Anthony Dupont/Raul Villegas Marín/Giulio Malavasi/Mattia Cosimo Chiaratti (eds.): *Sancti viri, ut audio*. Theologies, Rhetorics, and Receptions of the Pelagian Controversy Reappraised. Leuven/Paris/Bristol, CT: Peeters 2023 (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 336). IX, 385 p. € 78.00. ISBN: 978-90-429-5185-3.

This collection of seventeen essays[1] is the outcome of a conference in Barcelona in 2021. In their preface, the editors set out their aims: to present a *status quaestionis* concerning scholarship on the so-called 'Pelagian' controversy, to offer new insights, and to provide impetus for future research.

Opening the volume is Otto Wermelinger's chapter which provides a summary overview of contributions to study of Pelagius on selected themes as well as reference works, plus a list of what are identified as "*Scripta Pelagiana*" (p. 13) which Wermelinger presents as provisional. While a list of works and fragments of works attributed to Pelagius himself may be useful, a key issue is what the list contains and excludes. This list assumes that the category 'Pelagiana' exists and includes 'Pseudo-Pelagius', the Caspari Corpus, Pseudo-Jerome, works by Caelestius and Julian of Aeclanum, etc. This selection represents the individuals identified by Augustine of Hippo and proponents of the doctrines he proposed, i. e. the usual suspects according to the narrative inherited from these writers. However, the list excludes a great many works which propounded the version of Christianity that Pelagius defended. The list therefore enshrines circular thinking, particularly if the aim of the volume is to reconsider the roots of discussion of the relationship between human effective free will and divine involvement in human decision making.

Thereafter the book is divided into three sections, titled respectively "Theologies" (pp. 23–108), "Rhetorics" (pp. 109–252), and "Receptions" (pp. 253–362). The first section ("Theologies") looks at Christ, grace, and sin. Starting the section, Anthony Dupont considers Augustine's use of three passages in Ambrose and whether they indeed show that Ambrose expounded a theology that encompassed the notion of original sin (*peccatum originale*). Dupont gives a summary of previous discussion of the relationship between Ambrose and Augustine's theologies and how far Ambrose propounded the idea

1 For a detailed table of contents, readers are referred to the end of this review (pp. 383–384).

of original sin. This survey might have benefited from inclusion of the study by Rowan Greer in "Fear of Freedom".[2] Dupont himself concludes that Augustine's interpretation of the effects of the Fall is significantly different from Ambrose's. Next up, Jonathan Yates discusses the use of Scripture in five North African letters (Aug. epist. 175–179) to ask whether this represents polemics in a pastoral guise. He sets out the letters' commonalities, focusing on their shared use of Matt. 6:12–13. Joshua Evans considers the arguments proposed by Augustine of Hippo and Julian of Aeclanum concerning the flesh of Christ, showing clearly how far apart their conceptions of Christ's nature were. Evans suggests both conceptions might seem strange to today's readers. The final chapter in section one is Mathijs Lamberigts' on Julian of Aeclanum's interpretation of God's grace and mercy, which outlines Julian's conception of grace.

Section two, "Rhetorics", opens with Andrew Chronister's essay looking at whether Augustine's representation of a relationship between Pelagius and Caelestius was historically accurate or rhetorical invention, focusing on their views on grace. Useful here would have been reference to heresiology as a genre and heresiological practice more widely. Next comes a paper by Rafał Toczko on the tradition of Roman invective, which contextualises the polemical texts discussed elsewhere in the volume. Juana Torres contributes a literary analysis of Jerome's *Liber aduersus Pelagianos*, discussing whether it should be viewed as a *dialogus* or an *altercatio*. Torres surveys the different terms used to describe the text and the terminology available, concluding that its content is 'moderate' in tone and thus a *dialogus*, whereas an *altercatio* would have a more aggressive tone. María Victoria Escribano Paño offers a paper on the Emperor Honorius' letter to Aurelius of Carthage of 9 June AD 419. She points out that Honorius' statements that Imperial officers should not involve themselves in ecclesiastical affairs was contradicted by his chancery's relatively frequent legislation on religious matters in response to petitions from ecclesiastics unable to enforce their conciliar decisions. She also describes the contents of Honorius' letter to Aurelius and discusses what it set out to do, as well as discussing Aurelius' letter to the bishops of North Africa. Next David Burkhart Janssen looks at the label enemies of God's grace (*inimici gratiae Dei*) and Augustine's construction of a heresy named after Pelagius in his *Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum*, suggest-

2 R. A. Greer: Fear of Freedom. A Study of Miracles in the Roman Imperial Church. University Park, PA/London 1989.

ing that Augustine created it as a christological-soteriological heresy, a new tactic resulting from the context after 418. Janssen takes aim at scholarship embracing post-structuralist approaches to heresiology, and seems to want to exclude from the remit of such deconstruction soteriology and eschatology. However, religion as a whole is challenged by post-structuralist perspectives because religion is a discourse of power. Concepts of salvation and the end of days are human constructions just like heresiology and are part of the process of negotiation surrounding "le savoir-pouvoir" ("knowledge-power", Michel Foucault, 1980[3]) and any religion's "régime de vérité" ("regime of truth", Foucault, 1975[4]). Following Janssen, Mickaël Ribreau contributes an interesting paper on Augustine's "double construct" of Julian of Aeclanum, arguing that Augustine systematically presented Julian as angry and as linked to Pelagius. Ribreau identifies reasons for Augustine's rhetorical tactics, for example that they allowed Augustine to exclude Julian from the group Augustine identified as 'Christians', and contextualises them within heresiological practice. Finally in section two of the volume, Timo Nisula looks at the anti-Manichaean argumentation used by Julian of Aeclanum. He concentrates on Julian's *Ad Florum* and argues that Julian opted for the rhetorical tactic of associating Augustine's style and terminology with material filth such as vomit and slime as a way to brand Augustine's theology as Manichaean as effectively as possible. As part of his examination of Julian's rhetorical strategy he refers to the Letter to Menoch to compare Augustine's teachings with those of Mani.

