements made in this context as if they represented Irenaeus's doctrine "tout court" and which led them to suspect him of modalism), does not pay sufficient attention to the specificity of Irenaeus's discourse in this second book, and it is not always clear that he is talking here about a God who is *not* creator (this is the point of view of the Valentinians, which Irenaeus adopts here for the discussion). Another criticism that could perhaps be levelled is the undoubtedly excessive weight given to recent English-language works (and this point is linked to the previous one, as JS, who aims to propose a '*via media*' between Behr and Briggman [p. 1] seems at times, in his concern for contemporary discussions, to lose sight of Irenaeus's own perspective). The result is a sometimes unjustified dependence on earlier criticism, to which he generally gives space at the beginning of his chapters. For example, he accepts Crawford's views on Tatian without criticizing them and without really re-examining the texts. The same applies to the "Stoic" provenance of Irenaeus's analyses of the formation of language in thought, which is not at all proven. That said, the bibliography of the work is extremely solid, rich and mostly relevant. Regardless of these remarks and a few other minor criticisms that could be made, this is a major work, not only for understanding Irenaeus and second-century thought, but more generally for the history of theology: it shows with great documentary rigor and depth of analysis how Irenaeus's thought, deeply rooted in the theoretical and philosophical reflection of the imperial era as well as in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, is powerfully oriented towards the search for knowledge of God and the appropriate way of expressing it.

Agnès Bastit

STENGER, Jan R. (ed.), *Learning Cities in Late Antiquity: The Local Dimensions of Education*, London – New York, Routledge, 2019, 264 p.

In this at once narrowly focused and far-ranging volume, Jan R. Stenger has collected a series of eleven essays, which address *The Local Dimensions of Education* in *Learning Cities in Late Antiquity*. The discussion begins and ends with essays authored by Professor Stenger himself. The first introduces "Learning cities" as a "novel approach" to exploring "ancient *paideia*," and foregrounds the intersectional character of urban settings in general (p. 1-23). The concluding essay examines "consensus" and "diktat" as "two models of cultural leadership in late-antique Gaza" (p. 230-258). Distinctive in its use of contemporary urban settings as a way into developing a clearer picture of

⁹² UNGER, Dominic J. – DILLON, John, *St. Irenaeus of Lyons: Against the Heresies (Book 2)* (Ancient Christian writers 65), New York – Mahwah, NJ, Newman Press, 2012.

ancient pedagogical networks (and vice versa), the volume's content assesses chronological tiers that link "ancient, present and future." Simultaneously, it examines the city of Gaza as a central node in late antiquity's wider network of "learning cities." One subset of contributions focuses explicitly on Gaza. A complementary subset addresses a spectrum of 'learning cities', across a broader geographical swathe of the late antique landscape.

Among the essays which retain Gaza as a focus, Stenger's own exploration of the city's role as a hub of cultural leadership is followed by a series of essays that engage various aspects of the city's cultural ethos. Martin Hose introduces the question, "Why Gaza?" with reflection on "the importance of the Greek polis for Greek literature" (p. 47-69). Using an alternate facet of the urban educational landscape as a point of access, Fatini Hadjittofi surveys "the orations of Choricus of Gaza" as a portal for identifying "town and gown" interactions (p. 145-163). Three additional Gazan essays introduce complementary themes. David Westberg offers an overview of the "ideals of education and sophistic realities in late antique Gaza" (p. 164-186). In seeking to answer the question: "Was there a leading form of knowledge in Late Antiquity?" Claudia Tiersch examines "the debate on rhetoric versus law" in the letters of Procopius (p. 187-211). Michael W. Champion invites readers to recognize Gaza as a locus of both "tradition and habituation," through exploring the relationship between "rhetorical and monastic education" (p. 212-229). Each of these essays offers rich food for thought, inviting readers to address a range of questions that often escape close consideration. In turn, Westberg's and Champion's contributions likewise explore material that fills important curricular lacunae.

The volume's four remaining essays expand the anthology's core focus on Gazan-related figures and loci. In alignment with the volume's expansive chronological aim of linking ancient and contemporary "learning cities," Michael Osborne, Muir Houston, and Catherine Lido explore global and historical exemplars of "the role of big data in elucidating learning cities, ancient, present and future" (p. 24-46). Ine Jacobs geographically contextualizes Gaza's learning nexus relative to "the survival [and]/or demise of the traditional urban context" in sixth-century cities of the Roman East (p. 111-144). As Christa Gray traces the commonalities that link "Jerome, Quintilian, and Little Paula," through a Palestinian lens of "asceticism, education and ideology" (p. 87-110), she additionally highlights the common threads that tether Jerome's late antique, 'ascetic' curriculum to the Roman models rehearsed by Quintilian – even as her somewhat idealized rendering of Jerome's role as tutor to young Paula overlooks the degree to which Jerome's report invites closer, critical scrutiny.

Therese Fuhrer's examination of "Augustine's rhetorics of theology" in light of "the religious debates of late antique Carthage" (p. 70-86) shifts the volume's Gazan-centric focus to re-read texts related to an alternate landscape of late antique learning. Having identified two sermons (*sermons* 62 and 64) as distinctively marked by "elements of ... Carthage's cultural identity" (p. 79), Fuhrer humanizes shifting ecclesiological mandates more traditionally examined in a theological light. She likewise calls attention to the savvy skill with which Augustine variously adjudicates "the same behavior" in diverse cities (p. 79). Elucidating civic presuppositions that might escape a less critical reader, Fuhrer observes that "in a kind of situational tolerance," the cultic acts which "Augustine objects to in the small [North African] town [of Bulla Regia] he appears to sanction in "the cultural and religious melting pot of Carthage" (p. 79). In turn, as Augustine diplomatically recasts the city's pagan cults – "rebuilt and equipped ... on a Roman model in the Augustan period" – he treats this learning locus as something of "a special case" (p. 79). Since he offers little objection to "accept[ing] the simultaneous presence ... of [the city's] Christian, pagan and Jewish religions" (p. 79), Fuhrer argues that Augustine's tailored rhetoric mirrors not only an urban audience that had "preserved [and] even promoted ... religious plurality," but also Augustine's own sensibility to his status as a "visiting

preacher,” in a city that served as an “educational centre and a flashpoint for religious and philosophical debates” (p. 79).

The overall strength of this volume lies in the invitation it extends to explore the ambiguous ‘learning networks’ of late antiquity through a lens informed by measurable criteria, drawn from concrete analysis of contemporary urban settings. Grounded in an underlying vision that premises “the interdependence of higher education and the city on various levels throughout the centuries,” the volume likewise demonstrates the promise inherent to linking “two strands of research” – one focused on modern “learning cities,” and the other on “historical cities of learning,” with the aim of enhancing knowledge of “both” (p. 5). The volume’s concentrated focus and exploration of the learning networks associated with the well-researched city of Gaza, serves in turn to consolidate information in a manner that provides nuanced access to a singular urban learning node within a broader networked landscape. The same singularity in focus, however, is somewhat surprising. Near exclusive concentration on what is perhaps the most well-researched center of late antique learning appears to belie the anthology’s promised exploration of broader networks of urban investment. Here, a simple change in title, and/or inclusion of a more descriptive sub-title, could amplify the threads that tether included content, without diminishing the volume’s overall aims. For example, identifying interest in the “local dimension of education” via examination of ‘one’ or ‘a’ “Learning City in Late Antiquity,” might better reflect the relationship between the volume’s stated focus and the tenor of its constituent essays.

Beyond this particular peculiarity, the volume’s broader limitations are those shared with wider scholarly address of education in late antiquity (whether urban or ex-urban). The first is encapsulated in somewhat idealized (and often highly spiritualized) interpretations of late antique life and learning. Underscoring the challenge implicit to distilling history from hagiography, these assessments often lack secure footing when subjected to rigorous scrutiny. The second is more complex. While this anthology refreshingly claims the city’s role in lifetime learning as its explicit focus, by virtue of the subject matter treated, individual essays equate such investment almost solely with elite endeavor. Whether the frame is late antique or contemporary, given the cross-section of readers with growing interest in this area, it is difficult to over-emphasize the importance of re-imagining what learning ‘looks like’ within more demographically diverse networks of engagement. In counterpoint, the present volume’s “novel approach” simultaneously demonstrates the conceptual value of placing disparate landscapes in conversation, and the rich returns garnered from examining late antique learning in more complex ways.

Lillian I. Larsen

VAN OORT, Johannes, *Augustine’s Confessions. Ten Studies* (Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae*, 182), Leiden, Brill, XVIII-249 p.

Le fil conducteur de ce riche volume, bilan de près de quinze années de recherche, est l’importance du manichéisme dans la conversion d’Augustin et le récit qu’en offre les *conf.* La thèse de l’auteur (désormais : l’A.), éminent spécialiste du sujet, est posée sans ambiguïté : l’influence manichéenne, reçue sur le terreau gnostique de la religiosité dans laquelle baigna le jeune Augustin, est plus déterminante encore que celle du néo-platonisme si l’on veut proposer une juste compréhension d’ensemble des *conf.* À cette thèse se rattache l’intérêt pour le lectorat manichéen, horizon d’attente qui explique pour l’A. nombre des références, plus ou moins explicites, à ces doctrines. L’A. s’attache à démontrer cette thèse au long de dix chapitres, alternant entre études d’ensemble et notices plus spécialisées sur des points qui touchent tous, d’une manière ou d’une autre, à cette relation dynamique entre manichéo-christianisme et catholico-christianisme (selon le couple proposé par l’A.). Ce n’est

pas le moindre intérêt de ce volume que d'offrir au lecteur un accès au vaste corpus de sources écrites mais également iconographiques visant à éclairer certains détails du récit. Une miniature de la célébration du Bêma, par exemple, est mise en regard de la scénographie de la table à jeux (*mensa lusoria*) sur laquelle est posé le codex de Paul (*conf.* VIII, 14) que le *Tolle lege* invite Augustin à saisir : elle offre comme en écho le geste d'un Élu, debout à côté d'une petite table, la main tournée vers un ouvrage en une invitation à l'ouvrir.

