

CAELESTIUS, DISCIPULUS PELAGII

During the last few decades, much research has been done concerning the role and importance of Pelagius and Julianus of Aeclanum in the Pelagian movement¹. With regard to this matter, Celestius has fallen somewhat into oblivion, since — as far as we can ascertain — no systematic study has yet been devoted to him. However, this does not mean that in literature on Pelagius and the Pelagian movement, Celestius is not mentioned. On the contrary, in many works Celestius plays an important role in the development and spread of Pelagian ideas. One of the most authoritative works in this respect was de Plinval's *Pélage, ses écrits, sa vie et sa réforme*, in which he depicts Celestius as the person responsible for the whole Pelagian movement². Does this image correspond with reality? Who was Celestius and what was his contribution in the Pelagian movement? In this review, we want to examine this further on the basis of the remaining source material. This is mainly an historical study, although we will also say something about Celestius' theology. In the footnotes we want to confront the sources with the main ideas of modern literature.

A. BEFORE THE CONTROVERSY

We can no longer retrieve the exact date of Celestius' birth. We only have some information at our disposal which can help us indirectly. First of all, Marius Mercator mentions that Celestius came to Carthage from Rome as a disciple of Pelagius³. This could have been around 410,

¹ For a survey of recent literature, see O. WERMELINGER, *Neuere Forschungskontroversen um Augustinus und Pelagius*, in C. MAYER, K. H. CHELIUS, "Res et Signa". *Internationales Symposium über den Stand der Augustinus-Forschung* (Giessener Augustinus-Studien, Band I), Würzburg, 1989, p. 189-217. Also see B.R. REES, *The Letters of Pelagius and his Followers*, Suffolk, 1991.

² G. DE PLINVAL, *Pélage, ses écrits, sa vie et sa réforme. Étude d'histoire littéraire et religieuse*, Lausanne, 1943.

³ "Caelestius quidam ... discipulus et auditor Pelagii ante viginti plus minus annos ex urbe Romana Carthaginem Africae totius metropolim venit". M. MERCATOR, *Commonitorium super nomine Caelestii*, ACO, I, V, I, p. 66. Mercator has probably written this work in 429. We refer to it as *Commonitorium I*. For the exact date of this work, see for instance O. WERMELINGER, *Marius Mercator*, in DS X (1980) 610-615.

at the time of the invasion of the Visigoths. Another author, Gennadius, calls Celestius *adulescens* before he met Pelagius⁴, thereby referring to someone between 15/17 and 30 years old⁵. From this information we think we may conclude that Celestius was born around 380⁶. We cannot retrace where Celestius was born. We only find some vague information with Jerome⁷, from which we do not dare to draw any conclusion⁸. According to M. Mercator, Celestius is of noble birth⁹. We see no reason to question this information¹⁰. After all, Pelagius' lifestyle and doctrine were especially succesful with the aristocracy. As a consequence, Celestius may very well have met Pelagius in this social environment. On the other hand, Pelagius could also have been introduced in this milieu by Celestius. Pelagius' disciple is said to have received a law training, as we know from Mercator¹¹. Celestius' role in the further evolution of the Pelagian

⁴ "Caelestius antequam Pelagio concurreret, immo adhuc adulescens, scripsit ad parentes suos ..."; *De viris inlustribus*, 45. See GENNADIUS, *Liber de viris inlustribus*, herausgegeben von E. C. RICHARDSON (Texte und Untersuchungen 14, 1a), Leipzig, 1896, p. 77.

⁵ See for example C.T. LEWIS, C. SHORT, *A Latin Dictionary*, Oxford, 1955, p. 46. Also see E. EYBEN, *De jonge Romein volgens de literaire bronnen der periode ca 200 v. Chr. tot ca 500 n. Chr.*, Brussel, 1977, p. 20-26.

⁶ We did not find a possible date of birth with any of the consulted modern authors.

⁷ Jerome vaguely taunts that one of the leaders of the Pelagianist movement "habet enim progeniem Scotticae gentis de Brittannorum vicinia". HIERONYMUS, *In Hieremiam* III,I,4, CCL 74,120. Also Pelagius can be meant here.

⁸ There are some modern authors who claim to know Celestius' nationality. Hedde and Amann see him as an Italian. De Plinval believes that Pelagius' disciple comes from Campania (Italy) or from Africa. Grossi thinks he is British, while Nicholson calls him Celtic. These authors do not give any sources for their opinions. Morris thinks it is possible that Celestius was British, yet he has too little material at his disposal to pass judgement. See R. HEDDE, É. AMANN, *Pélagianisme*, in DTC 12 (1933) 675-712, c. 682; G. DE PLINVAL, *Pélage*, p. 212; V. GROSSI, *Celestio*, in *Dizionario Patristico* I (1983) 639-640, c. 639; M.F. NICHOLSON, *Celtic Theology: Pelagius*, in J.P. MACKEY (ed.), *An Introduction to Celtic Christianity*, Edinburgh, 1989, 386-413, p. 389; J. MORRIS, *Pelagian Literature*, in JTS 16 (new series) (1965) 26-60, p. 41.

⁹ "... nobilis natu quidem et illius temporis auditorialis scholasticus". M. MERCATOR, *Commonitorium adversum haeresim Pelagii et Caelestii vel etiam scripta Iuliani*, ACO, I, V, I, p. 6. (further on, this work will be referred to as *Commonitorium* II).

¹⁰ Morris does question this information. According to his opinion, the church-writers mostly attribute *nobilis natu* to heroes, not to enemies. J. MORRIS, *art. cit.*, p. 41. However, we believe that this argument may as easily be shifted. Because *nobilis natu* is mostly not attributed to the enemy, this exception can proof the authenticity of this characteristic.

¹¹ "auditorialis scholasticus" refers to a lawyer. Augustine for example, uses this expression in this meaning in *Contra Iulianum*, VI,11,34, PL 44,841, and in *Contra duas epistolas pelagianorum* II,6,11, CSEL 60,570.

controversy proves this¹². Our author also assumes to know that Celestius had an "infirmity". He was a eunuch¹³. However, in our opinion we have to meet this claim with the necessary caution. First of all, there is no other source that mentions this fact. Moreover, the term "eunuch" also refers to an operation after birth: being born as a eunuch seems very strange. Therefore this rather seems an apologetic argument of Mercator to bring the future priest Celestius into discredit. If Celestius really were a eunuch, would the other apologetes have not mentioned this too¹⁴?

Also Gennadius has left us some information about Celestius' youth. During this period, Celestius is said to have written some letters to his parents¹⁵. The question here is, how we have to interpret "de monasterio". May we conclude from this that Celestius had been a monk for a certain time¹⁶? We think there are no real arguments to assume this¹⁷. In our opinion, the information of Gennadius rather applies to the contents of the letters, namely to the monastery¹⁸. There is no doubt

¹² See for example the way he defends himself during the synod of Carthage in 411 (CSEL 42,168-169).

¹³ "... sed naturae vitio eunuchus matris utero editus". M. MERCATOR, *Commonitorium* II, ACO I, V, I, p. 6; also see ID., *Commonitorium* I, ACO I, V, I, p. 66: "Caelestius quidam, eunuchus matris utero editus".

¹⁴ Most of the modern authors do accept this report of Mercator. Only Ferguson adds a cautious "probably" to this information. J. FERGUSON, *Pelagius, A Historical and Theological Study*, Cambridge, 1956, p. 48.

¹⁵ "Caelestius, antequam Pelagio concurreret, immo adhuc adulescens, scripsit ad parentes suos **De monasterio** epistulas in modum libellorum tres, omni Deum desideranti necessarias morales, siquidem in eis dictio nihil vitii postmodum proditi, sed totum ad incitamentum tenuit". GENNADIUS, *De viris illustribus* 45.

¹⁶ This is the opinion of Ferguson, Bardy and Nuvolone. See J. FERGUSON, *loc. cit.*; G. BARDY, *Celestius*, in DHGE 12 (1953) 104-107, c. 104; F. NUVOLONE, *Célestius*, in DS XII-2 (1985) 2891-2895, c. 2891.

¹⁷ See F. LOOFS, *Pelagius*, in RPTHK XV (1904) 747-774, p. 758; R. HEDDE, É. AMANN, *Pélagianisme*, c. 682.

¹⁸ See B. CZAPLA, *Gennadius als Litterarhistoriker. Eine quellenkritische Untersuchung der Schrift des Gennadius von Marseille 'De viris illustribus'*, Münster, 1898, p. 209-214. Also Morris believes that Celestius was a monk, partly on the basis of Augustine, who complains in his work *De gestis Pelagii* XXXV,61 about the fact that the Pelagian movement came into existence "a quibusdam monachis". According to Morris, the plural can refer to Celestius, since the Church Father only calls Pelagius and Celestius leaders of the heresy. Then the author tries to find out in which monastery Celestius could have stayed. In any case, as Morris says, he did not stay there for a long time and he did not take vows. See J. MORRIS, *Pelagian Literature*, p. 41-42. However, we have to make a few remarks with regard to this argumentation. First of all, we agree with Czaplá that the quotation of Gennadius does not refer to the monastic character of Celestius. Moreover, in Augustine's work we can read "a quibusdam **veluti** monachis", which seems to give a depreciated impression. The Church Father does not explicitly say that the

about the fact that Celestius came into contact with Pelagius. He is always referred to as Pelagius' disciple¹⁹. They probably met in Rome²⁰. Celestius also met Rufinus in this town²¹, as he himself declared at the synod of Carthage in 411²².

B. THE SYNOD OF CARTHAGE IN 411

As we learn from Mercator, Celestius left Rome and went to North Africa, more precisely to Carthage²³. We have to remain silent with regard to the question whether he has spent some time on Sicily during this journey. In *De perfectione iustitiae hominis*, Augustine certainly gives the impression that Celestius has been there²⁴. However, it is highly doubtful whether he means that Celestius, on his journey to Carthage, has stopped in Sicily as early as 410²⁵.

Pelagian leaders were monks. Finally it seems that the author, in his search for the monasetry, goes further than the sources permit him to.

¹⁹ See above; also for instance AUGUSTINE, *De peccato originali*, VIII,9, CSEL 42, 172. *Ibid.*, XLI,48, CSEL 42,206; OROSIUS, *Liber apologeticus* 19,4, CSEL 5,633.

²⁰ Cf. M. MERCATOR, *Commonitorium* II, ACO I, V, I, p. 5-6.

²¹ There is no certainty about the identity of Rufinus. It probably is the priest Rufinus, who lived with Jerome in the Monastery of Bethlehem, who is meant here. For more information on this subject, see M. LAMBERIGTS's dissertation, *De polemiek tussen Julianus van Aeclanum en Augustinus van Hippo. Een bijdrage tot de theologiegeschiedenis van de tweede pelagiaanse controverse (418-430)*, Dl. I, Vol. II, Leuven, 1988, p. 4-6. Also see M.W. MILLER, *Rufini Presbyteri Liber de Fide. A critical Text and Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Patristic Studies 95), Washington, 1964; H.I. MARROU, *Les attaches orientales du pélagianisme*, in *Patristique et Humanisme* (Patristica Sorbonensia 9), Paris, 1976, 334-340; G. BONNER, *Rufinus of Syria and African Pelagianism*, in *Augustinian Studies* 1 (1970) 35-41; G. MARTINETTO, *Les premières réactions antiaugustinienne de Pélage*, in *REA* 17 (1971) 83-117; A. DE VEER, *Le dossier Célestius*, in *Oeuvres de Saint-Augustin. La crise pélagienne II* (BA 22), Parijs, 1975, p. 704-710; H. RONDET, *Rufin le Syrien et le Liber de fide*, in *Augustiniana* 22 (1972), 531-539; E. TESELLE, *Rufinus the Syrian, Caelestius, Pelagius. Explorations in the Prehistory of the Pelagian Controversy*, in *Augustinian Studies* 3 (1972) 61-95; L.J. VAN DER LOF, *The Man in the Shadow behind Pelagius*, in *Studia Patristica* 15, Berlijn, 1984, 247-254.

²² See AUGUSTINE, *De peccato originali* III,3-IV,3; CSEL 42,168-169.

²³ M. MERCATOR, *Commonitorium* I, ACO, I, V, I, p. 66. See above.

²⁴ "et non frustra istos fratres qui haec attulerunt in Sicilia existimo audisse, quod ipse docuerit ista vel scripserit". AUGUSTINE, *De perfectione iustitiae hominis* I,1, CSEL 42,3.

