

Robert Dodaro/Cornelius Mayer/Christof Müller (eds): *Augustinus-Lexikon*. Vol. 4 [Meritum – Sacrificium]. Basel: Schwabe Verlag 2012–2018. LXIV, 1322 coll., 4 unpaginated p. € 380.00. ISBN: 978-3-7965-3723-3.

Observers holding a pessimistic view of the Late Roman Empire happily point to the proliferation of derivative literature during this epoch: instead of creating new insights, too many authors of Late Antiquity preferred to excerpt, rearrange and often banalize earlier writings. If such literary production indeed provided evidence for a cultural decline, we should be quite concerned nowadays: never before, I believe, have so many ‘Dictionaries’ or ‘Encyclopedias’ on various fields of Classics been published as in recent years! Some, or even many of these works share an English-centered approach (i.e., not only being authored in English, but ignoring most of non-English scholarship) and a largely privilege secondary bibliography (i.e., simply excerpting from or summarizing relevant research or even, sometimes, earlier encyclopedic articles). Yet instead of becoming pessimistic for our future, one should ignore these ephemeral publications and focus on the consummate encyclopedic projects of our times, such as the recently completed *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques*, or the ongoing *Augustinus-Lexikon*.

On account of several peculiarities, the *Augustinus-Lexikon* is quite different from other projects, and all of its defining features attest to its utmost scholarly ambitions. First of all, articles are published in either English, French or German (sometimes, when a longer article is divided into more than one part and has been authored by more than one scholar, the language changes within the article); this is not a dictionary for undergraduates. Consequently, headwords are in Latin only; if you are interested in (e.g.) ‘Original Sin,’ you must know that this is *peccatum originale*. Importantly, the work proceeds from a firmly grounded base: as a parergon, *Augustinus-Lexikon* vol. IV (henceforth: AL4) includes an updated list of Augustine’s works and the editions used in the lexicon. This list covers no fewer than 24 pages in a minuscule font! Any serious scholar working on Augustine must be immensely grateful for this list, as it is exceedingly difficult to keep up to date with the numerous editions and re-editions of Augustine’s works, and their respective merits. The list is not raisonné; so, it does not offer a reason why – for example – Goldbacher’s old edition of the letters is preferred to the

one recently published by Daur. But in each and every case where I personally did research on the editions in question, I agree with the assessment (the Daur edition is a good example for *recentiores non meliores*). The list of works therefore allows any scholar to point to it (“for Augustine’s works, the AL4 reference editions have been used”) without having to spend much time doing textual research.

What makes the AL stand out is the consistency of its quality. As a multitude of authors have contributed to it, this suggests that the editorial team in the background interfered a great deal more than what appears to the eye. Only rarely are such interventions marked out, as in the article *epistulae* of AL2 (arguably the crown jewel of all published volumes of AL so far; this article covers more than 150 columns, providing a fresh update and the relevant literature to each and every one of Augustine’s letters).

Entries in the AL are invariably highly condensed (i.e., not long like in the *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*), but always fully referenced, creating the curious situation that the references in small-print sometimes cover as much space as the section they pertain to. At the same time, AL articles are usually not derivative; they offer in the little space available to them new insights by some of the leading specialists in the field. So, in AL4, Dolbeau’s article on Possidius does not depend on the recent monograph on him, but gives a different (and more convincing) assessment.

The Augustinus-Lexikon has been published in fascicles from the mid-80s onwards; from time to time, hard-bound volumes are issued, containing the fascicles of several preceding years. So far, four such volumes have appeared; the fourth and to-date last one came out recently (this is the volume this review is directly concerned with). The publication of the concluding volume can be expected in a few years; in fact, the first fascicle of this volume 5 appeared less than a year after volume 4.