Le premier chapitre ambitionne de renouveler la lecture de l'œuvre maîtresse d'Augustin au prisme du dialogue « haletant » entre les spiritualités gnostique et catholique ; il présente avec grande précision les écrits manichéens qui sous-tendent la rencontre d'Augustin avec les héritiers de Mani. Plus spécifique, le deuxième chapitre répond par l'affirmative à la question « Augustin a-t-il eu connaissance du *Livres des images* de Mani ? » à partir de *conf.* XI, 10 et *c. Faust.* XX, 9. Changement de cadre avec le chapitre trois qui se penche sur la formule, souvent commentée, « le fils de ces larmes » (*conf.* III, 21), par laquelle l'évêque anonyme, sollicité par Monique pour détourner son fils de ses erreurs, désigne Augustin en prédisant sa conversion. L'enquête menée sur le passé manichéen de cet évêque permet à l'A. de montrer avec subtilité que la mention *legendo* – c'est-à-dire le *modus operandi* de la conversion annoncée – doit être complétée comme suit : c'est en lisant ... les écrits manichéens que le « fils de ces larmes » découvrira la fausseté de cette doctrine, exactement comme cela s'est produit pour l'évêque en question. Sans quitter *conf.* III, 21, le bref chapitre quatre se penche sur l'hapax *substomachans* employé dans la dernière admonestation de l'évêque et propose, en s'appuyant sur l'emploi de ce mot chez Julien d'Éclane, de le décrypter en lien avec le repas rituel manichéen, précédemment décrit de manière très documentée dans le premier chapitre. L'A. y voit un jeu de mots subtil à l'intention des lecteurs familiers du manichéisme et propose une nouvelle traduction : « De dégoût, il vomit alors ces mots : “Éloigne-toi de moi, aussi vrai que tu vis, il n'est pas possible que le fils de ces larmes se perde” ». L'examen de l'évocation du *pulch.* (*conf.* IV, 20-27) occupe le cinquième chapitre. À travers onze notules, l'A. s'emploie à spécifier le sujet de cette œuvre de jeunesse en citant, ici encore, de nombreuses sources manichéennes. Comment rendre compte des différentes représentations de Dieu au fil des *conf.* ? C'est la question qui guide le chapitre six, sous-tendu par l'énigme du mal, caractéristique de l'arrière-plan manichéen sur lequel émergent ces représentations. L'A. montre comment l'influence néo-platonicienne – principalement celle de Plotin – conduit Augustin à infléchir sa compréhension de la nature divine, depuis une conception anthropomorphique et spatiale, jusqu'à une forme de panthéisme, en passant par une figuration toute matérielle, avant de se fixer sur une conception strictement spirituelle. Centre de l'ouvrage, de l'aveu même de l'A., l'ample chapitre sept se concentre sur les éléments manichéens repérables dans le récit de conversion (*conf.* VIII, 13-30), au nombre desquels figure la célébration du Bêma, le motif de « l'appel et la réponse » ou celui de la « vierge », ou encore le figuier et ses fruits. L'A. affirme ainsi, au vu de ses explorations de la mythologie manichéenne, que l'énigmatique voix enfantine qui prononce le *tolle lege* décisif représenterait Jésus – selon la figure manichéenne de « Jésus, le jeune (garçon) ». Le chapitre huit porte sur l'étude des traits manichéens observables dans la première partie du livre X ; l'A. y met en avant les parallèles possibles entre la *memoria Dei* et le *Kephalaion* 56. C'est à nouveau une perspective d'ensemble qui caractérise le chapitre neuf. Il réévalue l'influence biblique et patristique (Irénée et Ambroise en particulier) repérable en arrière-plan des emplois de l'expression « la main de Dieu » en mettant en exergue le rôle de la christologie et de la piété manichéennes. Le dixième et dernier chapitre aborde la question centrale du péché et de la concupiscence. L'A. suit Augustin dans le récit de sa jeunesse où il voit explicitement manifestées les tendances homo-érotiques du futur évêque d'Hippone qui, rappelle-t-il, ne fait pas mystère de ses rêves sexuels. À distance, semble-t-il de ce qu'Augustin affirme au livre X, savoir que la

concupiscence et, partant, la continence ne sauraient être réduites à la pure dimension sexuelle, et que cette dernière doit être envisagée plus largement comme ce qui « rassemble » le sujet et le « ramène à l'unité », l'A. se dit convaincu du fait que la *concupiscentia* comme la *libido* sont à comprendre avant tout comme sexuelles et peccamineuses et que l'essentiel de l'histoire d'Augustin porte sur le sexe et le péché.

On s'étonnera peut-être que l'A. choisisse de clore son ouvrage par une thèse susceptible d'éveiller la contradiction, à la lumière de lectures complémentaires insistant, par exemple, sur les périls de la *curiositas* – la *propositio* de *conf.* X, 30, 41 ne reprend-elle pas la triple convoitise exposée en 1 Jn 2, 16, « celle de la chair, celle des yeux et l'ambition du siècle » ? C'est peut-être le volet le plus sujet à discussion d'une somme ambitieuse dont l'A. souhaite qu'elle constitue le *terminus a quo* pour les commentaires suivis des *conf.* qui viendront à sa suite. Doit-on faire des péchés sexuels un objet essentiel du titre et du contenu des *conf.*, avec pour conséquence éventuelle d'infléchir dans cette direction la classique tripartition de la *confessio* en faisant de la *confessio peccatorum* une *confessio carnalium peccatorum* ? Tel est, à tout le moins, un des débats auquel cet opus invite ses lecteurs. À eux reviendra également de donner, en tout ou partie, leur assentiment à la clef de lecture manichéenne dont l'A. fait le « *cantus firmus* » des *conf.*

Juliette de Dieuleveult

VERMÈS, Hugues, *Etiam peccata ? La mise à profit des péchés dans l'économie du salut selon Augustin d'Hippone* (Collection des études augustinienes. Série Antiquité 215), Paris, Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2024, 594 p.

Qual è il ruolo dei peccati nell'economia della salvezza di Agostino d'Ippona? Può il male, ovvero il peccato, tornare utile al peccatore? In che modo e chi utilizza un male per il bene? Queste e altre domande sono affrontate nell'ampia monografia di Vermès, edita nella prestigiosa serie Collection des Études Augustiniennes. Il volume è l'esito della ricerca dottorale condotta dall'autore sotto la direzione di Isabelle Bochet.

L'opera è divisa in quattro parti. Vermès inizia la sua ricerca ricostruendo il dibattito avvenuto in Francia attorno agli anni '50 circa l'attribuzione ad Agostino della glossa *etiam peccata* a Rom 8, 28, *omnia cooperantur* (o *cooperatur*, vedi p. 47-48) *in bonum* (Prima parte, “*Etiam peccata?* Une question d'attribution”). Le posizioni degli studiosi si sono divise tra quanti sostenevano (1) la presenza materiale della glossa e la fedeltà formale al pensiero di Agostino, (2) l'assenza materiale ma la fedeltà al pensiero di Agostino e, infine, (3) l'assenza materiale e l'infedeltà al pensiero di Agostino. Vermès, tramite l'utilizzo delle moderne banche dati, conferma l'assenza formale della glossa *etiam peccata* a Rom 8, 28 nel corpus agostiniano. Il problema della fedeltà o meno della glossa alla teologia del vescovo di Ippona resta invece da investigare, e questo è lo scopo che si prefigge l'autore nel capitolo successivo.

L'esegesi agostiniana di Rom 8, 28 riferisce il termine *omnia* alla punizione del peccato o alle persecuzioni degli eretici e non direttamente ai peccati, che Dio farebbe concorrere al bene dei peccatori stessi. Unica eccezione si trova in *de correptione et gratia* 9, 24, in cui Agostino, pur non utilizzando il termine *peccata*, si riferirebbe di fatto ai peccati, in particolare al rinnegamento di Pietro. In questo caso l'interpretazione agostiniana di Rom 8, 28, pur nell'assenza materiale della glossa in questione, corrisponderebbe al significato che la tradizione ha in seguito attribuito all'*etiam peccata*, ovvero l'utilizzo dei peccati da parte di Dio a beneficio dei peccatori stessi. L'attribuzione della glossa *etiam peccata* a Rom 8, 28, come ricostruisce Vermès riprendendo ipotesi già formulate e avanzandone una nuova, avrebbe avuto un'origine medievale.

Dall'esegesi di Rom 8, 28 in relazione alla glossa *etiam peccata*, Vermès amplia i confini della sua ricerca, investigando in generale il ruolo dei peccati nell'economia della salvezza secondo Agostino. A questo proposito, Vermès ritiene che l'espressione *etiam de peccatis*, benché rara in Agostino, possa esprimere meglio di *etiam peccata* la teologia agostiniana dell'utilizzo dei peccati da parte di Dio. In particolare, con l'espressione *etiam de peccatis* si vuole mettere in evidenza il ruolo strumentale dei peccati e dei mali da parte di Dio: i peccati non sono solo il punto di partenza, ma anche lo strumento che Dio utilizza per fare il bene. Si tratta di una posizione teologica che Vermès ritrova in maniera costante nella teologia di Agostino, dal *de musica* al *contra Iulianum opus imperfectum*.

La seconda parte della ricerca ("*Etiam de peccatis: cur possibile?* Les conditions de possibilité d'une mise à profit des péchés") è dedicata all'approfondimento delle premesse, o meglio delle condizioni, che rendono possibile l'utilizzo dei peccati per il bene. A questo proposito, Vermès dedica un lungo capitolo alla complessa definizione di peccato secondo il vescovo di Ippona. Il capitolo si concentra inizialmente sul *de libero arbitrio*, in cui è già presente la doppia caratteristica del peccato come atto volontario e come pena del peccato. Agostino ritornerà costantemente nel corso della sua vita sul concetto di peccato, come messo in evidenza in maniera intelligente da Vermès, che analizza il vocabolario utilizzato, le definizioni fornite in altre opere e l'interpretazione di Si 10, 15 e 1 Tm 6, 10. Vermès individua nel ruolo crescente della concupiscenza carnale la principale evoluzione nella concezione agostiniana del peccato: si tratta di una componente la cui presenza nel *de libero arbitrio* è particolarmente debole e che acquisisce sempre più importanza nel corso degli anni, in particolare durante la controversia pelagiana. Ciononostante, secondo Vermès, la concezione del peccato di Agostino, pur evolvendosi, rimane fondamentalmente coerente con quanto esposto nel *de libero arbitrio*.

L'azione salvifica di Dio si dispiega all'interno di un'economia temporale della salvezza, come mostrato da Agostino nel *de uera religione*, ampiamente analizzato da Vermès. La dimensione temporale dell'azione divina non riguarda soltanto il luogo, o meglio il momento, attuale, ma anche l'utilizzo delle realtà temporali, inclusi i peccati, per condurre l'uomo alle realtà eterne. Le osservazioni di Vermès a questo proposito mi sembrano pienamente condivisibili e frutto di una comprensione profonda del pensiero di Agostino. Tuttavia, contrariamente a quanto avviene negli altri capitoli, Vermès non sviluppa in maniera approfondita l'analisi della dimensione temporale dell'economia della salvezza all'interno del corpus agostiniano, limitandosi per lo più al *de uera religione*. Sarebbe stato utile verificare quanto radicata fosse questa convinzione in Agostino tramite un esame più approfondito di altre opere, utilizzando la medesima metodologia impiegata negli altri capitoli.

La successiva questione affrontata da Vermès riguarda il rapporto tra la dottrina della predestinazione e la permissione del peccato da parte di Dio. La dottrina della predestinazione è presentata a partire dall'*ad Simplicianum*, ma la sua evoluzione è seguita fino alle ultime opere di Agostino. Vermès non ritiene che il vescovo di Ippona abbia mai effettivamente sostenuto una doppia predestinazione, sia dei salvati che dei dannati. Agostino si sarebbe limitato a sostenere la predestinazione divina dei santi. Dio avrebbe avuto soltanto una prescienza dei peccati, non essendone però il responsabile, che rimane a tutti gli effetti l'uomo. Dio si limiterebbe a permettere agli uomini di compiere il male, tanto ai predestinati quanto ai dannati, sebbene con conseguenze e utilità differenti.

A partire dal capitolo successivo inizia la terza parte dell'opera ("*Etiam de peccatis: quomodo?* Les modalités de la mise à profit des péchés"), in cui Vermès analizza le modalità della messa a profitto dei peccati da parte di Dio. Il primo aspetto ad essere approfondito è l'esperienza personale di peccatore che Agostino racconta nelle *confessiones*. Alcuni aspetti emergono con più frequenza in

questa opera, tra cui il peccato come amarezza sperimentata dal peccatore, che è indotto a ricercare la dolcezza di Dio, e l'inquietudine del peccatore, che ricerca un vero riposo in Dio. Infine, l'umiliazione dell'orgoglioso è un'ulteriore modalità dell'utilizzo dei peccati da parte di Dio presente nelle *confessiones*. Si tratta di un elemento fondamentale della teologia agostiniana che verrà affrontato in più occasioni da Vermès.