²⁵ Bardy and Huegelmeyer are certain about this fact, whereas Ferguson still has his doubts. On the basis of Prosper's quotation in *Carmen de ingratis* I,70, also Morris believes that Celestius probably went to Sicily in 411, after the fall of Rome, where he then spread his ideas. The author mentions that Prosper first of all talks about riots in Sicily and only after that, he talks about Africa. He believes this is a chronological argument. Here we want to make the remark that, in our opinion, the context shows that

In Carthage, Celestius tried to receive holy orders, as Augustine and Orosius report²⁶. But he came up against deacon Paulinus of Milan who brought charges against him with bishop Aurelius of Carthage²⁷. The motives of Paulinus' charges remain a matter for conjecture, since no source material on this matter has been preserved²⁸. During a synod in the autumn of 411²⁹, the deacon was given the opportunity to read his *libellus accusationis*. The exact content of this work is not known. We only have the six³⁰ theses as they are given by M. Mercator and

the word "Africa" refers to the African reaction in the years 416-418. Moreover, Prosper first mentions Celestius' exile from Constantinople, then he talks about his difficulties in Ephesus and only then he mentions Sicily. It is clear that Prosper does not arrange his data chronologically. Hedde and Amann even seem to know that Celestius wrote his *Definitiones* there during that period. They do not give any argument to prove this. See J. FERGUSON, *Pelagius*, p. 29; G. BARDY, *Celestius*, c. 105; C. HUEGELMEYER, *Carmen de ingratiss S. Prosperi Aquitani. A Translation and a Commentary* (Patristic Studies 95), Washington, 1962, p. 112; J. MORRIS, *Pelagian Literature*, p. 40-41; R. HEDDE, É. AMANN, *Pélagianisme*, c. 685-686.

²⁶ AUGUSTINE, *Epistula* 157, III, 22, CSEL 44, 471: "nam unus eorum nomine Caelestius in eiusdem civitatis ecclesia iam ad presbyterii honorem subrepere coeperat..."; OROSIUS, *Liber apologeticus* 3, CSEL 5, 607: "Caelestium iam ad honorem presbyterii subrepentem apud Carthaginem".

²⁷ "Restitit ei quidam Paulinus diaconus, defensor et procurator ecclesiae Mediolanensis cuique in conventu sacerdotum multa capitula objecit contra fidem catholicam"; [PRAEDESTINATUS], *Haeresis* I, 88; PL 53, 617. Also see M. MERCATOR, *Commonitorium* I, ACO I, V, I, p. 66.

²⁸ Modern authors give some possible reasons. According to Wermelinger, the motives for the charge are rather to be found in the local church of Africa than with Paulinus himself. The battle against the Donatists had given the African theology a more profound basis. They were therefore not prepared to question this theological position once again. Nuvolone agrees with this theory: it is possible that Paulinus was asked by the Africans. But on the other hand, he also thinks it possible that Paulinus already came into contact with the works and theories of Celestius when he was in Italy and that he charged them there. Paredi agrees with this last theory. He adds that the attempt of Celestius to become a priest in Carthage, was the immediate cause for Paulinus to react. Maybe we can suggest a combination of these motives. See infra. See O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius. Die theologische Position der römische Bischöfe im pelagianischen Streit in den Jahren 411-432* (Päpste und Papsttum 7), Stuttgart, 1975, p. 8; F. NUVOLONE, *Celestius*, c. 2891; A. PAREDI, *Paulinus of Milan*, in *Sacris erudiri* 14 (1963) 206-230, p. 208-209.

²⁹ On this subject, see F. REFOULÉ, *Datation du premier concile de Carthage contre les Pélagiens et du "Libellus Fidei" de Rufin*, in REAug 9 (1963) 41-49.

³⁰ Some authors claim that Paulinus raised seven theses against Celestius. The following theses are mentioned here: "children have eternal life, even if they are not baptized" (Ferguson, Phan, Hedde-Amann, Huegelmeier) and "a person can be without sin and keep the divine commands" (Bilhmeyer-Tüchle). However, these authors do not give adequate arguments for their theories. Moreover, we want to draw attention to the

Augustine³¹. Hereby Mercator relies on the acts of the synod itself³² and he has probably kept the original order of the six theses³³. We now give these theses as we can find them with Mercator³⁴. There, where Augustine deviates from Mercator's text, we will mention it between brackets³⁵. These differences do not alter the contents.

1. *Adam mortalem factum, qui sive peccaret sive non peccaret, moriturus fuisset (esset 1+2)*;

2. *quoniam peccatum Adae ipsum solum laesit et non genus humanum (laeserit 1+2)*;

3. *quoniam parvuli qui nascuntur in eo statu sunt, in quo Adam fuit ante praevaricationem (quoniam infantes nuper nati in illo statu sint 1+2)*;

4. *quoniam neque per mortem vel praevaricationem Adae omne genus hominum moriatur neque per resurrectionem Christi omne genus hominum resurgat*;

5. *quoniam lex sic mittit ad regnum caelorum quomodo et evangelium (mittat...quemadmodum 2)*;

6. *quoniam et ante adventum domini fuerunt homines impeccabiles, id est sine peccato (quoniam ante adventum Christi fuerunt (fuerint 2) homines sine peccato 1+2)*³⁶.

We find these theses, together with some others, in many other works, especially with Augustine³⁷. We also find a part of the further

fact that the problem of eternal life for unbaptized children was not yet under discussion in Carthage (411). This also goes for the other thesis. See *infra*. See J. FERGUSON, *Pelagius*, p. 51; P. PHAN, *Grace and the Human Condition* (Message of the Fathers of the Church 15), Wilmington-Delaware, 1988, p. 228-229; R. HEDDE, É. AMANN, *Pélagianisme*, c. 685; C. HUEGELMEYER, *Carmen de ingratiss*, p. 112; K. BILHMEYER, H. TÜCHLE, *Church History I*, Westminster-Maryland, 1958, 281-285, p. 282-283.

³¹ Augustine mentions the six theses two times, once in *De gestis Pelagii* XI,23, CSEL 42,76 and once in *De peccato originali* XI,12, CSEL 42,174. Augustine takes the theses from the libellus, that contained the charge of the synod of Diospolis (415).

³² M. MERCATOR, *Commonitorium I*, ACO I, V, I, p. 66.

³³ Also see AUGUSTINE, *De peccato originali* II,2-III,3, CSEL 42,167-169, where he quotes a part of the acts of 411. Cf. O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius*, p. 8-15.

³⁴ For convenience we will number the theses, whereas Mercator did not do this.

³⁵ If it concerns a change in the version of *De gestis Pelagii* then we will indicate this with 1; if it concerns the version of *De peccato originali*, then we will indicate this with 2. The order with Augustine: 1-2-5-6-3-4.

³⁶ According to Wermelinger, the term *impeccabiles* does not occur in the original acts, but is added later by Jerome. Also see O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius*, p. 9-11.

³⁷ AUGUSTINE, *De gestis Pelagii*, XI,23, CSEL 42,72; *Id.*, *De peccato originali* XI,12, CSEL 42,174; *Id.*, *De gestis Pelagii* XI,24, CSEL 42,77-78; *Ibid.* VI,16, CSEL 42,68-69; *Ibid.* XXXIII,57, CSEL 42,111-112; *Ibid.* XXXV,65, CSEL 42,120; *Id.*, *Epistula* 186,IX, 32, CSEL 57,71. Also see M. MERCATOR, *Commonitorium II*, ACO I, V, I, p. 6;

development of the synod in his work. From these acts, he cites the lively discussions concerning the second and third charge of Paulinus³⁸. However, the result of the synod does not seem very clear to us, since the oldest reports do not speak about a "condemnation" of Celestius. In *Epistula* 157, Augustine rather talks about a "rejection" by the church³⁹. Orosius also shares this opinion⁴⁰. However, later fragments in Augustine do speak of a condemnation⁴¹. According to Mercator, this is even beyond doubt⁴². Thus, in our opinion it is perfectly possible that the rejection of Celestius in Carthage in 411 has become an explicit condemnation in the "Wirkungsgeschichte"⁴³. Further on, Mercator mentions that Celestius wanted to lodge an appeal in Rome after this "condemnation"⁴⁴ and also Orosius

[PRAEDESTINATUS], *Haeresis* I,88; PL 53,618; PROSPER OF AQUITAINE, *Chronicon integrum*, PL 51,591.

³⁸ AUGUSTINE, *De peccato originali* III,3-IV,3, CSEL 42,168-169.

³⁹ ID., *Epistula* 157,III,22, CSEL 44,471: "sed quia magis convictus et ab ecclesia detestatus quam correctus et pacatus abscessit, veritus sum ...".

⁴⁰ OROSIUS, *Liber apologeticus* 3, CSEL 5,607: "Caelestius iam ad honorem presbyterii subrepentem apud Carthaginem plurimis episcopis iudicantibus proditum auditum convictum confessum detestatumque ab Ecclesia ex Africa profugisse".

⁴¹ AUGUSTINE, *Epistula* 175,1, CSEL 44,654: "... unde factum est, ut recensendum peteremus, quid ante ferme quinquennium super Caelestii nomine hic apud ecclesiam Carthaginensem fuerit agitatum ... quamvis iudicatio manifesta constaret, quia illo tempore episcopali iudicio excisum hoc tantum vulnus ab ecclesia videretur ...". Also in *De gestis Pelagii* Augustine is very clear: "... haec ita obiecta sunt, ut etiam apud Carthaginem a sanctitate tua et ab aliis tecum episcopis dicerentur audita atque damnata"; "ita ut Caelestius ad ecclesiasticum iudicium perveniret et reportaret dignam sua perversitate sententiam"; "Caelestius quidam talia sentiens ad iudicium Carthaginensis ecclesiae perductus episcoporum sententia condemnatus est". ID., *De gestis Pelagii* XI,23; XXII,46; XXXV, 62, CSEL 42,76-77,100,116. Finally, Augustine says in *Retractationes*: "Caelestius vero discipulus eius iam propter tales assertiones apud Carthaginem in episcopali iudicio, ubi ego non interfui, excommunicationem meruerat". ID., *Retractationes* II,33, CSEL 36,171.

⁴² M. MERCATOR, *Commonitorium* I, ACO I, V, I, p. 66: "De quibus omnibus capitulis <insertis> supra scriptis exemplaribus synodaliu gestorum patres et episcopi regionis illius restiterunt Caelestio et iusserunt ut eadem condemnaret, quia essent haeretici sensus, sed Caelestius nullo modo adquiesscens, quin immo resistens, actis isdem quibus frequenter auditus est, ecclesiastica communione privatus est, a qua sententia ad Romani episcopi examen credidit appellandum".

⁴³ This is also the opinion of Wermelinger. See O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius*, p. 17-18. Most of the authors are, however, certain that Celestius was condemned and excommunicated by the synod of Carthage. For example G. BARDY, *Celestius*, c. 105; F. NUVOLONE, *Célestius*, c. 2891; E. TESELLE, *Augustine the Theologian*, New York, 1970, p. 280. M. WOJTYWITSCH, *Papsttum und Konzile von den Anfängen bis zu Leo I (440-461). Studien zur Entstehung der Ueberordnung des Papstes über Konzile (Päpste und Papsttum 17)*, Stuttgart, 1981, p. 226. Loofs however, believes that Pelagius' disciple was probably not condemned, but rejected. See LOOFS, *Pelagius*, p. 759.

⁴⁴ M. MERCATOR, *Commonitorium* I, ACO, I, V, I, p. 66.

seems to know that Celestius left Africa after the trial⁴⁵. This report of Mercator seems plausible to us⁴⁶, since Celestius had spent considerable time in Rome, where the Pelagian teachings were not considered as dangerous for faith. It is possible that Celestius has written a *libellus brevissimus* as a result of the process in 411⁴⁷. We believe that Augustine's report in *De peccatorum meritis et remissione* points in that direction, although he does not mention a name⁴⁸. The Church Father is more clear in *Epistula* 175 and in *De peccato originali*⁴⁹, but the further content of this *libellus brevissimus* is not known to us⁵⁰.

