

SAN AGUSTÍN, *La ciudad de Dios, Libros VI-VIII*. Edición crítica, traducción y notas de Ana Pérez Vega y Pablo Toribio Pérez, vol. III. Madrid: CSIC, 2013. xv + 142 pp. (dobles). ISBN 978-84-00-09731-8.

This edition, with translation and notes, belongs to the series *Alma Mater: Colección de autores griegos y latinos* directed by Francisco R. Adrado. It is, after fifty-five years, the continuation of the edition by Lorenzo Riber and Juan Bastardas in 1953 (vol. I) and 1958 (vol. II). Ana Pérez Vega prepared the full collation of the *codices meliores* and the first draft of the translation; Pablo Toribio Pérez inspected the *codices recentiores*, revised the translation, and prepared the notes. The present edition is the only one of *De civitate Dei* that has used for its collation Manuscript 29 of the Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid (tenth century, parchment, abbreviated R), which the editors list among the *meliiores*, given that it often contains the *lectiones meliores et difficiliores*¹.

Even if the present reviewer is not a Spanish native speaker, the translation clearly endeavours to reproduce what the editors call the magisterial Latin of Augustine, the complexity and elegance of his Ciceronian prose, as well as the richness of the vocabulary, especially from the philosophical viewpoint. The translation has thus avoided, as far as possible, both lexical and syntactical oversimplifications. This is a choice that, especially from the syntactical standpoint, can be followed more easily in languages such as Spanish or Italian – although clearly not the Spanish or the Italian of contemporary SMS messages and the like –, and less easily in others such as English or German.

The volume might appear a bit “bare bones”: there is no introduction, but only an initial prospect of *sigla codicum* – which also lists the previous editions, prominent among which is that of Dombart and Kalb –, a very essential *apparatus fontium*, and few and short notes. However, as is explained in the preface, a new general introduction, a new bibliography, and a new *stemma codicum* will be offered at the end of the whole edition of *De civitate Dei*, as an epilogue (*Epílogo*). The manuscripts that the editors deem *meliiores* are, for these books of *De civitate Dei*, C, K, F, and R. The last has already been dealt with above; the others are:

– C or *codex Corbeiensis, postea Germanensis* 766 (sixth-seventh cent.), which included Books 1-10 but is now divided into two: *codex Parisinus* n. 12214 (Books 1-9) and *codex* ß Q v. I Nr. 4 (Book 10);

¹ Its description is found in E. Ruiz García, *Catálogo de la sección de códices de la Real Academia de la Historia*, Madrid 1997.

- K or *codex Coloniensis* 75 (Darmstadt 2077; eighth cent.), also containing Books 1-10;
- F or *codex Monacensis (Frisingensis) lat.* 6267 (ninth cent.), which comprises Books 1-18.

On every page the Latin edition is faced by the Spanish translation and has at the bottom a critical apparatus and, very sparsely, an *apparatus fontium* that might have been much richer. References and allusions to classical literature and philosophy as well as Christian literature, *in primis* the Bible itself, are legion in these books, as well as in most of Augustine's *De civitate Dei*. Likewise the footnotes, which are placed at the bottom of the translation, are extremely occasional and succinct. A fuller commentary, even just in the same form of footnotes, might perhaps have been desirable, but this was clearly not in the plans. Thus, the choice of which points in Augustine's discourse deserved an elucidation is inevitably arbitrary. However, it would be simply unfair to judge a volume from what one might feel is missing, all the more so in that what is there – the edition and the translation – is certainly a fine work.

In Book 6 Augustine takes issue with Varro's *theologia tripartita*, that is, divided into *tria genera*: 1) *fabulosum*, 2) *naturale*, and 3) *ciuile* (I keep the spelling of the edition). Now, even though this is not remarked in the notes, it is interesting to observe that Varro was elaborating on the tripartition of theology into τρία εἶδη theorised by the Old Stoic Chrysippus (SVF 2.1009): μυθικόν, taught by poets, φυσικόν, taught by philosophers, and νομικόν, established by individual cities by means of norms, customs, and cultic and ritual traditions. This theory proved to be extremely influential on classical theological allegoresis, down to Varro himself and to Cornutus, the Roman Stoic who authored the *Compendium theologiae graecae* and took over Chrysippus's and Varro's tripartition². Even if there is a Christian reception of Cornutus³, it is from Varro that Augustine – who was virtually ignorant of Greek – drew Chrysippus's theory of the threefold transmission of theology.