Among the articles of AL4, those on ‘Peccatum’ and ‘Peccatum originale,’ ‘Pelagius, Pelagiani,’ ‘Philosophia’ and ‘Priscillianistae, Priscillianus’ stand out both by their extent and their importance. But they should not detract from the many hidden gems, including prosopographical articles (which should be preferred to parallel entries in the *Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, volume 1, and not just because of their recentness), entries on individual works of Augustine (usually providing the best short summary available anywhere) and on important terms in Augustine (some of which one

would probably not expect to find, such as ‘Nunc – tunc’ or ‘Pars – totum’; browsing the Augustinus-Lexikon therefore makes sense!).

In preparation for this review, I gave a sample of ten articles a close read (‘Paenitentia,’ ‘Paganus,’ ‘Patria,’ ‘Pelagius, Pelagiani,’ ‘Persecutio,’ ‘Pinianus,’ ‘Possidius,’ ‘Presbyter,’ ‘Priscillianistae, Priscillianus,’ ‘Rescriptum’) and could only confirm their high quality, apart from one concern. This concern pertains to legal history, and as this problem seems to be recurring, it might suggest that the AL should, perhaps, have articles in the last volume especially vetted for this respect.

A theologian would not cherish to see terms like ‘bishop,’ ‘presbyter,’ ‘deacon,’ ‘priest,’ ‘cleric’ used interchangeably without any clear meaning attached to them. This example may illustrate the feelings of a legal historian when he sees terms such as ‘edict’ or ‘rescript’ used untechnically (or should I say: wrongly?). In the article “Paganus” (on coll. 447–448) CTh. 16,10,10–12 and CTh. 16,5,63 are all called ‘edicts’ none of which actually is one. Worse, in the article ‘Pelagius, Pelagiani’ (on col. 638) the constitution *collectio Quesnelliana* 14 is first called “Reskript” (in the main text), then “Edikt” (in the annotation), which makes clear that there is no concern for exactitude here.

In the article ‘Priscillianistae, Priscillianus’ it is stated (col. 922) that imperial laws targeted Priscillianism; the pertinent annotation on col. 923, no. 17 refers to CTh. 16,5,40, 16,5,43, 16,5,48, 16,5,59, 16,5,65. While it is true that all of these texts mention *Priscillianistae*, they mean by that term the group usually called Montanists. There were several synonymous appellations in use for this group, such as Phrygians (after their home region), *Pepyzites* (after their holy place) or Priscillianists (after one of the female prophets, Priscilla). That the *Priscillianistae* of the laws denote Montanists is certain beyond doubt in the case of CTh. 16,5,59, *Fryges, quos Pepyzitas sive Priscillianistas [...] appellant*, “the Phrygians, which are also called Pepyzites or Priscillianists”; it is extremely likely in the case of CTh. 16,5,48, *Montanistas et Priscillianistas et alia huiusmodi genera nefariae superstitionis*, “Montanists and Priscillianists and other suchlike types of nefarious superstition,” which is a law enacted in Constantinople (near the Montanist heartland, far from Priscillian in Spain); the same is true in the case of CTh. 16,5,65, *Montanistae seu Priscillianistae, Fryges*, “Montanists or [i.e., otherwise called] Priscillianists, Phrygians.” With some effort, one might try to claim that CTh. 16,5,40 (being a Western law, after all) might target the followers of the Spaniard Priscillian. However, *Frygas sive Priscillianistas [...] persequimur*, “we persecute [...] Phrygians or Priscillianists” rather suggests to me that *sive*, once again, introduces an alternative name. At any rate, it should raise suspicion that the Priscillianists in the laws invariably appear next to clear references to Montanists. The only exception where this is not the case is Sirm. 12 (of which CTh. 16,5,43 is but an extract; preferably, this text should hence be cited as Sirm. 12). Here it is stated as a side-note that all laws against Donatists, Manichaeans, ‘Priscillianists’ and pagans remain in vigor. But this law (mostly against Donatists) refers to the African situation where some remnants of Montanism still lingered (while we would not know of any followers of Priscillian there), nor do we know of earlier general laws against

Priscillian's supporters. Thus, I do not believe that we have any uncontroversial instance of a law directed against Priscillian's supporters, while there is good reason to believe that all of the laws against 'Priscillianists' refer to followers of Priscilla (i.e., Montanists).