Is Celestius himself responsible for the six theses that are pinned on him? In our opinion, he rather seems the exponent of ideas that he takes over from others but that he backs completely. After all, Celestius himself mentioned the name Rufinus at the trial⁵¹. There is a *Liber de fide* written by this Rufinus, in which some theses correspond with those

⁴⁵ OROSIIUS, *Liber apologeticus* 3, CSEL 5,607.

⁴⁶ Cfr. also M. WOJNOWYTSCH, *Papsttum*, p. 226; G. DE PLINVAL, *Pélagius*, p. 258; G. BARDY, *Celestius*, c. 105; F. NUVOLONE, *Célestius*, c. 2891. Wermelinger adds that Celestius decides not to take the necessary steps; O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius*, p. 18. We can only guess at the reason why he decided not to do so.

⁴⁷ As we can also find in *Ibid.*, p. 17; J. FERGUSON, *Pelagius*, p. 52; F. NUVOLONE, *art. cit.*, c. 2893.

⁴⁸ AUGUSTINE, *De peccatorum meritis et remissione* I,34,63, CSEL 60,64: "Proinde quod attinet ad baptismum parvulorum, ut eis sit necessarius, redemptionem etiam ipsis opus esse concedunt, sicut cuiusdam eorum libello brevissimo continetur qui tamen ibi remissionem alicuius peccati apertius exprimere noluit".

⁴⁹ AUGUSTINE, *Epistula* 175,6, CSEL 44,661: "quamquam per baptismum Christi etiam parvulorum fieri redemptionem libello suo Caelestius in Carthaginensi ecclesia iam confessus est". *Id.*, *De peccato originali* XIX,21, CSEL 42,181: "Nam et Caelestius apud Carthaginem in libello suo redemptionem confessus est parvulorum, et tamen noluit confiteri ex Adam in eos transisse peccatum".

⁵⁰ De Veer gives a possible interpretation of the *libellus brevissimus*. In his opinion, it attracts attention that Augustine, in his account of the trial, only uses extracts from the conversation in Carthage, where Celestius among other things orally admitted that children have to be baptized. Augustine does not quote from a *libellus* in which Celestius should have specified this. According to De Veer, the *libellus brevissimus* could thus be regarded as just an oral specification of Celestius in the debate which was mentioned in the acts and co-signed by Celestius. Nevertheless, the *libellus* also seems to have been a text that also existed independent of the acts. Celestius used them five years later with Pope Zosimus. Here the author refers to the letter *Magnum pondus* of Pope Zosimus (CSEL 35/1,101-102). See A. DE VEER, *Le dossier Célestius*, p. 691-692. This interpretation seems reasonable to us.

⁵¹ Also Marrou, Wermelinger and Brown endorse the similarity of ideas between Pelagius and Rufinus. See H.I. MARROU, *Les attaches orientales du pélagianisme*, p. 331-334; O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius*, p. 11-15; P. BROWN, *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine*, London, 1972, p. 218-220.

of Celestius⁵². According to Celestius, there were more people who doubted the "transmission of sins"⁵³. Also Pelagius testified in his comment on the Roman letter that there is discussion in Rome about the *tradux peccati*-doctrine⁵⁴. From all this, we may conclude that Celestius cannot be regarded as the only one responsible for the theses. We can no longer answer the question as to where Paulinus found the theses which were attributed to Celestius, with certainty. Paulinus probably knew the ideas of Celestius from his writings, although the fragment of the Acts indicates that he has also preached his doctrine orally⁵⁵. Nor is it very clear whether Paulinus found these theses as such in Celestius' work, or whether he summarised "Celestius' points of view" in the six theses⁵⁶.

C. FROM CARTHAGE TO DIOSPOLIS: CELESTIUS INCOGNITO

After the synod of Carthage, we begin to lose track of Celestius. In 414 Hilary of Syracuse informs Augustine about tumult in Sicily: certain Christians are confusing the people with their teachings⁵⁷. The Church Father thinks that Celestius might be responsible for this tumult⁵⁸. Then again, in *De perfectione iustitiae hominis* Augustine seems to deny this

⁵² It concerns the following theses: "Adam's sin injured himself alone and not the human race", "infants at birth are in that state in which Adam was before his sin", "before the advent of Christ, there were humans who did not sin": *Liber de Fide* 38-39. See M. W. MILLER, *Rufini Presbyteri Liber de Fide*, p. 110-112.

⁵³ See Augustine's account of the trial in *De peccato originali* III,3-IV,3, CSEL 42, 168-169.

⁵⁴ PELAGIUS, *In Epistulam ad Romanos* 5,15; PLS I,1137; or A. SOUTER, *Pelagius' Expositions of Thirteen Epistles of St. Paul II* (Text and Studies 9,2), Cambridge, 1926, p. 46-47.

⁵⁵ "Caelestius dixit: <dixi> de traduce peccati Aurelius episcopus dixit: docuisti, Caelesti, aliquando..."; CSEL 42,168.

⁵⁶ Nuvolone and Teselle believe that the theses are taken from Celestius' works. Loofs doubts whether the theses are literally taken from a work of Pelagius' disciple. In his opinion, this is impossible because of the fragment of the Acts. See F. NUVOLONE, *Celestius*; c. 2891; E. TESELLE, *Rufinus the Syrian*, p. 77-78; F. LOOFS, *Pelagius*, p. 759.

⁵⁷ AUGUSTINE, *Epistula* 156, CSEL 44,448-449.

⁵⁸ ID., *Epistula* 157, CSEL 44,448-449: "Sed quia magis convictus et ab ecclesia detestatus quam correctus et pacatus abscessit, veritus sum, ne forte ipse ibi sit, qui vestram fidem perturbare conatur; ideo nominis ipsius commemorationem putavi esse faciendam, sed sive ipse sit sive alii consortes eius erroris — plures enim sunt, quam sperare possumus, et, ubi non redarguuntur, etiam alios ad suam sectam seducunt et sic crebrescent, ut nesciam, quo sint eruptiri...".

information, although later he admits that Celestius has been there⁵⁹. Is Augustine correcting himself here? Does he mean that Celestius indeed had been in Sicily at that moment, or does he only want to indicate that Pelagius' disciple has been there before 414? We think that he means the latter, but it remains a very vague report⁶⁰. From Marius Mercator we learn that Celestius has been in Ephesus and that he has been ordained in that town⁶¹. We also find this information with Augustine, although Ephesus is not explicitly mentioned⁶². We see no reason to question Mercator's report. The exact date of Celestius' ordination can, however, no longer be retrieved, but it must have been before the summer of 416, during the councils of Carthage and Milevis⁶³. Later he also turns up in Constantinople, as we learn from Mercator⁶⁴. Also Prosper of Aquitaine

⁵⁹ ID., *De perfectione iustitiae hominis* I,1, CSEL 42,3-4: "qui hoc attulerunt de Sicilia, ubi Caelestius non esse perhibetur". "et non frustra istos fratres qui haec attulerunt in Sicilia existimo audisse, quod ipse docuerit ista vel scripserit".

⁶⁰ According to de Plinval, it is very probable that Celestius caused this Pelagian propaganda in Sicily. He is said to have stayed there before travelling further to Ephesus. Moreover, the author takes the report of Jerome seriously (*In Hieremiam* IV,1,2, CCL 74, 174), namely that Celestius was also responsible for the tumult on Rhodes. In our opinion, Jerome is so vague that we are unable to pronounce upon this matter for lack of other sources. Other authors deny that Pelagius' disciple has been in Sicily in 414, although they do not exclude that he has not been there before. Bardy explains Augustine's attitude as follows. In 414 the Church Father believes that Celestius is responsible for the tumult, but in 415 he admits that he was mistaken: Celestius has not yet returned to the west. See G. DE PLINVAL, *Pélage*, p. 259, 267; ID., *Oeuvres de saint Augustine. La crise pélagienne* I (BA 21), Parijs, 1966, p. 10, 15, 417; O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius*, p. 18, 29; J. MORRIS, *Pelagian Literature*, p. 40-41; G. BARDY, *Celestius*, c. 105.

⁶¹ M. MERCATOR, *Commonitorium* I, ACO I, V, I p. 66: "... qua mox idem ipse appellatione neglecta Ephesum Asiae urbem contendit ibique ausus est per obreptionem locum presbyterii petere".

⁶² *Epistula* 175 says: "... quamvis et ad presbyterium idem Caelestius postea pervenisse dicatur, ..."; AUGUSTINUS, *Epistula* 175,1, CSEL 44,654. *Epistula* 176 gives more details: "quorum unus, id est Caelestius etiam ad presbyterium in Asia dicitur pervenisse". ID., *Epistula* 176,4, CSEL 44,667.

⁶³ Modern authors declared with one voice that Celestius has been ordained in Ephesus. Wermelinger situates this before 416, because it is then known in Africa. Grossi shares this opinion, saying that Celestius appeared for a second time in Ephesus in 416, where he had already been ordained at that time. See O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius*, p. 137-138; V. GROSSI, *Adversaries and Friends of Augustine*, in A. DI BERARDINO, J. QUASTEN, (ed.), *Patrology* IV, Westminster-Maryland, 1986, 463-504, p. 486; F. NUVOLONE, *Celestius*, c. 2891.

⁶⁴ M. MERCATOR, *Commonitorium* I, ACO I, V, I, p. 66: "inde post aliquantos annos sub sanctae memoriae Attico episcopo urbem Constantinopolitanam petiit, ubi in similibus detectus, magno studio sancti illius viri ex praedicta alma urbe detrusus est". According to

and Augustine are able to testify to this⁶⁵. Pelagius' disciple was banished from this town, but it cannot be said with certainty when this event took place. Mercator says that Celestius hastily left Constantinople to meet Pope Zosimus⁶⁶. Then he is said to have been banished in the beginning of 417. For lack of other source material we cannot retrieve the exact date⁶⁷. Therefore, information about Celestius' personal appearance after 411 is very scarce. There are, however, some ideas which are thought to be Celestius'. It is, for example, in this period that two bishops, Eutropius and Paul, who are probably from Spain, give the work *Definitiones, ut dicitur Caelestii*, to Augustine. Augustine thinks that the work the bishops gave him, did not carry the title *Definitiones, ut dicitur Caelestii*⁶⁸. He presumes that the work is written by Celestius or one of his followers. At least the contents correspond with another work from which it is certain that Celestius is the author. Unfortunately, Augustine does not mention which work is meant here. In our opinion, Augustine decides not to attribute these *Definitiones* to Celestius⁶⁹.

Mercator, Bishop Atticus has written some letters about this to colleagues in Asia, Thessaloniki and Carthage.

⁶⁵ PROSPER OF AQUITAINE, *Carmen de ingratis* I, 61-66. See C. HUEGELMEYER, *Carmen de ingratis*, p. 46. AUGUSTINE, *Contra Iulianum* III,1,4, PL 44,703: "... qui (exercitus Christi) debellavit apud Carthaginem Coelestium, quando illic ipse non eram; et rursus Constantinopoli tam longe a regionibus Africanis".

⁶⁶ M. MERCATOR, *loc. cit.*: "Praedictus tamen Caelestius etiam hinc eiectus ad urbem Romam sub sanctae memoriae Zosimo episcopo tota festinatione perrexit..."

⁶⁷ In modern literature this exile from Constantinople is not situated before 416.

⁶⁸ AUGUSTINE, *De perfectione iustitiae hominis*, I,1, CSEL 42,3-4: "... ut definitionibus quae dicuntur Caelestii esse respondeam. sic enim praenotata est eadem chartula quam dedistis: definitiones ut dicitur, Caelestii. quae praenotatio credo quod non illius, sed eorum sit qui hoc attulerunt de Sicilia, ubi Caelestius non esse perhibetur, sed multa talia garrientes et, sicut ait apostolus, ipsi errantes et alios in errorem mittentes. ex illius tamen haec esse doctrina vel etiam quorundam sociorum eius et nos possumus arbitrari. nam neque istae breves definitiones vel potius ratiocinationes ab illius abhorrent ingenio, quod in opere alio eius inspexi, cuius eius esse constat auctorem, et non frustra istos fratres qui haec attulerunt in Sicilia existimo audisse, quod ipse docuerit ista vel scripserit". These *Definitiones* have been brought together from *De perfectione iustitiae hominis* by J. GARNIER in PL. 48,617-622 and by A. BRUCKNER, *Quellen zur Geschichte des pelagianischen Streites* (Sammlung ausgewählter kirchen- und dogmengeschichtlicher Quellenschriften II, 7), Tübingen, 1906, p. 70-78. In the first part, 16 *definitiones*, or rather *ratiocinationes* are being introduced and they all deal with the ability not to sin. In the second part, the writer wants to give his argumentations a solid ground by quoting the Scriptures. In the third part, the Scriptural texts of the opponents are being refuted.