Il capitolo seguente è dedicato alla comprensione e contestualizzazione dell'utilizzo dei peccati da parte di Dio nella produzione teologica di Agostino, passando dall'esperienza personale narrata nelle *confessiones* all'elaborazione teorica presente nelle varie opere teologiche. Vermès propone prima di tutto una breve ma efficace presentazione di come questo tema sia stato trattato dai filosofi pagani (Seneca e Plotino) e dagli scrittori cristiani (Ambrogio). Purtroppo, probabilmente per ragioni di spazio, l'autore decide di non prendere in esame Origene (p. 276, n. 3), che, seppur già ampiamente studiato dalla critica moderna, sarebbe stato utile per delineare con maggior precisione il pensiero di Agostino. Se nella tradizione filosofica antica è il saggio e non la persona malvagia a trarre vantaggio dai propri peccati, in Ambrogio il peccato diventa utile anche per il peccatore, che è ricondotto all'umiltà e al riconoscimento della necessità dell'intervento divino. Si tratta di una caratteristica che Agostino farà propria e approfondirà nel corso della sua produzione teologica. Anche se Agostino non ha mai scritto un'opera specificamente dedicata alle modalità con cui Dio mette a profitto i peccati dell'uomo, Vermès individua in un passo del *de continentia* (6, 15) un compendio delle modalità dell'agire divino, che utilizzerebbe i peccati *siue ignoscendo, siue sanando, siue ad utilitates piorum coaptando atque uertendo siue etiam iustissime uindicando*. Sebbene nel corpus agostiniano non vi siano altri passi in cui compare la medesima quadruplici divisione, Vermès dimostra in maniera precisa e puntuale che queste modalità dell'agire divino ritornano con continuità nelle altre opere di Agostino.

Nel capitolo successivo, Vermès si concentra su alcuni casi concreti di peccatori e sulle modalità con cui Dio ha usato bene dei loro peccati. In particolare, sono analizzate le figure di Adamo e di Pietro, oltre che il libro 22 del *contra Faustum* dedicato ai peccati dei patriarchi e dei profeti. In questo capitolo, Vermès passa dall'esposizione teorica dei principi esposti in *de continentia* 6, 15 alla loro concreta applicazione nelle vite di alcuni peccatori paradigmatici nella storia della salvezza.

Le diverse modalità con cui Dio può produrre un bene a partire dai peccati degli uomini, secondo Vermès, funzionano con un meccanismo ben preciso: l'esperienza del peccato, in quanto rifiuto orgoglioso da parte dell'uomo del bisogno di Dio, rende in realtà l'uomo stesso consapevole di questo bisogno, facendolo così tornare umilmente a Dio. Vermès analizza questa meccanica a partire da due trattati anti-pelagiani, il *de natura et gratia* e il *contra duas epistulas pelagianorum*, in combinazione con l'esegesi agostiniana di 2 Cor 12, 7-9 e Rom 5, 20.

La quarta e ultima parte della ricerca riguarda il ruolo di Cristo e della chiesa (*“Etiam de peccatis in Christo. Le rôle du Christ dans la mise à profit des péchés”*). Il ruolo di Cristo è un aspetto difficile da studiare in quanto Agostino non ha mai scritto un'opera esclusivamente su questo tema. Dopo aver brevemente esposto i lineamenti principali della cristologia agostiniana, Vermès studia il ruolo di Cristo nell'utilizzo dei peccati tramite l'esegesi di 2 Cor 5, 21 e Rom 8, 3. Sottolinea, inoltre, un aspetto molto interessante, ovvero il ruolo esemplare di Cristo, da intendersi sia come esempio morale che ontologico. Cristo, quale testa del corpo costituito dalla chiesa, mostra alle sue membra tramite la propria sofferenza, morte e risurrezione la strada da seguire e da imitare. A questo proposito, sarebbe interessante valutare la critica che Giuliano d'Eclano muove alla cristologia di Agostino soprattutto nell'*ad Florum* e la risposta di Agostino nell'*opus imperfectum contra Iulianum*. Partendo dalla cristologia di Agostino, Giuliano critica infatti la possibilità che Cristo sia un esempio per gli

uomini se la sua natura umana, come ritiene Agostino, è priva della concupiscenza carnale contro cui gli uomini devono lottare quotidianamente.

Dalla cristologia si passa all'ecclesiologia, un altro concetto particolarmente complesso nell'elaborazione teologica di Agostino, non esistendo una definizione univoca di cosa sia la chiesa, variando a seconda del contesto preso in esame (qui ed ora o in futuro) e del grado di appartenenza ad essa. Ad ogni modo, per Agostino la chiesa che vive il tempo presente sperimenta la presenza costante del peccato e dei peccatori al suo interno. Soprattutto nel *de ciuitate Dei* Agostino mostra come i peccati e i peccatori risultino utili ai membri della città di Dio in diversi modi, tra cui, per esempio, rendendo manifesta agli eletti la grazia di cui è fatto loro dono, e permettendo loro di esercitare, nei confronti delle eresie, la saggezza nella ricerca della verità. Tuttavia, la chiesa è utile anche ai peccatori: nessuno può salvarsi se si trova al di fuori di essa. Ciò nonostante, l'appartenenza alla chiesa, intensa come partecipazione alla sua vita sacramentale, non può assicurare di per sé la salvezza, perché la predestinazione e la perseveranza nella fede sono doni della grazia divina non riservati a tutti i membri della chiesa terrestre. Al contempo, nel pensiero di Agostino, soprattutto nelle *enarrationes in psalmos*, si osserva un continuo tentativo di incorporare il peccatore all'interno della chiesa per la sua salvezza. Si tratta di un movimento continuo, che potrà giungere a compimento soltanto nella vita eterna.

La ricerca di Vermès affronta con successo il tema dell'utilizzo dei peccati da parte di Dio, un aspetto che, come sottolineato nella conclusione del volume, può avere utili ricadute anche per l'uomo della nostra epoca, una volta effettuate le dovute distinzioni. I meriti di questa ricerca, a mio giudizio, sono da ricercarsi prima di tutto nella metodologia utilizzata. Vermès decide programmaticamente di non utilizzare un approccio strettamente cronologico, ma di delineare un percorso che, a partire da un problema storiografico, ovvero l'attribuzione della glossa *etiam peccata* all'esegesi agostiniana di Rom 8, 28 (parte prima), permette ai suoi lettori di approfondire e comprendere le condizioni che permettono un utilizzo con profitto dei peccati (parte seconda, *cur possibile?*), le modalità di questo utilizzo (parte terza, *quomodo?*) e, infine, il ruolo di Cristo e della chiesa (parte quarta, *in Christo*). Vermès, in ogni capitolo, inizia la sua analisi tramite un'opera particolarmente significativa di Agostino in relazione al tema trattato (per esempio, il *de libero arbitrio* nel capitolo dedicato al peccato), per poi ampliare la sua analisi a specifici passi della produzione agostiniana, non tralasciando mai di approfondire l'aspetto esegetico e omiletico. Il metodo seguito da Vermès sembra riprodurre il movimento di fisarmonica, concentrandosi su un'opera specifica salvo poi estendersi alla sterminata produzione agostiniana, effettuando una selezione intelligente. Questa metodologia ha il pregio, da un lato, di non trascurare la variabile tempo nell'evoluzione del pensiero di Agostino, che Vermès ha cura di evidenziare a più riprese, dall'altro, di non limitarsi a una monotona sequenza di passi relativi a un medesimo tema, privi di approfondimento e contestualizzazione. Al contrario, la scelta di concentrarsi su una determinata opera permette a Vermès di penetrare nel profondo il pensiero di Agostino e di porlo nel corretto contesto storico-teologico.

La ricerca si pone inevitabilmente all'interno dell'annoso dibattito sulla continuità o discontinuità nella teologia di Agostino. Pur limitandosi ad approfondire un aspetto specifico, seppur complesso, del pensiero del vescovo di Ippona, mi pare evidente che la posizione di Vermès si collochi a favore di una tendenziale continuità nella teologia di Agostino circa l'utilizzo dei peccati da parte di Dio all'interno dell'economia della salvezza, pur evidenziando la presenza di alcune evoluzioni. Mi pare che questa possa essere una chiave di lettura utile per collocare il contributo di Vermès all'interno del più ampio dibattito sulla teologia agostiniana.

Giulio Malavasi

WALSH, Robyn F., *The Origins of Early Christian Literature: Contextualizing the New Testament within Greco-Roman Literary Culture*, Cambridge – New York, Cambridge University Press, 2021, XIX-225 p.

This monograph, which consists of an introduction, five chapters, and a conclusion, focusses on the New Testament (NT), and more specifically the gospels, which Walsh regards as composed by educated “cultural producers” interested in “Judean teachings, practices, and paradoxography”, and working within a network of “literate specialists” (p. 1), after the Jewish War and in dialogue with contemporary literature. Walsh does not deem the Gospels to be transmitted by oral tradition, or at least, “if the gospels writers are aware of any oral tradition about Jesus, it is the position of this monograph that these elements are irretrievable to us, if they existed at all” (p. 156). The orality thesis was introduced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries during Romanticism, which treasured the idea of *Volk* oral tradition. While this argument is sound, nevertheless it is to be remarked that the ancient testimonies on orality in connection with the Jesus Movement, including Papias, were of course not influenced by Romanticism.

Walsh concentrates especially on Herder, who “focused on questions of *Urvolk* and *Ursprache* and how to reconstruct the original myths, stories, and language of each unique community of *Volk*” (p. 68); she also points out his creeping anti-Semitism, since he conceived of the Jews as no *Volk*, spread all over the world, without any *Vaterland* (p. 70). Herder also anticipated von Harnack’s model of the so-called Hellenisation of Christianity through his idea of the purity of Hebrew culture before it was mixed and adulterated by Hellenism: “the living language of Canaan, during the period of its greatest beauty and purity, before it was mixed with the Chaldaean [and the] Greek” (*die lebendige Sprache Kanaans war, und auch hier nur von ihren schönsten reinesten Zeiten, ehe sie mit der Chaldaischen Griechischen ... vermischt ward*, Herder, *Vom Geist der ebräischen Poesie*, 9).⁹³ Walsh also observes that although “Jefferson may have intended to use ‘Platonic Christianity’ as a historical description, the terminology did not exist in antiquity and possessed strong pejorative connotations for Jefferson” (p. 25). I note that the expression “Christian Platonism” – rather than “Platonic Christianity” – is instead justifiable and can be an appropriate designation for an important strand of thought which has been alive for almost two thousand years (although people such as Jefferson, Herder, Harnack, and many others would think of it as an adulteration of a supposedly “pure” Christianity), and “Patristic Platonism” is also a suitable designation for Christian Platonism from the Patristic period.⁹⁴

The stress on *Volk* and the spirit or *Geist* of a *Volk* led NT scholars to emphasise the role of “communities” and their oral traditions over that of individual writers, although “it is certainly the case that the Gospels present strong ideas about some kinds of social formations – including communities of disciples and ἐκκλησία” (p. 10). So, “we continually look for evidence of socially marginal, preliterate Christian groups in these works” (p. 6), while the Gospel authors should be understood as “in dialogue with writings and writers of their age rather than assuming that they were

⁹³ For a refutation of the “Hellenisation of Christianity” model, see my *Origen, Patristic Philosophy, and Christian Platonism: Re-Thinking the Christianisation of Hellenism*, in *Vigiliae Christianae* 63 (2009) 217-263; C. MARKSCHIES, *Hellenisierung des Christentums: Sinn und Unsinn einer historischen Deutungskategorie*, Leipzig, Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2012, esp. 119 and 138; Idem, *Does It Make Sense to Speak about a ‘Hellenization of Christianity’ in Antiquity?*, in *Church History and Religious Culture* 92 (2012) 5-34.