The third and final section of the volume ("Receptions") opens with a paper by Volker Henning Drecoll on a dossier in the *Collectio Quesnelliana* composed of documents involved in the indictment of those who objected to Augustine of Hippo's soteriology and anthropology. This paper usefully sets out clearly the contents of the *Collectio Quesnelliana* and in an appendix gives preliminary critical editions of Innocent I's *epistula familiaris* to Aurelius of Carthage, Honorius' (and Theodosius II's) rescript of 418, Palladius' proclamation of 418, Aurelius of Carthage's letter to the bishops of Byzacena of 419, the letter of the emperor Constantius III to Volusianus, and Volusianus'

3 M. Foucault: Power/Knowledge. Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977. Ed. by C. Gordon. New York 1980.

4 M. Foucault: Surveiller et punir. Naissance de la prison. Paris 1975 (Bibliothèque des histoires); English translation: Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison. New York 1977.

resulting proclamation. Drecoll suggests that some of the documents must have originated in North Africa (such as Aurelius' letter of 419), and that these documents may then have travelled elsewhere; he suggests that the *Collectio Quesnelliana* as it stands may have been put together either in Rome or southern Gaul. Next comes a paper by Gert Partoens discussing a pseudo-Augustinian sermon preserved in an early (possibly pre-Carolingian) collection of texts supporting the indictment of Christians who rejected Augustine of Hippo's anthropology and soteriology. The sermon was exegesis on Psalm 22, intended for catechumens. Partoens discusses the homilist's exegesis on each verse of Psalm 22 and compares it with Cassiodorus' treatment of the psalm in his *Expositio psalmorum*. He then presents arguments for the existence of a collection of texts promoting Augustine of Hippo's anthropology and soteriology, including the *Hypomnesticon* and four letters preserved among Augustine's correspondence relating to Augustine's absolutist account of prevenient grace and its related doctrines. Partoens suggests these texts were put together to form a dossier before the Carolingian era. Giulio Malavasi contributes a paper on a set of theses which he titles *De duobus baptizatis*, looking at surviving statements of the theses and later reception of the issues raised by them. He notes the different responses of authors often identified as having some connection to Pelagius to these questions about the need for infant baptism. Raul Villegas Marín offers a clear, useful paper on Isidore of Seville's reception of Augustine's theology concerning original sin, the nature of prevenient grace, and the nature of predestination. Villegas Marín notes Isidore's assertion of double predestination (i. e. to heaven and hell) and points to Isidore's method of abbreviation and his desire to simplify doctrine so that it could be easily memorised (for example by candidates for the priesthood) as an explanation for Isidore's position. He also suggests that despite many refugees from North Africa bringing manuscripts to the Iberian peninsula, Augustine's many polemical writings seeking to install his own views by attacking a constructed set of tenets Augustine attributed to Pelagius, were not available to Isidore. Finally in section three, and closing the volume, Matthew Drever offers a paper that critiques what he argues are misreadings by two contemporary writers (Hans Blumenberg and Michael Gillespie) who have used their conceptions of Augustine's theology and resistance to it to discuss 'modernity',[5] defined by

5 H. Blumenberg: The Legitimacy of the Modern Age. Cambridge, MA 1983; M. A. Gillespie: The Theological Origins of Modernity. Chicago, IL 2008.

Drever as a radical human autonomy. However, post-structuralism poses the challenges to inherited ways of thinking currently in play, and there are more compelling accounts of its implications than the ones discussed in this paper under Drever's definition of 'modernity'. Furthermore, Drever's analysis might recall for some a polemical binary proposed by US Senator Josh Hawley.

Overall, throughout this volume the terms 'Pelagian', 'Pelagianism', and 'Pelagian controversy' appear repeatedly (*passim* with the exception of Joshua Evans who compares Augustine and Julian of Aeclanum on Christ's flesh and Mickaël Ribreau who takes a critical approach to terminology). Inevitably this limits any reappraisal possible, because the users of these terms have implicitly endorsed Augustine of Hippo's construct as representing historical reality. They appear to have internalised Augustine's ideology and be unable to think outside it. Symptomatic of this is the fact that the late antique authors discussed are the usual suspects, namely Pelagius, Caelestius, and Julian of Aeclanum, who are presented as a group throughout not least through inclusion of essays on them in the collection and exclusion of other writers apart from Ambrose of Milan. As with the term 'Pelagian', this decision likewise starts from and confirms the model constructed by Augustine of Hippo. Pelagius and the context are read through the paradigm of Augustine's polemical construct. But there are many other contemporary authors who illuminate the theological context far better than Augustine or the authors included in these papers. As a result, if this volume was intended to offer a reappraisal, its achievement is limited. For example, the notion of a separate "post-Pelagian controversy" triggered by the "most problematic aspects of Augustine's theological thought" (Malavasi, p. 318) fails to acknowledge that debate was initially triggered by Augustine's novel theology which many Christians found problematic. The need to predicate a second controversy (or several more) can only be explained by the presence of a tenacious ideological paradigm; those in the grip of this model cannot see past it. If you cannot stop using the terms 'Pelagian' and 'Pelagianism' then you are always working within the fictive construction Augustine created, and how much of a reappraisal can you ever achieve? That said, within the parameters of Augustine of Hippo's paradigm, several contributions to this volume advance clarity about details of events and theological arguments deployed and, as noted above, a few approach the paradigm from a critical perspective.

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Empfohlene Zitierweise

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