⁶⁹ Augustine's hesitation becomes very clear with modern authors. Wermelinger concludes that the Church Father does attribute these *Definitiones* to Pelagius' disciple, on the basis of oral information from Sicily and after comparing it with another work of Celestius. But then again, we must ask ourselves the reason why Augustine did not

The Pelagian doctrine is also starting to come to the surface in the East. In 415, probably on July 28th, Pelagius is summoned for the first time in Jerusalem⁷⁰. The discussion within the church ends without any result, but for Celestius it is of minor importance. A few months later, two deported Gallic bishops, named Heros of Arles and Lazarus of Aix, sent a *Libellus* against Pelagius to the primate of Palestine, Eulogius. This *Libellus* contained 29 theses, among which the six theses from 411, 3 theses from Sicily and 10 quotations from an unknown work of Celestius⁷¹. On December 20th, 14 bishops gathered in Diospolis to examine these charges⁷². The synod is interested to look at how Pelagius reacts to the theses that are attributed to Celestius. The acts show that Pelagius does

explicitly confirm this. Ferguson, Nuvolone and Grossi also regard Celestius as the author of the *Definitiones*. Thereby Grossi makes a distinction between the *Definitiones* of Celestius and an earlier anonymous work *Definitiones ut dicitur Coelestii* that was refuted by Augustine in *De spiritu et littera*. This distinction seems strange to us. First of all, the Church Father clearly talks about the work *Definitiones, ut dicitur Caelestii* in *De perfectione iustitiae hominis* I,1, although he questions the correctness of the title. Moreover, *De spiritu et littera* is not directed against Celestius. De Plinval is more careful: in all probability Celestius is the author of the work. Hedde-Amann and Zumkeller do not give their opinion, since Augustine admits that he is not certain about the title nor about the authorship. The handwriting does correspond with that of Celestius. See O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius*, p. 31; F. NUVOLONE, *Celestius*, c. 2891; J. FERGUSON, *In Defence of Pelagius in Theology* 83 (1980) 114-119, p. 116; V. GROSSI, *Adversaries and Friends of Augustine*, p. 486; G. DE PLINVAL, *La crise pélagienne* I, p. 115, 593; R. HEDDE, É. AMANN, *Pélagianisme*, c. 683; A. ZUMKELLER, *Schriften gegen die Pelagianer* II, Würzburg, 1964, p. 19-20.

⁷⁰ OROSIUS, *Liber apologeticus* 3-6, CSEL 5,606-611.

⁷¹ Is this work truly written by Celestius? In *De gestis Pelagii* Augustine explicitly recognised Celestius as the author (*De gestis Pelagius* XXIII,29, CSEL 42,82) and he quotes from some of its chapters. But at the end of his writings (*De gestis Pelagii* XXXV, 65, CSEL 42,121) the Church Father quotes another Pelagian thesis. This thesis is said to come from chapter 11 of a book of which the author is unknown, but that is attributed to Celestius. Does this mean that Augustine does question the authorship of the work that is a part of the libellus, containing the charges? Or does he refer to another anonymous work? We do not know the exact answer, but we think the first supposition is the most likely. First of all, "the eleventh chapter" can, in our opinion, refer to the book from which the other theses were quoted, since the quotation from the twelfth chapter is associated with it. Further, Augustine also clearly refers to Heros and Lazarus, "ideo fratres, qui haec obiecerunt". Finally, after this remark, Augustine continues to quote from the thirteenth chapter of the work from which the most quotations were taken. If our interpretation is correct, namely that chapter 11 was part of the work from which the other quotations were taken, then this could mean that once again a work had been wrongly attributed to Celestius.

⁷² Augustine's work *De gestis Pelagii* is about this synod and it is based on the Latin summary of the acts. For the reconstruction of the *libellus* and the discussion in Diospolis, see O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius*, p. 295-299.

not want to attribute the theses to his disciple, but that he nevertheless condemns them⁷³. To conclude that Pelagius distanced himself in Diospolis from his disciple Celestius, would in our opinion be without foundation⁷⁴. It seems that Pelagius only condemns the theses *ad satisfactionem sanctae synodi*, since he does not mention this fact anymore in his *Chartula defensionis*, in which he reproduces the trial in Diospolis⁷⁵. Pelagius was found to be catholic and was released. For our investigation, it is a pity that the text, which was attributed to Celestius and from which the quotations were taken, was lost. In our opinion, Augustine still had it at his disposal⁷⁶.

D. THE CONVICTION OF PELAGIANISM

1. The African reaction and the condemnation by Pope Innocent

Pelagius' acquittal sets off a chain reaction in Africa⁷⁷. At the annual synod of *Africa proconsularis* in Carthage in 416, Orosius gives an

⁷³ AUGUSTINE, *De gestis Pelagii* XIV,30, CSEL 42,84: "Ad ista Pelagius respondit: 'Haec utrum Caelestii sint, ipsi viderint, qui dicunt ea Caelestii esse; ego vero numquam sic tenui, sed anathematizo qui sic tenet'".

⁷⁴ De Plinval and Wermelinger agree with this point of view. See G. DE PLINVAL, *Pélage*, p. 290; ID., *La crise pélagienne* I, p. 633; O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius*, p. 77.

⁷⁵ AUGUSTINE, *op. cit.* XXXII,57-XXXIII,58, CSEL 42,111-113.

⁷⁶ The Church Father always mentions the chapter from which he has taken the quotations. He even takes more than one sentence from chapter twelve. "In duodecimo capitulo: Victoriā nostrā non ex dei esse adiutorio, sed ex libero arbitrio, quod inferre dictus est his verbis: 'nostra est victoria, quoniam propria voluntate arma suscepimus, sicut ex contrario nostrum est quando vincimur, quoniam armari propria voluntate contempsimus' et de apostolo Petro posuit testimonium divinae nos esse consortes naturae et syllogismum facere dicitur: 'quoniam si anima non potest esse sine peccato, ergo et deus subiacet peccato, cuius pars, hoc est anima, peccato obnoxia est'". *Ibid.* XVIII,42, CSEL 42,98.

⁷⁷ Especially the modern authors Ulbrich and Wermelinger deal with this African reaction at great length. Ulbrich draws, for example, attention to the fact that Augustine's theology is very important in the whole of the African reaction of 416. However, we want to remark that the Church Father was not present in Carthage. Moreover, we ask ourselves the question whether his thoughts themselves cannot be the result of the African theology. See H. ULBRICH, *Augustins Briefe zur Entscheidenden Phase des Pelagianischen Streites*, in *REAug* 9 (1963) 51-75, p. 60-67; O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius*, p. 94-101; G. BONNER, *Les origines africaines de la doctrine augustinienne sur la chute et le péché originel*, in *Augustinus* 12 (1967), n° 43-48, 97-116.

account of the synod of Diospolis. Hereupon the 68⁷⁸ bishops who were present, renew the condemnation of 411 and also condemn Pelagius. They write a letter to Pope Innocent⁷⁹, in which they announce their decision⁸⁰ and also ask the Pope to condemn this heresy. In the same period, 59 bishops from Numidia, including Augustine, gathered in Milevis. These bishops also condemn Pelagius and Celestius and send a letter to Innocent with an urgent request to condemn this heretical movement⁸¹. In support of these two letters, 5 African bishops also added

⁷⁸ The number of participants in the councils of Carthage and Milevis depends on the source edition that is followed. Zumkeller and Ulbrich followed CSEL 44,652-663, where 68 and 59 bishops are respectively given. Pietri used PL 20, where the edition mentions 69 and 61 participants respectively. Hedde-Amann used among others PL 33,762 where also 61 bishops were mentioned for the council of Milevis. We prefer the point of view of Goldbacher in CSEL 44. See A. ZUMKELLER, *Schriften gegen die Pelagianer* II, p. 52-53; H. ULBRICH, *Augustins Briefe*, p. 61.63; C. PIETRI, *Roma christiana. Recherches sur l'Eglise de Rome, son organisation, sa politique, son idéologie de Miltiade à Sixte III (311-340)* (Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 224), DI. II, Rome, 1976, p. 1187, footnote 1 (the reference to the Council of Carthage is not PL 26, 564-568, it should be PL 20,564-568. For Milevis the exact source is given: PL 20,568-571); R. HEDDE, É. AMANN, *Pélagianisme*, c. 695. Von Hefele-Leclercq also give another number. According to them, there were 68 bishops present in Carthage and 61 in Milevis. See C. VON HEFELE, H. LECLERCQ, *Histoire des Conciles d'après les documents originaux* II, 1, Paris, 1908, p. 184. Munier solved the problem cleverly: in Carthage approximately 70 bishops were present, in Milevis approximately 60. See C. MUNIER (ed.), *Concilia Africae a. 345 - a. 525*, CCL 149, Turnhout, 1974, p. XXIX.

⁷⁹ AUGUSTINE, *Epistula* 175, CSEL 44,652-662.

⁸⁰ ID., *Epistula* 175,1, CSEL 44,654-655: "His ergo lectis Pelagium et Caelestium auctores nefarii prorsus et ab omnibus nobis anathemandi erroris advertimus. Unde factum est, ut recensendum peteremus, quid ante ferme quinquennium super Caelestii nomine hic apud ecclesiam Carthaginensem fuerit agitatum. Quo recitato, sicut ex subditis advertere poterit sanctitas tua, quamvis iudicatio manifesta constaret, quia illo tempore episcopali iudicio excisum hoc tantum vulnus ab ecclesia videretur, nihilo minus tamen id communi deliberatione censuimus, ut huius modi persuasionis auctores, quamvis et ad presbyterium idem Caelestius postea pervenisse dicatur, nisi haec apertissime anathemaverint, ipsos anathemari oporteat ...".

⁸¹ AUGUSTINE, *Epistula* 176, CSEL 44,663-668: "Huius autem perniciosissimi erroris auctores esse perhibentur Pelagius et Caelestius, quos quidem in ecclesia sanari malum quam desperata salute ab ecclesia rescari, si necessitas nulla compellat. Quorum unus, id est Caelestius etiam ad presbyterium in Asia dicitur pervenisse, de quo ante paucos annos quis gestum fuerit, sanctitas tua de Carthaginensi ecclesia melius instruitur. Pelagius vero, sicut a quibusdam fratribus nostris missae loquuntur epistolae, Hierosolymis constitutus nonnullos fallere adseritur. Verum tamen multo plures, qui eius sensus diligentius indagare potuerunt, adversus eum pro gratia Christi et catholicae fidei veritate confligunt sed praecipue sanctus filius tuus, frater et conpresbyter noster Hieronymus".

a collective writing⁸². These three letters are brought to Rome together with a "file"⁸³. On January 27th 417, Pope Innocent I answered the three African letters⁸⁴. In these letters, he expresses his appreciation of the fact that they addressed themselves to Rome⁸⁵. Moreover, the letters of the Africans and the file have convinced Innocent of the dangerous ideas spread by the Pelagians. Thus he rejects this doctrine⁸⁶ and he condemns Pelagius and Celestius very solemnly⁸⁷. Hereby it is immediately apparent that the Pope does not want to pronounce a definitive

⁸² AUGUSTINE, *Epistula* 177, CSEL 44,669-688. They were Aurelius, Alypius, Augustine, Evodius and Possidius. In this letter the bishops deal with Pelagius' doctrine and acquittal in Diospolis in great length. They ask Innocent to investigate this case thoroughly and they propose to invite Pelagius to Rome. They do not talk about Celestius in this letter.

⁸³ This file contains the theses of 411, Pelagius' *Chartula* and *De natura*, Augustine's *De natura et gratia*, a letter of thanks from Timasius and Jacobus and a letter for Pelagius. See for the theses of 411: AUGUSTINE, *Epistula* 175,1, CSEL 44,654; for Pelagius' *Chartula* and the letter for Pelagius: ID., *Epistula* 177,15, CSEL 44,684-685; for Pelagius' *De natura* and Augustine's *De natura et gratia*: ID., *Epistula* 177,6, CSEL 44, 675.

⁸⁴ AUGUSTINE, *Epistula* 181-183, CSEL 44,701-736.