In the article 'Patria', I missed a reference to the juristic dimension of the term. It is not just the "place of ordinary residence or domicile," but had become in Late Antiquity a synonym of *origo*, successfully supplanting the earlier term (cf. Nörr in RE Suppl. 10, coll. 445–446). When Augustine considers Thagaste as his *patria*, this is not because he was born there but because his parents bequeathed, by way of descent, this *origo* = *patria* to him. In other words: even if his family had spent his early days elsewhere, Thagaste would still have been his *patria*.

All of these remarks are, of course, trifles. The only article that raised deeper concerns was 'Rescriptum,' which I found confused. Rescripts are letters by which emperors answer petitions from private petitioners (the answer might also go, additionally or instead, to a dignitary) or answer questions by dignitaries during court proceedings. In the Early Empire, such private rescripts were publicly posted; people interested in the law could copy them; these texts circulated and could be used in other cases. In the fourth century, their importance waned; there are few indications that they were still regularly published. From around 400 or shortly afterwards, they had lost all importance beyond a concrete case; this was not only explicitly stated by emperors, but on top of that they also threatened any jurist who dared to submit such texts in court proceedings. In Late Antiquity, there is no overlap between rescripts (now conceding strictly personal benefits or settling concrete trial questions) and 'real' laws, also called constitutions. There is no confusion in the Theodosian Code, and there is also no confusion in Augustine. Unfortunately, both situations are mixed in the 'Rescriptum' article: it starts by claiming that rescripts are constitutions (not true for the time of Augustine); that they have great authority; but that they are not as important in Late Antiquity, so they are different from 'edicts' (without anything being said on other types of constitutions; in fact, the vast majority of late antique enactments known to us are neither edicts nor rescripts), but then again, even in Late Antiquity, they are allegedly still *leges*, yet on the other hand, they are only valid for a concrete case. The problem is that the crucial volte-face around 400, when rescripts lost all general force, is not acknowledged, and the article consequently tries to make two very different situations agree, leading to muddled result. There is also a subsection "rescrit et procès"; here, Honorius' rescript in the Crispin case could have been mentioned, which is lacking.

No matter how hard I tried to detect other issues in my sample of articles, I failed but for one observation, which is an impressive testament to the quality achieved by the authors and redactors of the AL. This concerns a remark on col. 924: "P.[riscillian, PR] und die Priscillianisten gelten ihm [Augustine, PR] eindeutig als Manichäer," to which I would not subscribe. What Augustine actually says is (haer. 70.1): *Priscillianistae, quos in Hispania Priscillianus instituit, maxime Gnosticorum et Manichaeorum dogmata permixta sectantur, quamvis et ex aliis haeresibus in eos sordes tamquam in sentinam quamdam horribili confusione confluerint*, "The Priscillianists whom Priscillian founded in Spain chiefly follow the doctrines of the Gnostics and the Manichaeans in an intermingled fashion, although

sewage from other heresies flows into them as into some, as it were, cesspool, in a terrible confusion.” So, I do not believe that Augustine sees the Priscillianists as Manichaeans, but rather interprets their precepts as a mixture of many ideas (among which, however, Manichaean influences are quite important).

The fourth volume of the *Augustinus-Lexikon* successfully conforms to the very high expectations I had for it, given the outstanding quality of the preceding volumes, and it is with impatience that I look forward to the publication of the fascicles of the fifth and last volume.

Peter Riedlberger, Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg
Institut für Geschichtswissenschaften und Europäische Ethnologie
peter.riedlberger@uni-bamberg.de

www.plekos.de

Empfohlene Zitierweise

Peter Riedlberger: Rezension zu: Robert Dodaro/Cornelius Mayer/Christof Müller (eds): *Augustinus-Lexikon*. Vol. 4 [Meritum – Sacrificium]. Basel: Schwabe Verlag 2012–2018. In: *Plekos* 22, 2020, 285–289 (URL: <http://www.plekos.uni-muenchen.de/2020/r-augustinus.pdf>).