⁹⁴ I justified the category of Christian Platonism in *Christian Soteriology and Christian Platonism*, in *Vigiliae Christianae* 61 (2007) 313-356, and *Origen and the Platonic Tradition*, in *Religions* 8.2 (2017) 21.1-20; *Gregory of Nyssa on the Soul (and the Restoration): From Plato to Origen*, in A. MARMODORO – N. MCLYNN (eds.), *Exploring Gregory of Nyssa: Historical and Philosophical Perspectives*, Oxford, OUP, 2018, 110-141; A. HAMPTON – J.P. KENNEY (eds.), *Christian Platonism: A History*, Cambridge, CUP, 2020; my review *The Thomist* 86.4 (2023) 684-689.

produced by or for ‘Christian communities’” (p. XIV). Walsh is right that “we know that the gospel writers are heavily influenced by the Middle Platonists, Stoics, and other popular philosophies of the period; yet philosophical terminology and allusion (e.g., *eidōs*, *pneuma*, *logos*, *pistis*) are still often translated with Western Protestant Christian theological vocabulary (e.g., ‘spirit’)” (p. 7). We should not discount the presence of philosophical ideas in the NT; this is why, for instance, new seminars established at SNTS are endeavouring to explore the philosophical background and reception of the NT, especially John and Paul – but all of the NT is worth studying, including the so-called Pastoral Epistles, which do have points of contact with Hellenistic moral philosophy (including Stoicism and especially Hierocles the Stoic), as other colleagues and I have argued. The NT is included in the *Cambridge History of Patristic Philosophy* precisely because the integration of ancient philosophy in Christian theology starts here.

It stands to reason that “the gospel writers are not the ‘founding fathers’ of a religious tradition – at least not in their historical moment. They are rational agents producing literature about a Judean teacher, son of God, and wonder-worker named Jesus” (p. 6). Walsh deems it likely that the Gospels were produced in the same way as most Graeco-Roman literary products, that is, by a single writer, not as folk tradition but as “normal” ancient literature. As a consequence, according to Walsh, the saying–source Q (which indeed is controversial among NT scholars today) is an artefact of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Gospels “represent the strategic choices of educated Greco-Roman writers working within a circumscribed field of literary production” (p. 6); they were “‘normal’ ancient literature produced by educated, elite members of Greco-Roman society” (p. 13). I concur that “high education and knowledge of *paideia* did not necessarily correspond to economic or social standing as we understand these categories today” (p. 9), as Epictetus for instance proves; therefore, the Gospel writers could have been endowed with high education and *paideia* without being necessarily powerful or rich to any extent. The authors of the Gospels, like ancient authors in general, “self-consciously chose and craft[ed] their references and source materials in a rational way” (p. 84). Walsh raises the important question, “how can we meaningfully distinguish between fiction and history?” (p. 4) and helpfully cites Bowersock’s classical *Fiction as History*, which was such a source of inspiration when I worked long ago on my doctoral thesis on ancient novels and the New Testament at the State University in Milan. Alongside Bowersock, I would also indicate as especially relevant I.L.E. RAMELLI – J. PERKINS (eds.), *Early Christian and Jewish Narrative. The Role of Religion in Shaping Narrative Forms* (WUNT I 348), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2015.

In Chapter 1, Walsh argues against “the myth of Christian origins,” which she later reconstructs as follows: “the teachings of Jesus passed on orally from the illiterate eyewitnesses in Galilee to spontaneously formed and widespread communities of early Christians, later recorded by literate gospel authors” (p. 169). Walsh claims that scholars of the NT and Early Christianity are misguided by that she calls “the Big Bang” theory of the first spread of early Christianity, which is “a Romantic reconstruction of the Gospels,” because of which “we fail to acknowledge the degree to which these writings fit perceptibly within a larger trajectory of imperial literature” (p. 169). The “Big Bang” theory consists of “predominant assumptions” such as that “the early Jesus Movement grew explosively”, “that it was well established institutionally, and that its followers comprised almost miraculously bounded communities” (p. 22), and that “Christianity materialized in a manner otherwise unprecedented in comparison with the origin stories of other ‘new religious movements’” (p. 37). This, in her view, is a myth, while “the true origins of Christianity are in how its canonical texts were later collated, circulated, and established as authoritative, not in the mythic constructions we find described in the writings themselves” (p. 34). While it is true that Christian canonic formation played an important role in the formation of Christianity, nevertheless early Christianity, I think, is

not merely a literary phenomenon, but it is also a social, theological (even philosophico–theological) and religious one. It is very probably the case, I suspect, that Acts presents exaggerated numbers, speaking for instance of three, five, and many thousands who embraced the Jesus Movement or listened to the Apostles’ preaching about Jesus (2:41; 4:4; 21:20). This, however, is not a feature of Acts or other early Christian literature alone, but it is common to Josephus and many other historians and narrators.

The “Big Bang” myth, which, according to Walsh, should not be confused with history, was fostered by German Romantics and later by form criticism and redaction criticism. These focussed on communities of believers, instead of individual authors as culture producers. Therefore, the Gospels came to be considered as sources of information about communities. But, for instance, re-evaluating the literary precedents for Matthew’s use of terms such as ἐκκλησία and ἔθνη reveals that “Matthew’s group talk is a rhetorical signpost rather than evidence of literal communities behind the text” (p. 46). The same, according to Walsh, applies to Luke, the other Gospels, and Acts.

The role of German Romanticism and Idealism, which located cultures in communities or states, is explored especially in Chapter 2. Here, Walsh discusses, among else, Homer, Wolf’s thesis that “the *Iliad* was a collective work, ‘born and developed by accident and chance’ by a like-minded people over the course of centuries” (p. 72); the NT, the Grimm brothers’ interest in oral tradition, as is clear in their *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, Nietzsche, Alexander von Humboldt’s claim that “the rediscovery of *Germania* opened the ancient world of the North in a manner comparable to what Columbus had done for the West” (p. 63); the *Nibelungenlied* as *Volkspoesie*, and James MacPherson’s “invention of a Gaelic translation of Ossian poetry” (p. 59), interpreted through the Romantic lens that *Völker* produced original revelation through oral tradition and later in literary forms, which however represented communities. The writer is the educated mouthpiece of an illiterate community, a *Volk*. This concept resonated with that of the Romantic Savage – “simple, illiterate peasants who represent a seemingly more ‘authentic’ or ‘pure’ form of the moral teachings of Jesus” (p. 100). The Romantic Savage, in a way, I note, has an antecedent in the Stoic conception well voiced by Annaeus Cornutus in the time of Jesus and Paul: the ancients, he claimed, had a hidden, unadulterated knowledge that enabled them to express the truth, although in a veiled way (*Comp.* 35).

The concept of “community”, which according to Walsh “is rooted in anti-Enlightenment and Romantic notions of a cohesive *Volk* inspired by the ‘spirit’ or *Geist* of a group’s oral teachings” (p. 29), reminds me of what Fr Ignace de la Potterie often told me when I studied the Gospel of John with him at Rome at the Pontifical Biblical Institute (when I was very young, as a Master’s student at the Catholic University of Milan): he used to tell me with humour, both in person and over the phone, that hearing the expression “Johannine community” made him think of a bus full of Jesus followers travelling around Palestine after Jesus’ death and resurrection, collecting and spreading memories about Jesus. Although he would have been uncomfortable with several of Walsh’s suggestions, he was also somehow sceptical about the notion of “community”.

Concerning the New Testament, exegetes and theologians such as Rudolf Bultmann, Helmut Koester, and others, regarded the first Christians as incapable of being “authors,” with the exception of Paul, qua educated (although Walsh uses deconstruction with Paul and his communities as well: e.g. “While Paul was corresponding with assemblies that may have self-identified as cohesive, his letters reveal that these associations were dynamic and variable rather than stable and organized”, p. 38; see also p. 156). However, regarding Paul’s education, I note that a whole ancient tradition, partially initiated by Paul himself, regarded him as uneducated. The idea that Paul in particular was unlearned was

common in the first Christian reception of Paul.⁹⁵ In 1 Cor 1:17–31 Paul insists that he preaches, not human, but divine wisdom, and 3:16: “God’s spirit [πνεῦμα] dwells in you,” that is, in the Corinthian believers, whom Paul has just described as mostly simple people. Abraham Malherbe found that Paul’s own (Greek) style was not a model of *paideia*: “the Church Fathers, measuring Paul by the criteria of classicism, were embarrassed by his rudeness of style.”⁹⁶ What is more, “the earliest Christians found in Paul no rhetorician or high-born orator, but a humble author of weighty letters.”⁹⁷ This does not exclude his knowledge of Stoic tenets, on which modern research on Paul and Stoicism is casting light (perhaps not without exaggerations). Paul himself declares to the Corinthians: “even if I am rude in speech [ἰδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ], yet I am not so in knowledge” (2 Cor 11:6), but the knowledge he refers to comes from God: “we are unable to think out anything as coming from us, but our capacity comes from God” (2 Cor 3:5); “when I came to you, siblings, I did not announce the divine testimony with sublimity of words or wisdom” (καθ’ ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας, 1 Cor 2:1). John Chrysostom lauds Paul’s philosophical and rhetorical skills, calling him “more philosopher than the philosophers, more rhetorically skilled than the rhetors” (*Laz.* 6.9 PG 48.1041; *Sac.* 4.7), although he implies that Paul was neither a philosopher nor a rhetor, but rather “rude in speech,” ἰδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ, as Paul himself acknowledges in 2 Cor 11:6. Paul was an unschooled leatherworker, possessed “no power of eloquence,” but was absolutely “unlearned” (*Laud. Paul.* 4.10). But he was inspired by “some divine and ineffable power” (*Laud. Paul.* 4.13). Origen in the preface to his Commentary on Romans observes that this epistle is more enigmatic and difficult to understand (*difficilior ad intellegendum*) than his other letters, both because Paul uses “expressions sometimes confused and obscure” (*elocutionibus interdum confusis et minus explicitis*) and because he “discusses very many problems therein” (*quaestiones in ea plurima mouet*, *Comm. Rom.* 1.1). Origen explicitly acknowledges that Paul himself declared that he had not received any rhetorical education (*C.Rom.* 6.3.2).

According to Walsh, the gospels deserve to be reconsidered within their intellectual milieu. I am trying to do so not only in some of my publications, but also at an above-mentioned seminar on Paul, John, Graeco-Roman philosophy, and Patristic reception. Walsh adduces the example of Anthony on 167: “From the opening of the *Life of Saint Antony*, for example, the idea of the Christian who is ‘both undefiled by human learning and wiser than Greek philosophers’ is established and then reinforced.” This is the case; Athanasius’ portrait seems to differ in fact from the real St Anthony, who was learned, knew Origen’s ideas, and seems to have embraced some of them.⁹⁸

Chapter 3 deals with the role of authorship in antiquity within Mediterranean book culture and literary networks, with the aid of Pierre Bourdieu – who “offers an alternative social description of writing practices in antiquity that does not rely on an overly broad notion of communities” (p. 123) – and Stanley Stowers, to describe an ancient author as an elite “producer of cultural goods” and “an agent located within a particular field of social activity” (p. 121). Luke, for instance, overtly situates his work “within a competitive field of other writers from the very beginning of his [Gospel]” (p. 88), in the prologue. Walsh considers the gospels to be a “literary subfield” within the civic biographical tradition of distinguished statesmen, philosophers, and other leaders (p. 151). As already observed in the Introduction, “the Jesus of the gospels can be fruitfully compared with the Cynics, Aesop, the

⁹⁵ See R.S. Schellenberg, *Tò ἐν λόγῳ ἰδιωτικὸν τοῦ Ἀποστόλου: Revisiting Patristic Testimony on Paul’s Rhetorical Education*, in *NovT* 54 (2012) 354-368.