⁸⁵ As for example *Epistula* 181,1, CSEL 44,701-702; *Epistula* 182,2, CSEL 44,716-717; *Epistula* 183,5, CSEL 44,729. For the church-political aspects, see M. WOJTO-WYTSCH, *Papsttum*, p. 226-235; O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius*, p. 124-133. These authors draw the attention on how the Pope uses the letters from the Africans to support Roman primacy. However, for Africa the Pope is not the highest authority with regard to doctrines. The honour-primacy belongs to the *sedes Petri* and therefore they refer to it. On top of that, Wermelinger remarks that Innocent has but little possibility to refuse the wishes of the Africans. Kelly believes that the authority of the doctrine of Rome is stressed in Innocent's letters. We rather think that the Pope wants to put his juridical primacy in a clear light: the decisions taken by a local church only become effectual for the whole church if Rome takes them over and proclaims them. In our opinion, the declaration of an excommunication is rather a juridical matter. See J. KELLY, *The Oxford dictionary of Popes*, New York, 1988, p. 37-38.

⁸⁶ For example see *Epistula* 181,6, CSEL 44,709: "Si ergo hoc ille ita magnum scitu ut assidue diceret, ita necessarium confessus est ut doceret, quem ad modum Pelagius Caelestiusque seposita omni responsione psalmorum talique abdicata doctrina suasuros se aliquibus esse confidunt nos adiutorium dei nec debere quaerere nec egere, cum omnes sancti nihil se sine hoc agere posse testantur?"

⁸⁷ *Epistula* 182,6, CSEL 44,721: "Qua re Pelagium Caelestiumque, id est inventores vocum novarum, quae, sicut dixit apostolus, aedificationis nihilum sed magis vanissimas consuerunt parare quaestiones, ecclesiastica communione privari apostolici vigoris auctoritate censemus, donec resipiscant de diaboli laqueis, a quo captivi tenentur secundum ipsius voluntatem, eosque interim dominico ovilli non recipi, quod ipsi perversae viae secuti tramitem deserere voluerunt". The Pope adds that this measure also applies to all those who spread the Pelagian doctrine or who sympathize with it.

condemnation. He leaves the possibility open for the Pelagians to convert themselves⁸⁸.

2. Celestius and Zosimus

Was the Pelagian controversy solved by this? No, on the contrary! After his exile from Constantinople, Celestius went to Rome⁸⁹. Meanwhile, Pope Zosimus had succeeded his predecessor Innocent in March 417. During his journey, Celestius had met Heros and Lazarus, as we learn from Zosimus' letters⁹⁰. Upon arrival in Rome, Celestius tried to obtain a revision of his condemnation; and so he expressed his intention to lodge an appeal, originally formulated after his condemnation in 411. He presents a *Libellus fidei* to Zosimus to prove his orthodoxy⁹¹. Only a reconstruction of this work has been preserved. Pelagius also writes a letter and a *Libellus fidei* to the Apostolic See⁹². It attracts attention

⁸⁸ As for example *Epistula* 181,9, CSEL 44,713-714: "...quod si fecerint, erint in potestate pontificum istis aliquatenus subvenire et talibus aliquam curam praestare vulneribus, quam solet lapsis, cum resipuerint, ecclesia non negare, ut a suis revocati praecipitiis intra ovile domini redigantur..."

⁸⁹ M. MERCATOR, *Commonitorium* I, ACO I, V, I, p. 66. See above. In our opinion, it is not possible to retrieve the exact date of Celestius' departure for Rome. We think it must have been after he heard about the condemnation by Innocent. After all, it was the first time that Rome declared itself against the Pelagians. Seemingly, Pope Innocent (401-417) had found nothing wrong in the Pelagian doctrine until now, since it was very well known in Rome. Therefore we think it is very understandable that Celestius went to see the Pope. We further believe we can base our hypothesis on the fact that also Pelagius sent a letter to Innocent (PL 48,610-611; AUGUSTINE, *De gratia Christi* XXX,32, CSEL 42,150). Thus in our opinion, Mercator's *tota festinatione* is rather biased. Ferguson prefers Mercator's version, who, in his opinion, suggests that Celestius waited for better times to come, in this case the appointment of Pope Zosimus. See J. FERGUSON, *Pelagius*, p. 102.

⁹⁰ ZOSIMUS, *Epistula* 2 (Collectio Avellana 45,4), CSEL 35/1,100: "Lazarum sane in transitu cognitum, Herotem vero etiam satisfactione interposita, quod secus de ignoto et absente sensisset, cum gratia recessisse". We can no longer retrieve with certainty, whether they indeed met in Palestine, as Ferguson believes, but it is indeed very probable. This author and de Plinval share the opinion that Celestius only met Heros. The question is what they mean by a "meeting". Zosimus' letter mentions the fact that Celestius also knew Lazarus, be it *in sane transitu*. Probably, it will not have been an elaborate conversation, but Ferguson is exaggerating when he writes that Lazarus is not mentioned at all. See J. FERGUSON, *Pelagius*, p. 101-102; G. DE PLINVAL, *Pélage*, p. 313.

⁹¹ See PL 48,498-505. For the arguments of Garnier, see PL 48,497-498. De Veer doubts the authenticity, but gives no arguments. See A. DE VEER, *La crise pélagienne* II, p. 692. It can no longer be retraced whether the reconstruction is correct.

⁹² For the letter, see PL 48,610-611; for the *Libellus fidei*, see PL 48,488-491.

because Celestius' confession of faith is almost identically to the one of Pelagius, with a few exceptions (use of words, etc.)⁹³. We do find a personal addition in the third part of Celestius' libellus, in which he explicitly takes a stand concerning infant baptism⁹⁴. It serves to obtain access to the Kingdom of Heaven. On the other hand, he rejects the *tradux peccati*: it would cast a slur on the Creator to say something like that! Celestius concludes his letter by saying that he is prepared to correct himself if Zosimus thinks this necessary⁹⁵. Zosimus wants to examine Celestius' request seriously and he holds a public hearing in the Basilica of St Clemens⁹⁶. Celestius is found orthodox⁹⁷. In September 417, the Pope informs the African bishops of the trial in Rome⁹⁸. According to Rome, Celestius is innocent. Everyone who still wants to press charges against him, has to come to Rome within two months⁹⁹. On September

⁹³ The strong similarity between the two *libelli* suggests a contact between both of them, but no message of this has been preserved.

⁹⁴ AUGUSTINE, *De peccato originali* V,5-VI,6, CSEL 42,169-170: "infantes autem debere baptizari in remissionem peccatorum secundum regulam universalis ecclesiae et secundum evangelii sententiam confitemur, quia dominus statuit regnum caelorum nonnisi baptizatis posse conferri, quod quia vires naturae non habent, conferri necessarium est per gratiae libertatem". "in remissionem autem peccatorum baptizandos infantes non idcirco diximus, ut peccatum ex traduce firmare videamur. Quod longe a catholico sensu alienum est, quia peccatum non cum homine nascitur, quod postmodum exercetur ab homine, quia non naturae delictum, sed voluntatis esse monstratur. Et illud ergo confiteri congruum, ne diversa baptismatis genera facere videamur, et hoc praemunire necessarium est, ne per mysterii occasionem ad creatoris iniuriam malum antequam fiat ab homine tradi dicatur homini per naturam".

⁹⁵ AUGUSTINE, *De peccato originali* XXIII,26, CSEL 42,185: "si quae vero praeter fidem quaestiones natae sunt, de quibus esset inter plerosque contentio, non ego quasi auctor alicuius dogmatis definita hoc auctoritate statui, sed ea, quae de prophetarum et apostolorum fonte suscepi, vestri apostolatus offerimus probanda (esse) iudicio, ut, si forte ut hominibus quispiam ignorantiae error obrepsit, vestra sententia corrigatur".

⁹⁶ ZOSIMUS, *Epistula* 2 (Coll. Avell. 45,2), CSEL 35/1,99. The acts of these proceedings have not been preserved. A reconstruction is fairly possible on the basis of M. MERCATOR, *Commonitorium* I, ACO I, V, I, p. 66; AUGUSTINE, *De peccato originali* V,5-VII,8, CSEL 42,169-171; ID., *Contra duas epistulas pelagianorum* II, III,5-IV,6, CSEL 60,463-465; PAULINUS, *Libellus ad Zosimum* (Coll. Avell. 47), CSEL 35/1,108-109.

⁹⁷ ZOSIMUS, *Epistula* 2 (Coll. Avell. 45,8), CSEL 35/1,101: "unde in praesenti causa nihil praecox immaturumque censuimus".

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* (Coll. Avell. 45), CSEL 35/1,99-103.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* (Coll. Avell. 45,8), CSEL 35/1,102: "Quare intra secundum mensem aut veniant, qui praesentem redarguant aliter sentire quam libellis et professione contexit, aut nihil post haec aperta et manifesta, quam protulit, dubii sanctitas vestra resedisce cognoscat". Augustine interprets this request as follows: "Sed interposito duorum mensium tempore, donec rescriberetur ex Africa, resipiscendi ei locus sub quadam medicinali sententiae lenitate concessus est..."; AUGUSTINE, *De peccato originali* VII,8, CSEL

21st 417, the Pope also discharges Pelagius¹⁰⁰. Obviously, the libelli of Pelagius and Celestius sufficiently proved their orthodoxy¹⁰¹. Celestius and Pelagius were rehabilitated¹⁰². In Africa, they were not happy at all with this sudden turn in the Pelagian controversy. In the beginning of November 417, the African bishops write a letter in which they urgently request the Pope to leave everything as it was under Pope Innocent¹⁰³. In the same period, Paulinus also answers Zosimus' request to come to Rome¹⁰⁴. In *Epistula* 12, Zosimus refers to a *volumen* that he received later¹⁰⁵. This originated with the synod of Carthage in the autumn of 417, where the Pelagian controversy was examined for a second time¹⁰⁶. On March 21st, Zosimus reacts with a more gentle letter¹⁰⁷. In this letter, the Pope emphasizes the primacy of Rome and proposes to leave everything "as it was"¹⁰⁸.

42,171. Modern authors believe that Celestius was considered orthodox by Rome, although his rehabilitation was postponed for two months. Wermelinger draws the attention to the fact that Augustine distorts a historical fact: it is very clear in Zosimus' text, that those two months relate to the Africans, not to Celestius' chance to be converted. Hedde-Amann, however, stick to Augustine's version. See for instance M. WOJNOWYTSCH, *Papsttum*, p. 252; C. MUNIER, *La crise pélagienne* II, p. 15.18; C. PIETRI, *Roma cristiana*, p. 1222; O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius*, p. 262; R. HEDDE, É. AMANN, *Pélagianisme*, c. 698.

¹⁰⁰ ZOSIMUS, *Epistula* 3 (Coll. Avell. 46), CSEL 35/1,103-108.

¹⁰¹ Moreover, Celestius had come to Rome himself and he had given a letter of recommendation by Praylus from Jerusalem together with his confession of faith; *Ibid.* (Coll. Avell. 46, 2), CSEL 35/1,103. Ferguson brings in another four interesting arguments to defend Zosimus' attitude. See J. FERGUSON, *Pelagius*, p. 104-106.

¹⁰² ZOSIMUS, *op. cit.* (Coll. Avell. 46, 15), CSEL 35/1,107: "sit nobis gaudium eos, quos falsi indices criminabantur, agnoscere a nostro corpore et catholica caritate numquam fecisse divulsos".

¹⁰³ We no longer have this letter, but Zosimus refers to it in a later letter. Zosimus, *Epistula* 12 (Coll. Avell. 50, 5-6), CSEL 35/1,116-117. This letter is dated on 21/3/418.

¹⁰⁴ PAULINUS, *Libellus ad Zosimum* (Coll. Avell. 47), CSEL 35/1,108-111.

¹⁰⁵ ZOSIMUS, *Epistula* 3 (Coll. Avell. 50, 5), CSEL 35/1,116.

¹⁰⁶ In *Epistula* 215, Augustine talks of a *Concilium Africanum*. Cf. AUGUSTINE, *Epistula* 215,2, CSEL 57,389-390. This volumen has also disappeared, but it can be fairly well reconstructed on the basis of secondary sources. It is said to have consisted of the acts of the trial against Celestius and Pelagius and of the antipelagian libellus from Augustine's *Epistula* 186, 32-33.