In CD 6.10-11 Augustine expresses appreciation of Seneca on account of his criticism of “pagan” cultic traditions and practices. At the same time, however, Augustine criticises Seneca because he, as a senator, did worship pagan divinities, instead of repudiating them (*colebat quod reprehendebat*

² As demonstrated in I. Ramelli, *Anneo Cornuto: Compendio di teologia greca*, Milan 2003, on which the German edition is admittedly based: *Cornutus: Die Griechischen Götter. Ein Überblick über Namen, Bilder und Deutungen*, Hrsg. H.-G. Nesselrath, Tübingen 2009; see also my “The Philosophical Stance of Allegory in Stoicism and its Reception in Platonism, Pagan and Christian: Origen in Dialogue with the Stoics and Plato”, *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 18, 2011, 335-71.

³ As I have shown in “Cornutus in Christlichem Umfeld: Märtyrer, Allegorist, und Grammatiker”, in *Cornutus: Die Griechischen Götter*, 207-31.

... *quod culpabat, adorabat*⁴). However, Seneca's philosophical criticism of traditional religious rituals and cults had already elicited Tertullian's fairly enthusiastic definition of Seneca as *saepe noster* (*De an.* 20). A similar appreciative attitude may have brought about the composition of the Seneca-Paul correspondence, which is usually thought to be a fourth-century forgery or rhetorical exercise – this is the *communis opinio* to which fn. 35 on p. 30 here also adheres –, but which for several philological, historical, and especially intertextual reasons should probably be dated back to the second century⁵.

In Book 7, when in ch. 11 Augustine speaks of the epithets of Iuppiter-Zeus and explains that they do not refer to different deities, but to one and the same, he is again drawing on the Stoic allegorical theological tradition⁶. In this same book, Augustine repeatedly uses the terms *paganus* and *paganitas*, already in the titles of chs. 15 and 18. He seems to have been among the first to use this term in reference to traditional polytheistic religion, as opposed to Christianity (and Judaism). This is indeed the interesting reassessment of the first attestations of *paganus* and *paganitas* recently offered by Douglas Boin⁷.

In Book 8 Augustine sketches a kind of compendious history of philosophy, highlighting Socrates and especially Plato (who *excellentissima gloria claruit, qua omnino caeteros obscuraret*, ch. 4.1) and the Platonists: *nulli nobis [sc. Christianis] quam isti propius accesserunt* (ch. 5.2). Augustine maintains that Christians should discuss of theology principally with the Platonists, whose doctrines he – like Origen, Eusebius, Gregory Nyssen, Evagrius and most Patristic philosophers – deems better than those of all other philosophical schools in every branch of philosophy, including logic and ethics. Augustine also sets Plato's position that gods are only good against later Platonic demonology, in order to argue that demons are all evil, as asserted by the Christian tradition, which also identified "pagan" deities with demons. But when in ch. 14 he reports the opinion of those philosophers who divided up rational souls (*animas rationales*) into three kinds, *in diis*

⁴ See my "Seneca in Plinio, Dione, s. Agostino", in *Neronia VI. Rome à l'époque néronienne. Actes du VIème Colloque International de la Société Internationale des Études Néroniennes (SIEN), Rome 19-23 mai 1999*, ed. J.-M. Croisille – Y. Perrin, Bruxelles 2002, 503-13.

⁵ As I argued in "A Pseudepigraphon inside a Pseudepigraphon? The Seneca-Paul Correspondence and the Letters Added Afterwards", *Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha* 23, 2014, 259-89.

⁶ See on this I. Ramelli, *Allegoria, I, L'età classica*, Milan 2004, and Eadem, "Valuing Antiquity in Antiquity by Means of Allegoresis", in *Valuing the Past in the Greco-Roman World. Proceedings of the Penn-Leiden Colloquium on Ancient Values VII, Leiden 14-16 June 2012*, eds. J. Ker and Chr. Pieper, Mnemosyne Supplements, Leiden 2014, 485-507.

⁷ D. Boin, "Hellenistic 'Judaism' and the Social Origin of the 'Pagan-Christian' Debate", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 22 (2014) 167-96.

caelestibus, in daemonibus aeriis, et in hominibus terrenis, one cannot help drawing a parallel with the Christian Platonist Origen's tripartition of rational creatures into angels, demons, and humans. The main difference is, of course, that Origen speaks of creatures, since God does not belong there. The Platonists too, however, in their henotheism, distinguished the highest God from inferior deities.

Toward the end of Book 8, in ch. 27, Augustine sharply criticises the cult of the dead (*sacra uel sacrificia mortuorum tamquam deorum*), as fn. 166 rightly informs. Even Monica, Augustine's mother, was accustomed to practicing this cult, and would do so even in Milan, while bishop Ambrose was endeavouring to eradicate this practice. As is typical of these extremely essential notes, no secondary literature is given, but one major, very relevant study in this respect is that by Ramsay MacMullen, *The Second Church. Popular Christianity A.D. 200-400*, Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplements 1, Atlanta: 2009.

This is a careful work, very concise in terms of elucidations, comments, and apparatuses, but well done from the point of view of the edition and of the very "mimetic" and somewhat solemn translation.

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