⁹⁶ A.J. MALHERBE, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1977, p. 34.

⁹⁷ P.H. KERN, *Rhetoric and Galatians: Assessing an Approach to Paul’s Epistle* (SNTSMS 101), Cambridge, CUP, 1998, p. 203.

⁹⁸ See my *The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis: A Critical Assessment from the New Testament to Eriugena* (Vigiliae Christianae Supplements 120), Leiden, Brill, 2013, p. 227-230.

pastoral heroes of the Greek novel” (p. 10), and so on. Walsh contends that, “by classing ancient writings in terms of fields and subfields that represent an author’s rhetorical training, social location, and the established literary conventions for addressing particular subjects (e.g., ethnic literature, esoteric literature, moral philosophy), we can more accurately situate individual authors and their associated networks without appealing to their imagined audiences” (p. 112). Thus, “first-century writings about Jesus can be reread in light of this proposed framework and how such rereadings reveal the Gospels as a set of texts concerned with Judean practices and sacred writings, philosophy, subversive teacher-types, the perceived utopia of rural and exotic spaces, and paradoxographical subjects, among other interests, previously obscured by the need to account for Christian communities and Christian origins” (p. 112). This approach might even be *complemented* with the traditional reading. That Philo’s oeuvre is a compelling *comparandum* with the NT, notwithstanding the discrepancy in “social location” and training between Philo and the authors of early Christian literature (p. 127), is absolutely the case and is a comparison that scholarship has been making for a long time; clearly there is still much that this kind of comparative research can yield, including in the direction that Walsh is advocating. Walsh intends to illustrate how Philo participates in a “subfield” of “ethnic literature” (p. 112) and claims that *Legum allegoriae* 1-3 and *De vita contemplativa* “subvert the dominant cultural field” (p. 130); I add that the latter work even subverts the ubiquitous, extremely solid institution of slavery (through the celebration of the Therapeutae, although Philo himself owned slaves and deemed them necessary for the performance of menial tasks).⁹⁹

Both romantic novels and early Christian hagiographies were written by “trained specialist[s] and designed to appeal to a field of consumers for the purposes of entertainment and edification, as well as to engage those for whom participation in literate practices – including the interpretation and circulation of writings – conferred a certain social capital, even if one did not hold a high degree of literacy” (p. 124). Chapter 4 offers some suggestions as to which “strategic *topoi* and other literary elements may have been included in the Synoptics in order to appeal to audiences primed for this kind of literature and entertainment” (p. 124). For the gospels and the NT, I would add the purpose of the religious conversion of readers/listeners to the Jesus Movement and the instruction and edification of those who already adhered to it. This might not have been the *only* purpose, but it cannot be ruled out.

Walsh classifies the gospels as “a form of ancient biography” (p. 135). This classification is not new, of course; the gospels’ relation to biography is a widely discussed topic in recent scholarship. For instance, Helen Bond argued that Mark chose the βίος genre in writing his Gospel;¹⁰⁰ other scholars insist on the “gospel” genre as one of its own (εὐαγγέλιον), founded by either Paul¹⁰¹ or Marcion or the authors of the “canonical” or “apocryphal” gospels. Walsh is correct that several apparently “unique elements of the gospels are fully intelligible within the context of other first-century Greco-Roman writing strategies” (p. 14). She remarked with reason already in the introduction: “Scholars have long noted parallels between the canonical gospels and works like the Greek novel or the *Satyricon*, including the shared *topoi* of ritual anointing, crucifixion, a disappearance off the cross, a

⁹⁹ Argument in my *Social Justice and the Legitimacy of Slavery: The Role of Philosophical Asceticism from Ancient Judaism to Late Antiquity*, Oxford, OUP, 2016, p. ix, 9-13, 21-22, 82-94, 217-219, 234-238; *Slavery and Religion in Late Antiquity: Their Relation to Asceticism and Justice in Christianity and Judaism*, in C.L. DE WET – M. KAHLOS – V. VUOLANTO (eds.), *Slavery in the Late Antique World, 150–700 CE*, Cambridge, CUP, 2022, 43-65; *Christian Slavery in Theology and Practice: Its Relation to God, Sin, and Justice*, in B. LONGENECKER – D. WILHITE (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Ancient Christianity*, Cambridge, CUP, 2023.

¹⁰⁰ H.K. BOND, *The First Biography of Jesus: Genre and Meaning in Mark’s Gospel*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2020.

¹⁰¹ J. GARROWAY, *The Beginning of the Gospel: Paul, Philippi, and the Origins of Christianity*, Cham, Springer International Publishing, 2018; R. BIERINGER, *Proclaimed Message or Proclamation of the Message*, in J. SCHRÖTER – S. BUTTICAZ – A. DETTWILER (eds.), *Receptions of Paul in Early Christianity*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2018, ch. 2.

cannibalistic fellowship meal, (implied) resurrection, and the motif of the empty tomb; yet comparisons between these ancient corpora are few and far between” (p. 8). I am among the few scholars who have addressed them and in n. 27 I am cited among the “notable exceptions” along with two colleagues.

Consequently, Walsh in Chapter 4 discusses parallels between Petronius’ *Satyricon* and the gospels, which I had pointed out in a series of articles and a monograph, which she cites, entering into conversation with my scholarship and that of others. Indeed, Walsh notes that she is “building” on previous studies, including mine, “to suggest that the gospels should be classified as a form of ancient biography” referring to “G. W. Bowersock, David Konstan, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, Ilaria L.E. Ramelli, and Stanley Stowers” (p. 134-135 and n. 1). “The gospels are engaged in the same discourses, imagery, and style of creative elaboration as their peers” (p. 152), including especially novel writers: this is the direction that emerges from my research.¹⁰² Petronius’ “*Satyricon* is a compelling piece of *comparandum* in that it shares *topoi* and terminology with the gospels in distinctive combination, including communal meals, anointing rituals, crucifixion, missing bodies, and empty tombs. Yet relatively little has been made of these connections in scholarship” and in n. 5 Walsh cites again as “notable exceptions” my work and that of Richard Pervo. Walsh mentions the two alternative possibilities for the dating of the *Satyricon*, late in Nero’s age or early in the second century, possibly in the social circle of Pliny the Younger. The latter possibility is supported by Andrew Laird and Ulrike Roth, cited; I add S. RATTI, *Relire le Satyricon. Plinie le Jeune et les chrétiens, cibles du roman secret d’un affranchi cultivé*, in *Anabases* 22 (2015) 99-145. Walsh wisely takes no stance, which anyway would be of little consequence for her purposes. She argues that, if we are to “treat the Gospel writers like any other literate intellectuals in this cultural field, their writings are simply one more example of imperial literature interested in the gods, philosophy, paradoxographical subjects, travelogues, socially marginalized people, capital punishment,” and so on (p. 141).

Walsh examines the detail of the *ampulla nardi* in Petronius’ *Coena Trimalchionis* as a symbolic prefiguration of his funeral, and its parallel with Mark 14:3 and John 12:3, a parallel I first pointed out in *Aevum* 1996, reversing the relation supposed by Preuschen many decades earlier (namely that Petronius inspired Mark). Walsh also considers the detail of the rooster’s crow, as an omen of death, and Eumolpus’s testament saying that the beneficiaries of his will should eat parts of his body to receive the inheritance – both of which parallels I also pointed out, as well as that concerning the Widow of Ephesus in a Milesian Tale in the *Satyricon*, in which the body of a crucified man is removed from the cross on the third day, notwithstanding the custody of some guards, and replaced with another, arousing the wonder of the bystanders. While these motifs are not exclusive to the *Satyricon* and the Gospels, nevertheless their cumulative presence in both works, sometimes with very specific common details missing elsewhere, make me suspect a literary relation between the *Satyricon libri* and the gospels, especially Mark and John. Clearly, the literary nature of this relation would be even easier in the time of Pliny the Younger (when moreover the presence of Christians at court is

¹⁰² Including in my monograph, *I romanzi antichi e il Cristianesimo: contesto e contatti*, Preface by B.P. Reardon (Graeco-Romanae Religionis Electa Collectio 6), Madrid, Signifer, 2001, new edition Eugene, OR, Wipf & Stock, Cascade, 2012, and in articles such as *Petronio e i Cristiani: allusioni al Vangelo di Marco nel Satyricon?*, in *Aevum* 70 (1996) 75-80; *Il Satyricon di Petronio: tradizione, parodia, allusione*, in *Kairia Syggelasai* 7 (1997) 27-41; *The Ancient Novels and the New Testament: Possible Contacts*, in *Ancient Narrative* 5 (2005) 41-68, and D. KONSTAN – I.L.E. RAMELLI, *The Novel and Christian Narrative*, in S. BYRNE – E. CUEVA (eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to the Ancient Novel*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2013, 180-197; Ramelli and Perkins, *The Role of Religion in Shaping Narrative Forms*, and so on.

attested¹⁰³). Walsh also thinks that “Whether or not Petronius <Niger> wrote the *Sat.*, the *Sat.* is satirizing the gospels” (p. 153) – which I have indeed suspected for almost thirty years.

Walsh also suggests a comparison between Eumolpus’ cannibalistic request and those who eat the sick (p. 145), although Eumolpus, I note, speaks of his *dead* body (as a potential parody of the Eucharist). The motive of humans who eat the flesh of other humans, I add, is typical of exotic people: Bardaisan’s words in *Book of the Laws of Countries*, 13 Ramelli, attributes it to some Indians. The association between Jesus and Socrates (p. 144) is well attested and I add the Letter of Mara Bar Serapion to his son as a further, early attestation, possibly not even Christian but ‘pagan’ Stoic.¹⁰⁴ Walsh also takes into account Chaereas’ initial reaction to Callirhoe’s empty tomb, compared with Mark’s account (p. 152), a parallel I pointed out in *Caritone e la storiografia greca. Il Romanzo di Calliroe come romanzo storico antico*, in *ACME* 53 (2000) 43-62, and *I romanzi antichi*, 23-44. Also, Walsh reads Luke in light of Lucian’s *Vera Historia*: “It is within this trajectory that a preface like that to Luke’s gospel is intelligible as a rhetorical strategy” (p. 164), which I take not necessarily to mean to discard Luke’s historical elements; rather, this position takes into account Cicero’s famous definition of history as *opus oratorium maxime*, “mainly rhetorical work” (*Leg.* 1.5). Walsh understands Luke’s reference to his reliance on eyewitnesses as a rhetorical move in the sense of a literary *topos* because she aims to discount the oral tradition that a face-value reading would imply. I am not so sure about necessarily dismissing Luke’s reference to his reliance on eyewitnesses, although Luke is certainly a literary author.¹⁰⁵

Walsh describes the Gospels as “subversive biography” (Chapter 5), using a terminology first suggested by David Konstan and herself in a 2016 article. “Subversive biography” focussed on social underdogs and turned upon its head the conventional “civic biography,” aimed as it was at celebrating dominant social values. In particular I would like to draw attention to the genre of the intellectual-religious biography of philosophers and theologians, ‘pagan’ and Christian alike, in imperial times, which is being freshly examined in a forthcoming book edited by Elizabeth Digeser, Heidi Marx, and Ilaria L.E. Ramelli (*Problems in Ancient Biography: The Construction of Professional Identities in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge, CUP, 2015). Walsh goes back to the tradition of biography to substantiate her claim and point to two different types of protagonists of biographies: the active hero, within the system, and the Socratic hero, from “the margins of society” (p. 179); the gospel’s hero, Jesus, belongs to the latter type. Other subversive biographies were the *Life of Homer*, the *Life of Aesop*, and the *Alexander Romance*. Walsh believes that the “distinction Konstan and [she] have described remained stable, or at least relevant, from the classical epoch through late antiquity” (p. 174).