¹⁰⁷ ZOSIMUS, *Epistula* 12 (Coll. Avell. 50), CSEL 35/1,115-117.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* (Coll. Avell. 50,3), CSEL 35/1,115-117. The bishop repeats that he has thoroughly examined Celestius' case. Apparently, the Africans reproached him that he had been acting carelessly. He pronounces his decision: "idcirco noverit vestra fraternitas nihil nos, postquam illa vobis scripsimus vel litteras vestras accepimus, immutasse sed in eodem cuncta reliquisse statu, in quo dudum fuerant, cum hoc nostris litteris vestrae indicavimus sanctitati, ut illa, quae a vobis ad nos missa erat, obtestatio servaretur". Note that

In *Contra duas epistulas pelagianorum* II,III,5, Augustine describes how Pelagius and Celestius have deceived the Roman clergy and how Africa reacted to this. The African bishops demand that Celestius publicly denounce his libellus. Thereupon, Pope Zosimus is said to have invited Celestius again¹⁰⁹. The latter had, however, fled already, as we learn from Mercator¹¹⁰.

3. The conviction of Pelagianism in 418

The year 418 was a hard year for the Pelagians: within a few months time, they had to deal with as many as three condemnations. First of all, a rescript of the Emperor Honorius, written in Ravenna, was made public in Rome on April 30th 418. It was addressed to Palladius, the

the *dudum* can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, it can mean that everything should remain as it was under Innocent, as, according to Wermelinger, Caspar interprets it. But the context can also allow of another explanation: Zosimus sticks to his own decision and in that way he thinks to answer the request of the Africans. Wermelinger believes that Zosimus did not regard his own decision as a break with the opinion of Innocent. See O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius*, p. 164, footnote 144. The word *dudum* can also mean 'recently' and then he means to leave everything as it was settled in the first letter. Whether Zosimus backs down in this letter is not clear to us. Together with Wermelinger, we do not think he did. In a recent article, however, Wermelinger claims that the Pope does carefully come round in his letter of 21/3/418. But his argumentation does not convince us. See ID., *Staatliche und kirchliche Zwangmassnahmen in der Endphase des pelagianischen Streites*, in Agostino d'Ippona: '*Quaestiones disputatae*', Palermo, 1989, 75-100, p. 80-81. Other commentators do think that the Pope clearly came round in his letter. In our opinion, this option is certainly reasonable. A difficulty in the interpretation is: "ut illa, quae a vobis ad nos missa erat, obtestatio servaretur"; ZOSIMUS, *Epistula* 12 (Coll. Avell. 50,6), CSEL 35/1,117. The urgent request of the Africans was certainly not meant to resign themselves to Zosimus' decision. On the contrary, for them Innocent's judgement still remained valid, as it is so clearly put in Paulinus' letter; PAULINUS, *Libellus ad Zosimum* (Coll. Avell. 47,3), CSEL 35/1,108. Most authors conclude from this that Zosimus gave in. See for instance F. NUVOLONE, *Celestius*, c. 2892; M. WOJOWYTSCH, *Papsttum*, p. 253; C. PIETRI, *Roma christiana*, p. 1229-1230. It is due to the vagueness of Zosimus' words that there are different possible interpretations. Everything depends on the point of view from which you look at this sentence, from Africa's or Zosimus' point of view. In any case, a definite judgement is impossible in our opinion.

¹⁰⁹ AUGUSTINE, *Contra duas epistulas pelagianorum* II,III,5, CSEL 60,465: "tunc ergo cum eius praesentia posceretur, ut certis ac dilucidis responsionibus vel astutia hominis vel correctio diluisceret et nulli ambigua remaneret, se subtraxit et negavit examini".

¹¹⁰ M. MERCATOR, *Commonitorium* I, ACO I, V, I, p. 66: "vocatus ad audientiam plenam ... non solum non adfuit, sed etiam ex memorata Romana urbe profugit".

prefect of the praetorium¹¹¹. In this rescript, Pelagius and Celestius are said to be responsible for a new objectionable doctrine¹¹², against which action had to be taken quickly and effectively¹¹³. Palladius makes this decision of the Emperor public in an edict¹¹⁴.

¹¹¹ PL 48,379-386. Also in PL 45,1726-1727; PL 56,490-492. For the African bishops had sent the Acts of their last synod not only to Rome, but also to the imperial court in Ravenna.

¹¹² The Pelagian doctrine is summarised in two points: man is created mortal, death is no consequence of sin; the sins of the first human beings did not pass on to future generations. See PL 48,381-383: "... lege nos statuisset cognoscat, ut pulsus ex Urbe primis capitibus dogmatis execrandi, Coelestio atque Pelagio, si qui hujus de caetero sacrilegii sectatores, quibuscumque locis potuerint reperiri, aut de pravitate damnata aliquem rursus proferre sermonem, a quocumque correpti, ad competentem judicem pertrahantur... Hos ergo repertos ubicumque de hoc tam infando scelere conferentes, a quibuscumque jubemus corripere, deductosque ad audientiam publicam promiscue ab omnibus accusari, ita ut probationem convicti criminis stylus publicus insequatur, ipsis inexorati exsilii deportatione damnatis. Decet enim originem vitii an conventu publico sequestrari, nec in communi eos celebritate consistere, qui non solum facto nefario detestandi, verum etiam exemplo venenati spiritus sunt cavendi".

¹¹³ In some modern works, Emperor Honorius is blamed for having convicted the Pelagians without Zosimus asking him to do so. Such a thing was not customary. However, his authority to interfere with affairs of the church was not questioned. The consulted authors give different answers with regard to the reason of his interference. We cannot give our opinion about the precise motive of Honorius' act, since there are probably different elements which played an important role. Therefore it is interesting to put the different elements from contemporary literature together. According to Pietri, Honorius was not really a 'fan' of Zosimus, because of the difficulties caused by his performance in Gaul. It is said that political motives, such as the loyalty of Africa, were an important factor in the Emperor's decision to answer Africa's call. Wermelinger believes that Ravenna acted under pressure from the African bishops. Apart from the danger of losing worshippers, the concern for the public order and unity in the church was certainly another consequence of the Pelagian heresy (de Plinval and Ferguson). Brown tackles the matter from a different angle, namely from that of the aristocracy. From the beginning, Pelagius was very successful in aristocratic circles and he created small groups that wanted to form an elite. This caused a split in the aristocracy. The 'collapse' of Rome in 410 changed this situation, with a new tendency towards unity and solidarity. In 417-418 this early striving was threatened by the discussion between advocates and opponents of Pelagius. Among other things, Honorius is said to have acted for that reason. We may say that this concern for unity within the aristocracy was a part of the concern for unity within the Church and the State. See C. PIETRI, *Roma christiana*, p. 934-937; 1230-1234; O. WERMELINGER, *Staatliche und kirchliche Zwangsmassnahmen in der Endphase des pelagianischen Streites*, p. 82; G. DE PLINVAL, *Pelage*, p. 323-324; J. FERGUSON, *Pelagius*, p. 110-111; P. BROWN, *Religion and Society*, p. 189-191.

¹¹⁴ PL 48,392-394; PL 45,1728; PL 56,492-493. "Adversus Pelagium atque Coelestium catholici dogmatis fidem nefandis tractatibus destruentes, sententia principalis invaluit, ut venerabili urbe summoti bonorum concilio mulctarentur. Hoc igitur omnes admoneri oportet edicto, ne quis sinistram persuasionis erroribus credulum praestet sensum: etsi

On May 1st, 205 bishops met at a council in Carthage¹¹⁵. The Pelagian doctrine is condemned in 9 canons¹¹⁶.

In the first canon the first thesis of 411 is attacked¹¹⁷.

The second canon criticizes theses 2 to 4 from Paulinus' libellus with the charges.

The third canon discusses the destiny of children who die without being baptized. To say that they do enter the Kingdom of Heaven, is considered wrong.

In canons 4 to 6 grace is highlighted. Those who deny its necessity in all aspects of Christian life, are condemned.

The last three canons run counter to the last thesis of 411. Even saints are sinful people.

Hereby, the council of Carthage condemns the Pelagian doctrine for

sit ille plebeius ac clericus, qui in caliginis hujus obscena reciderit, a quocumque tractus ad iudicem, sine accusatricis discretione personae, facultatum publicatione nudatus, irrevocabile patietur exsilium".

¹¹⁵ "Cum Aurelius episcopus simul cum Donatiano Teleptensi primae sedis episcopo provinciae Bizacenae et aliis ducentis tribus coepiscopis suis, ...". See C. MUNIER, *Concilia Africae*, p. 69. We follow this text-edition. According to Prosper of Aquitania, 214 bishops took part in the council. See PROSPER OF AQUITAINE, *Contra Collatorem* 5, 3, PL 51,227; ID., *Chronicon* (a. 418), PL 51,592. Some authors follow Prosper, such as C. PIETRI, *Roma christiana*, p. 1234; R. HEDDE, É. AMANN, *Pélagianisme*, c. 699; G. DE PLINVAL, *Pélage*, p. 324; P. PHAN, *Grace and the Human Condition*, p. 255. Wermelinger chooses for the tradition of Quesnel which mentions "205" bishops. He believes that Prosper's account of 214 bishops comes from a letter written by the council to Zosimus. Thus we can conclude that there were more bishops who signed the letter than there were present at the council. The number 225, given by Photius, is said to be a writing error. This hypothesis seems completely unfounded to us. See O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius*, p. 150. Other authors are less precise: there would have been more than 200 bishops. See M. WOJNOWYTSCH, *Papsttum*, p. 253; J. FERGUSON, *Pelagius*, p. 111 (he gives the numbers 214, 225 and 203, but he chooses for 214).

¹¹⁶ For this number, we refer to O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius*, p. 166-167. He argues that canon 3 is also authentic, although it is not present in Gallic mss.. Other authors also accept that the council issued 9 canons. However, the recent work of Phan follows, without motivation, the Gallic mss., of which most give 8 canons. He calls upon C. Munier, but he does not quote him correctly. Munier does mention the 3rd canon in the Gallic mss., although between brackets. See P. PHAN, *op. cit.*, p. 255; C. MUNIER, *Concilia Africae*, p. 74-77.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 69. "Placuit omnibus in sancto synodo Carthaginensis ecclesiae constitutis ut quicumque dixerit Adam hominem mortalem factum ita ut sive peccaret, sive non peccaret, moriretur in corpore, hoc est de corpore exiret non peccati merito sed necessitate naturae, anathema sit". For the text of the following canons, see *Ibid.*, p. 69-73.

a second time and now it is considered permanent¹¹⁸. However, it does attract attention that Celestius and Pelagius are not mentioned, neither in the canons, nor in the justification that is given with most of the canons¹¹⁹.

In June/July 418¹²⁰, Zosimus makes his *Tractoria* public. Here, the Pope definitely makes a stand against Pelagius and Celestius. But except for some fragments, the text has disappeared completely. According to Mercator, it was a voluminous letter¹²¹. It is said to consist of a main part, a libellus for condemnation and an appendix with some documents for argumentation¹²². According to this author, Pope Zosimus clearly condemned the Pelagians¹²³. Only some fragments of this letter have

¹¹⁸ According to Wermelinger, Celestius' views are explicitly aimed at in canon 1 and 2, while his doctrine is implicitly present in the other canons, with the exception of canon 3. See O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius*, p. 165-196. De Plinval points out that the 9 canons are first of all written to refute concrete digressions of Celestius and Pelagius. Therefore he rightly calls the council of 418 the most systematic refutation of Pelagianism in history. Later on, the canons were said to belong to the speculative theology. Thereby it is important to keep the concrete "Sitz im Leben" of religious sayings in mind. See DE PLINVAL, *Pélage*, p. 326.

¹¹⁹ We already quoted Augustine and Mercator, where they mention Celestius' flight when Zosimus invites him a second time to justify himself. We can no longer retrieve when Celestius exactly fled from Rome. Most authors believe that it happened (shortly) after Honorius' rescript. See AUGUSTINE, *Contra duas epistulas pelagianorum* II,III,5, CSEL 60,465; M. MERCATOR, *Commonitorium* I, ACO I, V, I, p. 66; M. LAMBERIGTS, *Julianus van Aeclanum. Een kritische biografie*, dissertation in theology, Leuven, 1984, p. 114-115 (he refers to M. MERCATOR, *Commonitorium* I, ACO I, V, I, p. 66); G. BARDY, *Celestius*, c. 106; C. PIETRI, *Roma christiana*, p. 1236; J. FERGUSON, *Pelagius*, p. 112; C. MUNIER, *La crise pélagienne*, II, p. 23.

¹²⁰ O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius*, p. 209.

¹²¹ M. MERCATOR, *Commonitorium* I, ACO I, V, I, p. 66-68: "Ob hoc a beatae memoriae praedicto Zosimo episcopo scriptis amplissimis vel longissimis perdamnat est. In quibus et ipsa capitula de quibus accusatus fuerat, continenter et omnis causa tam de Caelestio supra scripto quam de Pelagio magistro eius praviore videtur esse narrata" (p. 66-67).

¹²² O. WERMELINGER, *Das Pelagiusdossier in der Tractoria des Zosimus*, in FZPT 26 (1979) 336-368, p. 337. Also see AUGUSTINE, *De peccato originali* XI,24, CSEL 42,183. Wermelinger believes that Mercator's information mainly consists of fragments from the appendix. Among others, the six charges of 411, Pelagius' explanation about Rom. 5, 12, an unknown work by Pelagius and his letter to the widow Livanina. See O. WERMELINGER, *op. cit.*, p. 337-354. According to this author, it can no longer be retrieved whether this appendix also contained the acts of 411 and 415 (Diospolis) and the correspondence between the Africans and Innocent.

¹²³ M. MERCATOR, *Commonitorium* I, ACO I, V, I, p. 68: "Quae omnia supra scripta capitula, ut iam superius dictum est, continet illa beatae memoriae episcopi Zosimi epistula, quae tractoria dicitur, qua Caelestius Pelagiusque damnati sunt, quae ad Constantinopolim et per totum orbem missa, subscriptionibus sanctorum patrum est roborata".

been preserved¹²⁴. As far as we can check, Zosimus nowhere refers to the council of May 1st nor to the rescript of Honorius. He wants to condemn Pelagius and Celestius on his own initiative¹²⁵.

¹²⁴ In *Epistula* 190 Augustine quotes from Zosimus' *Tractoria* to prove that Rome also accepts the remission of sins through christening; AUGUSTINE, *Epistula* 190,23, CSEL 57,159: "'Fidelis dominus in verbis suis' eiusque baptismus re ac verbis, id est opere, confessione et remissione vera peccatorum in omni sexu, aetate, condicione generis humani eandem plenitudinem tenet. Nullus enim nisi qui peccati servus est, liber efficitur nec redemptus dici potest, nisi qui vere per peccatum fuerit ante captivus, sicut scriptum est: 'si vos filius liberaverit, vere liberi eritis'. Per ipsum enim renascimur spiritaliter, per ipsum crucifigimur mundo, ipsius morte mortis ab Adam omnibus nobis introductae atque transmissae universae animae illud propagatione contractum chirographum rumpitur, in quo nullus omnino natorum, antequam per baptismum liberetur, non tenetur obnoxius". A second fragment can be found in *Epistula* 21,IX,10, PL 50,534A of Pope Celestine: "Quod ergo tempus intervenit, quo eius non egeamus auxilio? In omnibus igitur actibus, causis, cogitationibus, motibus, adiutor et protector orandus est. Superbum est enim, ut quidquam sibi humana natura praesumat, clamante apostolo: 'non est nobis colluctatio adversum carnem et sanguinem, sed contra principes et potestates aeris huius, contra spiritalia nequitiæ in coelestibus'. Et sicut ipse iterum dicit: 'Infelix ergo homo, quis me liberabit de corpore mortis huius? Gratia dei per Christum Jesum Dominum nostrum'. Et iterum: 'Gratia dei sum ite quod sum, et gratia dei in me vacua non fuit, sed plus illis omnibus laboravi; non ego autem sed gratia dei mecum'". In *Contra Collatorem* another short quotation of the *Tractoria* is cited; PROSPER OF AQUITAINE, *Contra Collatorem* 5,3, PL 51,228. Also see CELESTINE, *op. cit.* VIII,9, PL 50,533A: "Nos autem instinctu dei (omnia enim bona ad auctorem suum referanda sunt unde nascuntur) ad fratrum et coepiscoporum nostrorum conscientias universas retulimus".

¹²⁵ Some authors further examine the theological and church-political aspects of the *Tractoria*. Pietri, for instance, rightly points out that we may not deduce a complete theology of the Pope from a few fragments of this work. However, the author does believe that Zosimus also adopts elements from African theology, but uses a different terminology. According to Pietri, the Pope's strategy was to admit his mistake without losing face. Although Africa did win, Rome did not lose its status. Wermelinger further examines the independence of Zosimus towards Africa: the canons of 418 are not mentioned and the Pope partly draws from Augustine's antipelagian libellus (*Epistula* 186). Nevertheless, this opinion seems difficult to defend. Literary independence is possible, but with respect to content, Zosimus follows the views of the African bishops, as the preserved fragments prove. Floëri believes that the Pope did not follow the African views in the fragment about baptism, but that he was rather faithful to Innocent. Pietri's remark can also be applied here. The terminology is different, but does the Pope mean something else? However, Zosimus goes further than his predecessor. The author also argues that the Pope only condemns the Pelagians under political pressure, not because he changed his opinion. On the basis of the foregoing, we think we can refute this. See C. PIETRI, *Roma christiana*, p. 1235-1244; O. WERMELINGER, *Das Pelagiusdossier*, p. 364-368; F. FLOËRI, *Le pape Zosime et la doctrine augustinienne du péché originel*, in *Augustinus Magister* 2, Paris, 1954, 755-761.

E. CELESTIUS' LAST APPEARANCE¹²⁶

After the three condemnations of 418, peace does not seem to return in Rome. In the autumn of 418, Constantius issues a rescript to the town prefect Volusianus, in which he insists on increasing control on the Pelagians¹²⁷. Celestius' name is mentioned once again¹²⁸. Thereupon, Volusianus publishes an edict¹²⁹, from which it can be concluded that Celestius had gone into hiding¹³⁰. On June 9th 419¹³¹, Honorius writes a letter to bishop Aurelius¹³², in which he resumes his previous condemnation of Celestius and Pelagius. However, Honorius especially takes aim at the bishops who do not want to condemn the Pelagians. He wants Aurelius to demand the bishops to condemn Pelagius and Celestius. Thereupon, Aurelius sends a letter to the bishops of Byzacena and Arguzitana in which he invites them to condemn the Pelagians by letter¹³³. On July 9th 425, Valentianus addresses a similar edict to Amacius, the prefect of Gaul, in which he calls Pelagian bishops to order on

¹²⁶ In modern literature, little attention is paid to this period of Celestius' life. Wermelinger says that Celestius again took a very active part in literature in the period after 417. Hereby, he refers to Augustine, who casually talks about 'libri Caelestii' in *Epistula* 10*, 1, CSEL 88,46. This, however, does not convince us. It is not clear, what Augustine exactly means. It is therefore unfounded to rely on this to attribute a new publication period to Celestius. See O. WERMELINGER, *Neuere Forschungskontroversen*, p. 205. The author also believes that Celestius is probably the author of the letter *Ad Oceanum*, the letter of comfort *Ad Turasium* and *De singularitate clericorum*. Nuvolone, to whom Wermelinger refers, does not give his opinion about the authorship of these works. See F. NUVOLONE, *Celestius*, c. 2894.

¹²⁷ PL 48,404-407. Also in PL 45,1750; PL 56,499-500.

¹²⁸ PL 48,405: "Coelestium quoque magis ac magis ex Urbe pelli mandamus".

¹²⁹ Modern authors have not reached a consensus about the exact date of this edict. Wermelinger and Nuvolone situate it towards the end of 418, while Bardy and de Plinval give 421 as the exact date. Morris thinks it was written after the rescript of 419. See O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius*, p. 203; F. NUVOLONE, *Celestius*, c. 2893; G. BARDY, *Celestius*, c. 106; G. DE PLINVAL, *Pélage*, p. 345; J. MORRIS, *Pelagian Literature*, p. 52-53.

¹³⁰ PL 48,408-409. Also see PL 45,1751; PL 56,500. "Hactenus Coelestium divinae fidei, et quietis publicae turbatores, iudiciis, amica reis secreta subdlexerunt. Jam leges et iam edicta persequuntur absentem: cui, quod primum est, aeternae urbis negatur habitatio, ut si vel in proximis fuerit diversatus, debitum non evadat exitium, pro merito temeritatis atque ausus sui".

¹³¹ According to O. WERMELINGER, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

¹³² PL 48,394-397. Also in PL 45,1731; PL 56,493-494; AUGUSTINE, *Epistula* 201, CSEL 57,296-299.

¹³³ PL 48,400-403; PL 45,1731-1732; PL 56,494-495. The regions mentioned form the southern provinces of the Roman Empire close to the Mediterranean.

pain of exile¹³⁴. According to a report of Prosper, Celestius had made a new application to Pope Celestine in 423/424 for a review of his trial¹³⁵. This attempt was, however, futile¹³⁶.

In 428-429, the Pelagians come to Constantinople with their new leader Julian of Aeclanum. They try to get some support from the new patriarch Nestorius (patriarch since April 10th) and also from the Emperor¹³⁷. We learn from Mercator that Julian and his followers were heard by Nestorius, although he did not share their doctrine¹³⁸. In the beginning of his *Commonitorium super nomine Caelestii*, Mercator tells us at great length how he handed this commonitorium over to the Church of Constantinople, to many devout people and to the Emperor Theodosius in 429. And with success! The Pelagians have to leave¹³⁹. This proves that Celestius also came to Constantinople. After Celestius' exile by Theodosius, Nestorius writes him a letter of consolation¹⁴⁰, and this again proves that Celestius had indeed come to Constantinople. This also proves

¹³⁴ PL 48,409-411. Morris believes that in the following rescripts, especially Celestius is aimed at. Wermelinger shares this opinion, although he does think that particularly Julian of Aeclanum and his followers offer firm resistance. According to this author, the new measures prove that Honorius' action in April 418 had little effect. See J. MORRIS, *Pelagian Literature*, p. 52-53; O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius*, p. 206.

¹³⁵ PROSPER OF AQUITAIN, *Contra Collatorem* 21,2, PL 51,271B: "Coelestium, quasi non discusso negotio audientiam postulantem, totius Italiae finibus jussit extrudi: adeo et praecessorum suorum statuta et decreta synodalia inviolabiliter servanda censebat, ut quod semel meruerat abscindi, nequaquam admitteret retractari".

¹³⁶ Modern authors do take this account of Prosper serious, although no other source material has been preserved. Wermelinger thinks it is possible that Celestius tried this during the usurpation battle of Johannes Tyrannus (423-425). This Johannes would have been more tolerant with regard to heresies. Nevertheless, it seems a bit strange in our opinion that Celestius makes an appeal to the Pope, and not to Tyrannus. See O. WERMELINGER, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

¹³⁷ See Nestorius' letter to Celestine, ACO I, II, p. 12; F. LOOFS, *Nestoriana*, Halle, 1905, p. 165-166.

¹³⁸ *Nestorii capitula et sermones a Mario Mercatore translati*, ACO I, V, I, p. 60: "Item eiusdem contra haeresim Pelagii seu Caelestii, contra quorum pravam et impiam definitionem quamvis recte sentiret et doceret, Iulianum tamen ex episcopo Eclanensi, cum participibus suis huius haeresis signiferum et antesignanum, olim ab apostolica sententia exauctoratum atque depositum, in amicitiam interim censuit suspiciendum".

¹³⁹ M. MERCATOR, *Commonitorium* I, ACO I, V, I, p. 65: "... per quod commonitorium cognito funestissimo errore imperiali praecepto tam Iulianus defensor et sequax eius cum ceteris sociis et participibus suis quam postea idem Caelestius de Constantinopolitana urbe detrusi, ...".

¹⁴⁰ "... spem enim absolutionis promittens, ipsum quoque Caelestium litteris suis, quarum exemplaria subdidimus, consolatus est"; ACO I, V, I, p. 60; PL 48,185.

that he had gained support from the patriarch¹⁴¹.