Indeed, the category suggested by Konstan and Walsh makes sense and could be applied to the Gospels. Plutarch, however, “hopes that his readers might be led by examples of virtue to become better themselves and, correspondingly, that they may be deterred from wrongdoing” (p. 176): I think that such an intention may well have been shared by the gospel writers as well, and in general most NT authors. “Like Socrates or Aesop, Jesus is at the margins of society... [he] is followed by fishermen and teaches and interacts with other marginalized persons” – although, I note, he also has

¹⁰³ A. BARZANÒ, *Plinio il Giovane e i Cristiani alla corte di Domiziano*, in *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia* 36 (1982) 408-415.

¹⁰⁴ See my *Mara Bar Serapion’s Letter*, Comments on the Syriac Edition, Translation, and Notes by David Rensberger, in A. MERZ – T. TIELEMAN (eds.), *The Letter of Mara bar Serapion in Context*, Leiden, Brill, 2012, 205-231; *Theodicy in the Letter of Mara Bar Serapion: Connections with Philosophical (Stoic) Accounts of Divine Retribution*, in B.B. ASHKELONY – M.L. HJÄLM – R.A. KITCHEN (eds.), *The Third Lung: New Trajectories in Syriac Studies: Essays in Honor of Sebastian P. Brock*, Leiden, Brill, 2023, 193-222.

¹⁰⁵ See I.L.E. RAMELLI, *The Emmaus Disciples and the Kerygma of the Resurrection (Lk 24:34): A Greek Variant and the Old Syriac, Coptic, and Latin Traditions*, in *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 105 (2014) 1-19.

influential admirers such as Nicodemus; “and he comes to an untimely end, accused of impiety, and publicly executed” (p. 192). Jesus was accused of impiety at the Sanhedrin but of *maiestas* during his Roman trial as *rex Iudaeorum*. Aubert argued that both Jesus’ status as a *peregrinus* – not a Roman citizen – and his lower-class standing suggest that he was not charged with *maiestas*; Cook thinks Jesus was condemned for *sedition* (ἀπόστασις), crucified as he was with two brigands.¹⁰⁶ Pilate’s inscription in the gospels, however, read “King of the Jews,” the same title as Jesus has in Mara Bar Serapion’s Letter, which may stem from the 70s CE. Indeed, the crime of *maiestas* is linked to the *titulus crucis*. I concur that “Aesop’s unjust death and posthumous admiration are biographical elements shared with the likes of Socrates and Jesus” (p. 188). See above that which was noted about the Socrates-Jesus link in Mara Bar Serapion, Justin, and other authors.

When Walsh observes that “the second strand in the biographical tradition may have also had its origins in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*: the collection of anecdotes or conversations featuring Socrates and various interlocutors” (p. 179), she reminds me of Jesus’ λόγια and collections of those, attested, for example, in the case of Papias: he wrote an *Exposition of the Lord’s Sayings* (λογίων κυριακῶν ἐξήγησις, Eusebius *HE* 3.39.1). Walsh notes that “Jesus, John the Baptist, Judea, rural Galilee, wonder-working, Judean practices, texts, interpretation, ignoble death, and anonymity are all tools of subversion” (p. 131), and I add that Jesus cast wealth as being against God, and defended the poor, besides taking symbolically upon himself the task of a slave, that of foot-washing, to offer a model (as argued in my *Social Justice*, 9 and 117-119).

In the conclusion, using Pablo Picasso as an example, Walsh argues that it is impossible to isolate writers from their literary networks (p. 200). She also believes that the gospels may have been composed by non-Christians, or at least for non-Christians, as suggested already in the introduction: “Writers need not be a part of a religious community in order to write about Jesus, for example, but they must be a part of a social network that is in a position to circulate or publish their works” (p. 17). That the gospels were composed (also) for non-Christians is, I find, probable, and even verifiable, at least from the viewpoint of reception history; we know that many ‘pagan’ polemicists knew the gospels, from Celsus to Porphyry, for example, and that ‘pagan’ Neoplatonists commented on them, such as Amelius, from Plotinus’s circle (implications argued for in my *The Logos in the Johannine Prologue and Its Philosophical Reception*, in S.E. PORTER – D.I. YOON (eds.), *The Johannine Prologue and its Resonances*, Leiden, Brill, 2024, 168-199). The former point, however, that gospel writers were not Christians themselves, although theoretically possible, is not very plausible, given the announcements of the resurrection of Jesus in the gospels, his miracles, the invitations to faith, the (especially) Johannine declarations about the divinity of Christ¹⁰⁷, and much else. In John, many elements point to the divinity of Jesus, such as the Prologue on the Logos who was eternally “in relation to God” and “was God” (1:1-2), created all, and then became flesh (1:14); the theological “I Am” formulas (ἐγώ εἰμι, referring to God’s name in Exod 3:14), for instance “before Abraham

¹⁰⁶ J.-J. AUBERT, *A Double Standard in Roman Criminal Law?*, in J.-J. AUBERT – B. SIRKS (eds.), *Speculum Iuris*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, 2002, 94-133, p. 122; J.G. COOK, *Crucifixion and Burial*, in *New Testament Studies* 57 (2011) 193-213, p. 196 and 199-203.

¹⁰⁷ E.g., R. BAUCKHAM – L. HURTADO – S. GATHERCOLE – D. BOYARIN, *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ*, New York, New Press, 2012, 7 and 56: “Jesus and Christ were one from the very beginning of the Jesus movement. *It won’t be possible any longer to think of some ethical religious teacher who was later promoted to divinity under the influence of alien Greek notions*, with his so-called original message being distorted and lost; the idea of *Jesus as divine-human Messiah* goes back to the very beginning of the Christian movement, to Jesus himself, and even before that ... The reasons that many Jews came to believe that Jesus was divine was because they were already expecting that the Messiah/Christ would be a god-man. This expectation was part and parcel of Jewish tradition” (italics mine).

existed, I Am”; John the Baptist’s declaration that Christ “existed before me”; and many elements in the Farewell Discourse and elsewhere, including Thomas’ exclamation: “My Lord and my God!”

In the Synoptics, other elements suggest the divinity of Jesus. For example, in Luke 22:68-70, Jesus, when asked by the Sanhedrin whether he is the Son of God, answers: “you say that I Am”, using, as in John, the theological formula ἐγώ εἰμι. Also, in Luke 10:18, Jesus is said to have seen Satan’s fall from heaven: “I was seeing [ἐθεώρουν] Satan fall from heaven like lightning,” which recalls the imperfects in John 1:1 (ἦν thrice), indicating eternity, before time. The imperfect (instead of a normal aorist, for an extremely short and punctual action) seems therefore to signal that Jesus saw the fall of Satan before time and points to the divine nature of Jesus. Note that often modern exegetes understand Satan’s fall as happening just before Jesus was speaking and/or interpret Jesus’ words as prefiguring the eschatological defeat of Satan, whereas Origen points to a pre-cosmic fall (*H.Luc.* 31.5). Again, commenting on Psalm 109:1, “The Lord said to my Lord,” Jesus objects: “David calls him his Lord: thus, how can he be his son?” (Luke 20:42-4)¹⁰⁸. The two Lords are God the Father and David’s Lord, with whom Jesus identifies himself. In Luke 4:12, Jesus applies to himself the verse against Satan, “You will not tempt the Lord your God,” implying that he *is* the Lord God. Jesus forgives sins and people know that only God can do so (Luke 5:21-24; 7:48-9 etc.). Jesus describes himself as “more than Solomon” (king) and “more than Jonah” (prophet: Luke 31:32). The Lord God will give Jesus the throne of David, but unlike David, Jesus will reign forever: “his reign will have no end” (Luke 1:32-33).

The potential non-Christian identity of the gospel writers, suggested by Walsh, would better explain her hypothesis that the gospels contain fictitious material: “if we treat the gospel authors as authors with artistic license, we must contend with the possibility that these are writers acting as writers. This means that it is possible, even likely, that a good portion of what we read when we read the gospels is invention or part of a broader literary tradition” (p. 200). This was a point of contention already in antiquity, when ‘pagan’ polemicists, from Celsus to Porphyry, claimed that much in the gospels was made up, and Christian apologists, including Origen, Eusebius, and many others rejected their accusations. Of course, the literary nature of the gospels does not necessarily imply that the story of Jesus is a fake or contains many concocted elements; it is moreover supported by many other ancient documents.¹⁰⁹ A parallel point, which Walsh does not take into account because she focuses more on Graeco-Roman literature, is the relation with the Hebrew Bible and the application of ancient prophecies or passages to Jesus’ life, which is evident in the gospels. This is another point that can be interpreted as more literary (or even as a rhetorical move), in the sense of the gospel writers’ finding, or even inventing (to use Walsh’s perspective), the fulfilment of elements from the Hebrew Bible in the life of Jesus; or as more historical, in the sense of the fulfilment of prophecies in his life. Of course, the whole of patristic literature stands steadily on the latter side, and Christian apologetics, from antiquity to the present, can find many arguments to support it.

In the Bibliography, I am glad to see some of my studies on this topic cited. There are very few inaccuracies, e.g. on 28, l. 5 from bottom of page, in the citation of Acts 4:32, “ἦν καρδία καὶ ψυχὴ”, the final, key word μία is missing (this is also why the accent on ψυχῇ is grave and not acute, being followed by μία): μία expresses the unity of the Jesuan community in Jerusalem. But these are

¹⁰⁸ Analysis in my *Paul on Apokatastasis: 1 Cor 15:24-28 and the Use of Scripture*, in S. PORTER – C. LAND (eds.), *Paul and Scripture*, Leiden, Brill, 2019, 212-232.

¹⁰⁹ See, e.g., R.E. VAN VOORST, *Gesù nelle fonti extra-bibliche: Le antiche testimonianze sul Maestro di Galilea*, Milan, San Paolo, 2004; my *I Cristiani e l’Impero Romano: in memoria di Marta Sordi*, Milan, Marietti, 2011; *Ethos and Logos: A Second-Century Apologetical Debate between “Pagan” and Christian Philosophers*, in *Vigiliae Christianae* 69.2 (2015) 123-156, and N. HUTTUNEN, *Early Christians Adapting to the Roman Empire* (NovT Sup 179), Leiden, Brill, 2020.

quibbles with respect to a highly stimulating work. Of course, not every scholar will agree on every point, and I do have my own reservations, but the monograph is certainly thought-provoking and refreshing.

Ilaria L.E. Ramelli

WHELAN, Robin, *Being Christian in Vandal Africa. The Politics of Orthodoxy in the Post-Imperial West*, Oakland, CA, University of California Press, 2018, XIV-301 p.

Robin Whelan, maître de conférences en culture du monde méditerranéen de la fin de l'Antiquité et du haut Moyen Âge à l'université de Liverpool, consacre ce premier ouvrage aux conséquences des conflits ecclésiastiques en Afrique vandale post-impériale. Cette monographie se divise en deux parties.

La première soutient qu'une culture de la dispute chrétienne prospérait en Afrique vandale, où les méthodes et les enjeux fondamentaux de la controverse étaient ceux des conflits chrétiens du Bas-Empire romain. Cela montre que les clercs homéens et nicéens ont continué à établir des distinctions entre orthodoxie et hérésie, ce qui entraîna des conséquences importantes sur les questions d'identité et de formation politique de l'Afrique post-impériale. Le premier chapitre présente l'étendue et la composition des Églises homéenne et nicéenne en Afrique vandale, en s'inspirant des auteurs nicéens et en affirmant que ces Églises et clercs rivaux n'étaient pas si différents. Divers indices suggèrent que les deux institutions étaient d'un ordre de grandeur comparable. Malgré les conceptions modernes, ces deux Églises partageaient également des cultures similaires. Bien qu'elles fussent hétérogènes sur les plans linguistique et ethnique, elles doivent être considérées sur un pied d'égalité. Le deuxième chapitre présente la littérature hérésiologique d'Afrique vandale et la culture de la polémique chrétienne qu'elle incarne. Les écrivains nicéens et homéens d'Afrique vandale employèrent ces modalités littéraires et culturelles pour affirmer leur orthodoxie et contester les arguments de leurs adversaires. Le dialogue virtuel présent dans cette littérature reflétait et modélisait diverses formes de débats réels entre figures d'autorité nicéennes et homéennes. Le troisième chapitre reconstitue la représentation que les auteurs homéens font d'eux-mêmes pour se décrire comme membres de la seule et véritable Église, en présentant les nicéens comme des hérétiques homoousiens dont le christianisme était remis en question par l'utilisation de termes non bibliques pour parler de la Trinité. Les homéens cherchèrent à pousser les homoousiens au-delà des limites d'un christianisme acceptable en les assimilant à des hérésies et au paganisme. Le quatrième chapitre examine la réponse nicéenne qui consiste à faire de leurs opposants des ariens, ce qui exigeait une réflexion approfondie sur l'histoire et l'hérésiologie de l'Église. En présentant la politique ecclésiastique de l'Afrique vandale comme une reconstitution des conflits antérieurs entre catholiques et ariens, les clercs nicéens firent de leur Église la descendante d'une institution catholique triomphante et celle des homéens, l'incarnation actuelle de la secte arienne. L'histoire du schisme donatiste en Afrique romaine tardive constitua déjà un point de départ pour l'hérésiologie du royaume. Les auteurs nicéens utilisèrent des arguments antidonatistes pour faire de leurs nouveaux adversaires des hérétiques plus familiers à leur public.

La seconde partie de l'œuvre suggère des modèles plus nuancés d'interaction entre la cour vandale, les Églises nicéenne et homéenne, et l'élite mixte du royaume, en s'appuyant sur des travaux récents. La controverse sur la définition de l'orthodoxie chrétienne a effectivement contribué à façonner la société et la politique en Afrique vandale. Le cinquième chapitre réexamine la relation entre les rois vandales et l'Église de Nicée. Les récriminations mutuelles ont donné naissance à des représentations modernes de conflits inévitables. La capacité des évêques nicéens et des rois vandales à échapper aux implications des distinctions confessionnelles mérite en effet d'être réévaluée. Une tendance

prédominante persiste à considérer les identités sociales dans le monde post-impérial comme régies par des affiliations ethniques (l'arianisme vandale et le catholicisme romain). Le sixième chapitre réexamine l'interaction entre les identités chrétiennes et ethniques en Afrique vandale. Les fréquentes exhortations des clercs et des rois suggèrent que les chrétiens franchissaient ces (supposées) frontières communautaires. Les tentatives modernes d'interpréter des déclarations de « vandalisme » ou de « romanité » des aristocrates de l'époque échouent en raison du manque d'auto-identification et de discours ethniques. Plusieurs études récentes soutiennent que leurs actions se comprennent mieux comme des réponses aux exigences de distinction sociale, et non ethnique. Les chrétiens vandales et romano-africains (ou les Vandales et Romano-africains nicéens et homéens) ne doivent pas être étudiés séparément, mais plutôt en tant que membres d'une élite sociale mixte. Le septième chapitre explore les limites des distinctions hérésiologiques dans la vie sociale et politique du royaume. Les membres de l'élite pouvaient utiliser leur piété chrétienne pour afficher leur statut social, malgré les controverses ecclésiastiques contemporaines. Les preuves du martyrologe, de la poésie, des lettres et des tombes chrétiennes sont présentées pour démontrer que les élites chrétiennes vandales et romano-africaines ont trouvé le moyen de revendiquer un prestige résolument chrétien, acceptable pour les autres membres d'une élite religieusement hétérogène.

Pour ce qui est de la méthodologie, l'auteur ne manque pas, à quatorze reprises, de proposer des textes d'auteurs anciens pour illustrer son propos, sans privilégier un groupe particulier. Les tableaux, qui présentent des membres et des auteurs homéens et nicéens avec les dates, les noms et les références, sont les bienvenus pour des recherches plus approfondies. La ligne du temps proposée par l'auteur, qui débute en 325 par le concile de Nicée pour finir en 534 par la reconquête romaine orientale de l'Afrique par Justinien et Bélisaire, est suffisamment fournie pour présenter les repères historiques nécessaires sans superflu, en encadrant parfaitement la période en question. La carte de l'Afrique vandale permet de visuellement contextualiser la géographie concernée. Le plan de la basilique de l'évêque nicéen Melleus à Ammaedara et une représentation de la sépulture de l'évêque homéen Victorinus sont utiles pour éclairer la compréhension sans alourdir la lecture. La reproduction de l'épithaphe du « Garçon vandale » à Theveste permet d'en visualiser le style. La bibliographie actualisée comportant les collections de travail, les sources et les différentes études est particulièrement fouillée et pertinente. Elle offre directement, pour les collections de travail et les sources, l'abréviation avec les références complètes, ce qui dispense d'une double recherche. La bibliographie manifeste un très bon équilibre entre les auteurs anciens et les études modernes, comme cela se constate également dans le corps du texte et dans les notes infrapaginales. L'index facilite la recherche des différents auteurs, ouvrages et thèmes que l'on souhaite retrouver dans cette monographie de référence.

Nicolas Baijot

YOUNG, Frances M., *Scripture, the Genesis of Doctrine. Doctrine and Scripture in Early Christianity*, vol. 1, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2023, xxviii-280 p.

Frances Young, emeritus professor of theology at the University of Birmingham, has published a two-volume study on the relationship between doctrine and Scripture in early Christianity. Young has published widely on scriptural exegesis, patristics and systematic theology. Her two new books are justifiably characterized by one of her colleagues as the “culmination of [Young’s] scholarly career”.

The first volume explores “the extent to which doctrine was generated by the need to make sense of scripture” (p. 12). The second volume focusses on the two major doctrinal controversies of the early

church and the appeal to Scripture within those controversies, the one about the Trinity and the other about the two natures of Christ. This review addresses the first volume.

Young introduces the research question of her study by relating a story about a Pentecostal pastor in one of her theology courses who believed he was conveying the teaching of Scripture by defending a unitarian view of God, denying the doctrine of the Trinity. This simple anecdote shows that people can come up with different and contradicting doctrines from reading the same scriptural texts. This suggests that the doctrine of the church is not the *necessary* result of reading Scripture. The human activity of “sensemaking” lies between Scripture and doctrine.

Modern historical criticism has widened the gap between Scripture and doctrine even further. Since the 19th century, New Testament scholars have argued that the Jewish thought world of the followers of Jesus is very different from the Gentile world of the third and fourth centuries, in which the doctrines of the Trinity and of the two natures of Christ were formulated. There is no direct line between the two (p. 2).

So, how do Scripture and doctrine relate? Young introduces two influential models that have explained the relationship between Scripture and later dogma. The developmental model, proposed by John Henry Newman (1801-1890), says that the seed of later doctrine is already present in the New Testament. This seed eventually sprouted and blossomed in the doctrines of the church. According to Young this model betrays the idealist-evolutionist spirit of Newman’s age and does not do justice to the fact that “doctrines were the result of trying to make sense of Scripture” (p. 6). Doctrines were formulated by interpretative communities, who read Scripture with particular questions in mind, with which New Testament authors were not necessarily engaged. In her book Young seeks to do justice to this fact.

The nineteenth-century scholar of dogma Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930) introduced the idea of the “Hellenization of the Gospel”, thus severing the connection between Scripture and doctrine entirely. He argued that later dogmas were the product of the “Greek mind” on the “soil of the gospel”. The Church entirely distorted the original message of Jesus. Harnack intended to return to this original message, but ended up with his own reconstruction of the Jesus of history, mirroring his own Ritschlean view of the gospel. Harnack’s view of the original message of Jesus was short-lived. But his approach to the relationship between Scripture and doctrine has highly influenced New Testament scholarship in the 20th century (p. 11), which kept working within the “alienation-from-the-original” paradigm.

Young intends to find a third way to understand the relationship between Scripture and the development of doctrine, which does justice to the fact that the reading of Scripture was dialogical and culturally conditioned, but also to the normative influence of the apostolic tradition that was received by Christian communities (p. 12).

In Chapter 2 Young argues that nascent Christianity should not so much be understood as a unified religion, but as a network of loosely connected communities that looked a lot like ancient philosophical schools. They were different from these schools in that they were open to people from every class of society, but they were like these schools in that their teachers advocated a particular lifestyle, grounded in a particular account about God and the world, based upon the interpretation of a particular body of texts: the Jewish Scriptures and the testimonies of the apostles (p. 38; 41-42).

These communities arose as factions (*haireseis*) within Judaism but developed their own identity based on the belief that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Jewish Scriptures. The movement from a Jewish to a gentile context “necessitated more explicit teaching about the God whose prophecies were fulfilled and who had raised Jesus Christ from the dead” (p. 42).

But these communities lacked uniformity. Though disagreeing with Walter Bauer's thesis that later orthodoxy was the result of the influence of Rome upon the rest of the world, Young does emphasize that early Christianity was not doctrinally unified from the beginning. "Christian teachers, gnostic or not, assembled 'schools' alongside each other." (p. 30). All were concerned with the correct reading of Scripture and the right doctrine to be deduced from those books. This explains why teachers such as Justin, Marcion, and Valentinus could work alongside one other in Rome, before two of them were excommunicated.

What remains unclear in Young's account is how she explains this fact. She highlights the existence of a plurality of "fractioned" Christian schools in Rome (and also in Alexandria), but does not offer an explanation for the fact that some of their teachers were regarded as heretical. She speaks of original "institutional fluidity" and Eusebius's list of bishops being created in hindsight (p. 30), but if teachers were excommunicated, there needed to be a community with some kind of organized authority structure (bishops)¹¹⁰ that excommunicated them on the basis of a shared doctrine that was communally regarded as the original teaching of the church. Young's account sometimes sounds as if the difference between orthodoxy and heresy was *created* in the process of reading Scripture.

In Chapter 3, Young shows how three different teachers – Marcion, Ptolemaeus and Justin Martyr – were all conditioned by the philosophical rationality of their time, all intended to make sense of Scripture, but developed different doctrines of God. Mainstream Platonism taught that the highest God utterly transcended the world of space and time. In order to explain the creation and government of the world, Plato spoke about a lower god, the Demiurge, in his *Timaeus*. Reasoning from this Platonic view of the divine, Marcion and Ptolemaeus identified the Creator of the Hebrew Scriptures with the Demiurge, because of his anthropomorphic character. Above him, they argued, was a higher God (Bythos with his pleroma or the Father of Jesus). Justin Martyr, by contrast, taught that the Creator of the Old Testament and the highest God were one and the same. He intended simultaneously to uphold God's transcendence, however, but took his understanding of God's transcendence from Scripture. He rejected the Platonic understanding of God's transcendence, which was built upon the hierarchy of spirit and matter; it therefore denied that the highest God could have anything to do with the material world. Based on his reading of Scripture, Justin radicalized God's transcendence, teaching that exactly *because* God is the Creator of the world, He is both ontologically distinct from the world and active with and within it.¹¹¹

Young further shows that this identification of the highest God with the Creator – flowing from the reading of Scripture – dashed the presuppositions of Greek philosophy with regard to the *origin of the world*. Greek philosophy regarded reality either as flowing from the divine nature or as pre-existent matter imparted with form by God. Christian theologians developed the doctrine of "creation out of nothing", thus guarding the distinction between God and the world (his transcendence) and God's monarchy (no second eternal principle such as pre-existent matter). (p. 71-73). Although Young is not explicit about this, she seems to say that "orthodox" teachers such as Justin, Clement and Theophilus of Antioch had to relate to the same philosophical presuppositions as their "heretical" opponents (Marcion, Ptolemaeus and Basilides), but were truer to Scripture.

In the fourth chapter Young continues her story by focusing on the difference between the Valentinian's (gnostic) reading of Scripture as attested in the *Gospel of Truth*, and Irenaeus's in his *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*. Although the *Gospel of Truth* sounds very scriptural upon

¹¹⁰ M. KRUGER, *Christianity at the Crossroads. How the Second Century Shaped the Future of the Church*, London, SPCK, 2017, p. 146-148.

¹¹¹ This is a radicalization of the Platonic understanding of God's transcendence, which still presupposed a continuity between the human and divine spirit or soul.

first hearing, its content eventually transcends Scripture itself. This is because “the crucial thing for the gnostic was the insight that discerned, through any and all ancient texts, truths that had actually been received from elsewhere.” (p. 88). This gnostic idea gives room for a “greater creative freedom” with regard to the text of Scripture. The words and terms that Valentinus uses are scriptural, but the sense that is derived from Scripture is defined by Hellenistic philosophies.

By contrast, Irenaeus makes sense of Scripture by the “rule of faith”, which is structured by the three divine names, in which every believer was baptized (Matt 28:18). He regards this rule as the “hypothesis” (the framework or plot) of Scripture. The rule of faith guides the reading of Scripture, but the rule itself is simultaneously explained by the text of Scripture, derived from the law, the prophets and the apostolic writings. Young shows that doctrine thus emerged out of the liturgy, in which the faith had been received and confessed from the time of the apostles. This faith both *emerged* from the narrative of the Scriptures and *provided* the reading guide for the Scriptures. Young calls this the mutual coinherence of Scripture and the rule of faith (p. 109). In Rome, it gradually became clear that the scriptural-sounding teachings of Valentinus did not align with the apostolic faith. This is what Irenaeus then intended to show in his *Adversus Haereses*. The rule of faith was “honed” through such confrontation with rival gnostic readings of Scripture.

The fifth and sixth chapters address Origen and Cyril of Jerusalem. For Origen, doctrine functioned in a pedagogical context. Correct doctrine was not a goal in itself, but was embedded in a mystagogical process. In the context of theological controversy, Cyril of Jerusalem’s catechetical homilies place more emphasis on propositional-doctrinal truth. However, for both Origen and Cyril, doctrine is meant to illuminate and structure the story of the Scriptures, as the rule of faith did for Irenaeus. Young concludes: “Whether in creedal form or looser summaries like the rule of faith, *doctrine provided the key to correct scriptural interpretation*. Yet that doctrine was itself distilled from scripture in a process of making sense of it, turning its narratives and prophecy, psalms and wisdom into propositions that articulated the truth revealed” (p. 225). Young concludes that Origen and Cyril held the same views as Irenaeus on the coinherence of Scripture and doctrine.

Young concludes that her view of the relationship of Scripture and dogma is closer to that of John Behr and John Henry Newman than she expected. The basics of Christian doctrine were there in Scripture from the beginning. The *articulation* of this doctrine, though, took place through a process of discussion and sense-making. This also implied that things that could be said in the 3rd century by someone like Origen, could no longer be said at the end of the 4th and 5th centuries, after the controversies on the Trinity and the two natures of Christ.

In the seventh chapter Young draws a conclusion regarding the relationship of Scripture and doctrine, returning to the views of Harnack and Newman. How should we explain the perceived gap between Scripture and dogma? Against both Harnack and Newman, Young emphasizes that there was never a gap between Scripture and doctrine, as the church received a rule of faith from the apostles, which she shared with the writers of the New Testament. Further, against Harnack’s Hellenization-of-the-Gospel thesis Young argues that especially the doctrine of God as sole Creator of everything was a victory of biblical teaching over Hellenistic worldviews. But against Newman, Young insists that the development of doctrine was not a kind of necessary development from acorn to oak, but rather a process of sense-making of Scripture by historically conditioned communities, within a particular culture, with particular questions. In this regard, there is an element of truth in the “Hellenization-thesis” (p. 244-245).

Young calls her own approach “postmodern”, because postmodernism focusses on the construction of meaning through language and interpretation (p. 244; p. 11). Nonetheless, she arrives at a rather conservative position over against those who use postmodernism to declare all forms of early

Christianity equally valid responses to “the Jesus event”.¹¹² If I understand her well, she believes that the doctrine of the church is a contextual expression of the teaching of Jesus’s own apostles. Although the reviewer agrees with this view, Young will probably meet criticism from many New Testament scholars. Her claim raises the question: how do we have access to the teaching of the apostles? Can their teaching be found in the writings of the New Testament? And if so, do they form a theologically uniform entity? What is her view on the formation of the NT canon? All of these topics have to do with the question of whether we have access to the teachings of the apostles and consequently of Jesus himself.

All-in-all, I wholeheartedly recommend this study to anyone interested in the relationship between the Bible and the tradition of the church. If Young – who has already reached the blessed age of 86 – still has the energy to continue writing, I would welcome a new book about the questions raised above.

Bart van Egmond

ZAGANAS, Dimitrios – AUWERS, Jean-Marie – VERHEYDEN, Joseph (ed.), *Procopius the Christian Sophist. Catenist, Compiler, Epitomist* (Instrumenta Patristica et Mediaevalia 94), Turnhout, Brepols, 2024, 352 p.

En décembre 2021 se tenait à Louvain-la-Neuve un colloque consacré à Procope, sophiste chrétien, dont le rôle dans la transmission des exégèses patristiques sur l’Ancien Testament est si essentiel. Ce Procope est généralement identifié avec le célèbre sophiste Procope de Gaza, actif à la fin du V^e et au début du VI^e siècle. Outre l’importance des œuvres exégétiques transmises sous le nom de Procope, c’est-à-dire les différents épitomés sur tout ou partie de l’Octateuque, sur les livres des *Règles* mais aussi sur les livres salomoniens et sur *Isaïe*, la place qui lui a été accordée jusqu’ici tenait à une double particularité : son identification avec Procope de Gaza permettait de localiser dans le temps et l’espace un caténiste ancien, et d’offrir ainsi un contexte historique à l’émergence du genre des chaînes exégétiques. On voyait donc en Procope de Gaza le père du genre des chaînes exégétiques ou plutôt leur plus ancien témoin daté et localisé, puisqu’il utilise, pour les premiers livres bibliques, une chaîne préexistante. Cet auteur a en outre bénéficié ces dernières années de plusieurs éditions critiques essentielles, pour le *Cantique des cantiques* (J.-M. Auwers), la *Genèse* et l’*Exode* (K. Metzler).

Or les actes de ce colloque, qui offrent sinon une vue exhaustive, du moins une perspective d’ensemble sur l’œuvre exégétiques de Procope, proposent en outre une remise en cause de l’identification de Procope de Gaza et du Procope, sophiste chrétien, auteur des dites compilations exégétiques. D. Zaganas (D. Z.), l’un des organisateurs, est également l’auteur de la contribution liminaire, qui reprend la question de l’identification ; après avoir rappelé l’absence d’une mention de Gaza dans les titres des initiaux des manuscrits qui transmettent les compilations exégétiques – mais non dans les titres de fin, y compris dans un manuscrit du IX^e siècle, dont D. Z. écarte un peu rapidement le témoignage, ainsi que celui des autres témoins de cette formulation – et le silence, au moins relatif, de Choricius de Gaza, élève de Procope de Gaza, et de Photius, D. Z. cherche à montrer que Procope sophiste chrétien a utilisé des textes postérieurs à la mort du sophiste de Gaza et propose de situer son activité pas avant le milieu du VI^e siècle. Voilà donc un élément important, qui justifie à lui seul la lecture de l’ouvrage.

¹¹² Cf. A. KÖSTENBERGER – M. KRUGER, *The Heresy of Orthodoxy, How Contemporary Culture’s Fascination with Diversity Has Reshaped Our Understanding of Early Christianity*, Wheaton, Crossway, 2010.

Cependant, il ne faudrait pas réduire ce volume à cette seule nouveauté, si importante soit-elle – même si, on l’a vu, tout n’est pas encore clair dans cette affaire et il faudra sans doute reprendre plus en détail, et au fur et à mesure de l’édition des textes qui sont encore soit inédits, soit disponibles uniquement dans des éditions anciennes, la discussion. Les différentes contributions traitent d’un certain nombre des ouvrages attribués à Procope, sophiste chrétien : E. Prinzivalli, B. Gleede et T. F. Ottobriini pour l’*Épitomé sur la Genèse* (autour, respectivement, d’Origène, Théodore de Mopsueste et Jean Philopon) ; K. Metzler et A. Lorrain pour l’*Épitomé sur l’Exode* (les sources, et la nature du travail de l’auteur) ; R. Ceulemans pour les livres des *Règles*, à partir des scholies attribuées, probablement à tort selon lui, à Procope ; M. Danezan autour du dossier complexe des chaînes sur les *Proverbes* et de la place de la compilation procopienne dans cette forêt ; D. Zaganas, de nouveau, pour l’*Épitomé sur Isaïe* ; T. Lorieux, enfin, compare la chaîne III sur *Abdias* avec les épitomés de Procope, en particulier celui sur Isaïe. Le volume comprend également une ample bibliographie et de précieux index (Bible, auteurs et textes, auteurs modernes, manuscrits).

On voit, à la présentation des sujets qui précède, que les enquêtes sont de nature assez différente suivant l’état de publication des différentes compilations exégétiques. Si le *Cantique* et l’*Ecclésiaste* ne sont étrangement pas traités ici, ce qui aurait été utile au lecteur pour avoir un point de vue d’ensemble sur toutes les œuvres attribuées à Procope, sophiste chrétien, les *épitomés* sur la *Genèse* et l’*Exode* donnent matière à des études de détail sur leurs sources ou leur forme, qui sont rendues possibles par les éditions, traductions et études de K. Metzler parues dans les *GCS* en 2015-2016 et 2020. Au contraire les commentaires sur les autres livres de l’Octateuque, dont le commentaire procopien forme pourtant un tout avec celui sur *Genèse* et *Exode*, ne sont pas du tout traités – il n’y a pas de texte conservé sur *Ruth*. Et pour les autres livres bibliques, les études ne peuvent encore être que préliminaires, faute d’édition critique. Il valait pourtant la peine de tenter ce tableau d’ensemble et on peut en être tout à fait reconnaissant aux organisateurs du colloque et éditeurs : avec ce livre, le lecteur disposera sinon d’une vue d’ensemble, du moins d’amples perspectives sur l’œuvre exégétique et compilatoire de Procope, sophiste chrétien, ainsi que d’une nouvelle tentative, assez probante, de le distinguer de Procope de Gaza. Les lecteurs qui ne sont pas spécialistes des chaînes exégétiques ne devront pas boudier cet ouvrage : il comporte en effet des réflexions fort intéressantes sur l’articulation entre différentes formes d’exégèses patristiques, ainsi que leur transmission, leur réception et leur transformation, depuis l’œuvre d’origine, en passant par les extraits discrets des chaînes exégétiques, leurs remaniements et abrègements, jusqu’à la constitution de commentaires nouveaux à partir de ces extraits, plus ou moins remaniés. C’est donc bien un livre sur la transmission et la réception de l’exégèse patristique qui est ici proposé, à travers des facettes qu’il reviendra au lecteur de rassembler et de composer.

Matthieu Cassin