After his exile from Constantinople, Celestius is mentioned for the last time at the council of Ephesus in 431. According to Mercator, the Pelagians are condemned at this council¹⁴². In canons 1 and 4, Celestius is mentioned in one and the same breath with Nestorius¹⁴³. On July 22nd 431, the council writes a letter to Pope Celestine, in which he is informed

¹⁴¹ M. MERCATOR, *loc. cit.*, PL 48,181-184, 845-848; F. LOOFS, *Nestoriana*, p. 172-173. "Honorabili et religiosissimo presbytero Caelestio Nestorius in domimo salutem. Noli aegre ferre, venerabilis, perferens ab iis qui ea quae inferuntur, facere debent, et praesertim adserentibus veritatem et refugientibus pollutorum vel contaminatorum communionem, quia et sanctis qui ante nostram aetatem extiterunt, gratae fuerunt aerumnae. Et ipsae quidem temporales erant, veritas autem aeterna est. Sic Iohannes baptista de peccato arguens Herodem et quidem regem existentem, capite condemnatus est; sed non formidavit; Christum enim habebat caput, quod non posset abscidi. Sic Paulus, hoc modo quoque Petrus sunt interfecti. Et quid amplius dici opus est? Ita actum est per diversas temptationes semper pietate currente. Noli igitur a veritate deficiens eam proderere. Siquidem et epistulae missae concilii episcopis Occidentis et Alexandrino et multis rescriptae manifestam vobis nostram fecere sententiam, prudentibus scilicet eiusdem orthodoxae professionis. Forsitan enim utile aliquid ecclesiis rectae fidei proveniet, domino cooperante. Omnem fraternitatem salutamus". Together with modern authors, we think that Celestius no longer played the leading role during the last actions in Constantinople. Nevertheless, his name is not yet forgotten. Lamberigts explains that there are but few contacts between Pelagius' disciple and the bishops round Julian of Aecclanum. Celestius does, for instance, not come to Constantinople together with Julian and he is mentioned separately in the edict of Theodosius. In Nestorius' letter to Pope Celestius, only Julianus is mentioned. Finally, the letter of comfort, written by Nestorius after the exile of the Pelagians, is only directed to Celestius. According to Lamberigts, this letter shows that the patriarch is convinced of the sincerity of Pelagius' disciple. Nevertheless, there is no indication that Nestorius also shared Celestius' doctrine. See M. LAMBERIGTS, *Julianus van Aecclanum*, p. 173.181.184.

¹⁴² M. MERCATOR, *Commonitorium* I, ACO I, V, I, p. 65: "... in synodo quoque Ephesiensi ducentorum septuaginta quinque episcoporum sententia postmodum in praesenti damnati sunt".

¹⁴³ G. ALBERIGO, a.o. (ed.), *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta*, Bazel, 1962, p. 52. Canon 1 deals with metropolitans who share the opinion of Nestorius and Celestius: "Sive metropolitanus quis cuiuslibet regionis abscedens ab hoc sancto et universali conventu, adiectus est ad illud apostasiae concilium vel post haec si se illi commiserit vel si ea quae sunt Caelestii (post haec) sapuit sive sapuerit, contra suae regionis episcopus nihil poterit praevalere, omni ecclesiastica communione a praesenti iam hac synodo factus extorris atque privatus effectus; sed et ipsis suae regionis episcopis et affinibus undique metropolitanis, qui orthodoxe sentiunt, subiacebit, ut in totum et episcopatus gradu privetur". In canon 4 the same is said about priests who take over Nestorius' digression: "Si qui vero abscesserint clericorum et praesumpserint vel clam vel palam ea quae Caelestii sunt, sentire, et hos a sancta synodo esse depositos". *Ibid.*, p. 53.

about the condemnation of the Pelagians¹⁴⁴. Whether Celestius was present in Ephesus, remains unknown¹⁴⁵. After the council, he disappears for good.

F. CELESTIUS AND PELAGIUS

As a conclusion, we would like to take a closer look to the relation between Celestius and Pelagius. The sources abundantly use the image of disciple and master to point at the relation between Celestius and Pelagius¹⁴⁶. Celestius is said to have been apprenticed to Pelagius for a while, in order to spread these ideas of Pelagius afterwards with an *incredibilis loquacitas*¹⁴⁷. It is possible that they were in Sicily together, after which they went to North Africa. Here they each took a different route. Whether they still met each other during the years that followed cannot be known from the sources, but we suppose they did. From 415 onwards, a connection was made between the doctrine of Pelagius and that of Celestius. The church discussion in Jerusalem, the synod in Diospolis and especially the condemnations in the years 416-418 prove this. In our opinion, the relationship between Celestius and Pelagius, especially comes to the fore during the Pelagian controversy in Diospolis and in both their *Libellus fidei*. We also believe Pelagius distanced himself from his disciple

¹⁴⁴ PL 45,1760: "Porro autem perlectis in sancta synodo commentariis actorum in depositione impiorum Pelagianorum et Coelestianorum, Coelestii, Pelagii, Juliani, Persidii, Flori, Marcellini, Orontii, et eadem cum illis sentientium, quae a Pietate tua de ipsis decreta et constituta sunt, iudicavimus et nos ea solida firmaque permanere debere, et idem tecum omnes statuimus, eos pro depositis habentes".

¹⁴⁵ We did not pay much attention to the council of Ephesus, because in our opinion Celestius was only indirectly involved in it. His name is mentioned in two canons, but always together with Nestorius. Apparently, on the basis of their friendship it was thought that there was a correspondence between Celestius' doctrine and that of Nestorius, as can be seen in canon 1 and 4. However, Mercator clearly denies that Nestorius was a Pelagian. It is also very striking that the canons never explained what Nestorius' and Celestius' "doctrine" exactly was. Although this council condemns the Pelagians, Nestorius' Christology was always the central point. Together with Lamberigts and Hedde-Amann, we may conclude that the discussion about the Pelagian controversy was not recaptured in Ephesus, but the council had not forgotten about the Pelagian matter. "Pelagian" and "Celestian" were always used as terms of abuse, with which both sides could assault one another. See M. LAMBERIGTS, *Les évêques pélagiens déposés, Nestorius et Ephèse*, in *Augustiniana* 35 (1985), 264-280, p. 274-280; R. HEDDE, É. AMANN, *Pélagianisme*, c. 711-713.

¹⁴⁶ Augustine literally says: "Pelagio, qui magister eius perhiberetur"; *De gestis Pelagii* XXXV,62, CSEL 42,116.

¹⁴⁷ M. MERCATOR, *Commonitorium* II, ACO I, V, I, p. 6.

in Diospolis *ad satisfactionem sanctae synodi*. We can however not regard this as a split¹⁴⁸. A first indication of this is the fact that Pelagius does not mention in his *Chartula defensionis* that he has condemned some theses of Celestius. Moreover, there is a sharp similarity between their *Libellus fidei*. This proves that they both share the same opinions, although Celestius has included a couple of "self-made" articles in his confession of faith. However, we may not forget that we only know these *Libelli* by reconstruction.

For Augustine it is absolutely certain that Celestius and Pelagius support the same ideas. The *Chartula defensionis* that was written by Pelagius after the synod of Carthage, made it clear for the Church Father that Pelagius had tricked the judges of Diospolis and that in fact he did defend Celestius' theses¹⁴⁹. Augustine's assumption is confirmed when we read the *libelli* of Celestius and Pelagius¹⁵⁰. In his later works, the Church Father calls the followers of Pelagius and Celestius Pelagians as well as Celestians¹⁵¹. We also find this equal treatment in the work

¹⁴⁸ Also see G. DE PLINVAL, *La crise pélagienne* I, p. 632-633.

¹⁴⁹ AUGUSTINE, *De gestis Pelagii* XXXII,57-XXXIII,58, CSEL 42,111-114.

¹⁵⁰ ID., *De peccato originali* VI,6, CSEL 42,170: "Attendite itaque quid Caelestius apertissime dixerit, et ibi videbitis quid vobis Pelagius occultaverit". He then quotes the part about the christening from Celestius' *Libellus fidei* and concludes: "Hunc sensum suum vobis aperire Pelagius vel timuit vel erubuit, quem discipulus eius palam sine ullius obscuritatis ambagibus apud sedem apostolicam profiteri nec timuit nec erubuit"; *Ibid.* Also see ID., *De gratia Christi* XXXII,35-XXXIII,36, CSEL 42,152-153. A bit further, Augustine says it in a more concise way: "Proinde, si ostendero etiam ipsum nihil aliud sentire de parvulis, nisi quod sine ulla cuiusquam vitii contagione nascuntur, quid inter istum et Caelestium in hac quaestione distabit, nisi quod ille apertior, iste occultior fuit, ille pertinacior, iste mendacior, vel certe ille liberior, hic astutior?"; ID., *De peccato originali* XII,13, CSEL 42,175. Augustine then further explains how Pelagius, as well as Celestius, denies the existence of an original sin; *Ibid.*, XIII,14-XIV,15, CSEL 42,175-177.

¹⁵¹ In *De haeresibus*, he describes Pelagianism as follows: "Pelagianorum est haeresis hoc tempore omnium recentissima a Pelagio monacho exorta. Quem magistrum Caelestius sic secutus est, ut sectatores eorum Caelestiani etiam nuncupentur"; *De haeresibus* LXXXVIII,1, CCL 46,340. In *Contra Iulianum*, Augustine refutes Julianus, who accuses him of defining "Pelagian" and "Celestian" as follows: "Si quis aut liberum in hominibus arbitrium, aut Deum esse nascentium conditorem dixerit, Pelagianus et Caelestianus vocatur"; *Contra Iulianum* III,1,2, PL 44,702. Augustine then says who he does call like that: "sed qui libertatem in quam vocati sumus, non gratiae Dei tribuerit; et qui parvulorum liberatorem Christum negaverit; et qui cuiquam in hac vita justo aliquam in dominica oratione petitionem, non propter ipsum dixerit necessariam; ipse hujus erroris accipit nomen, quia errore communicat crimen"; PL 44,702-703.

*Praedestinatus*¹⁵².

In *De peccato originali* XII, 13, Augustine describes the characters of Pelagius and Celestius¹⁵³. Celestius is depicted as devout and determined, whereas Pelagius is said to be more shrewd and more diplomatic. Mercator has also depicted Celestius like this¹⁵⁴. We think we may subscribe to Augustine's view on Celestius' character, when we read the account of the synod of Carthage in 411 and Celestius' appearance with Pope Zosimus. The fact that, rightly or wrongly, the spread of Pelagian ideas on Sicily and many works are attributed to Celestius, points, in our opinion, to these traits just as Augustine and Mercator describe them. Celestius' actions will probably have given reason for such assumptions. However, we wonder whether Augustine does not exaggerate somewhat in the description of *De peccato originali* XII, 13. As far as we can see, the Church Father never met Celestius. And he is always very careful to attribute documents to Celestius¹⁵⁵. But in the description of his character, the Church Father expresses an opinion about his character, and this seems a bit peculiar to us¹⁵⁶.

¹⁵² [PRAEDESTINATUS], *Haeresis* I,88, PL 53,618: "Pelagiani, seu Coelestiani, catholicae plebi permixtae sunt, quia ecclesiam aliam non habent". Some modern authors in our opinion rightly draw attention to the fact that the Pelagian movement was not so structured and that it certainly may not be attributed only to Celestius and Pelagius. For instance E. TESELLE, *Augustine the Theologian*, p. 281; B. REES, *Pelagius. A Reluctant Heretic*, Suffolk, 1988, p. 89; P. BROWN, *Religion and Society*, p. 208. Other authors rather present it as if Pelagius and his disciples have the whole movement in their power. For instance J. FERGUSON, *Pelagius*, p. 48-49.70; G. DE PLINVAL, *Pélage*, p. 254-255; ID., *La crise pélagienne* I, p. 632-633; G. BARDY, *Celestius*, c. 107. This last author believes that it is clear from Nestorius' letter that Celestius is still very busy spreading Pelagian ideas in Constantinople. The letter, however, cannot prove this. Moreover, from this moment onwards, we do not hear anything anymore from Pelagius' disciple, so that Bardy's remark about Celestius having fought until death, is clearly exaggerated.

¹⁵³ See above.

¹⁵⁴ M. MERCATOR, *Commonitorium* II, ACO I, V, I, p. 6: "Hic a Pelagio praedicto institutus, sensum istum impiissimum meracius inbibit ac multos incredibili loquacitate amentiae huius suae participes et complices fecit".

¹⁵⁵ We already drew attention to the fact that Augustine does not give his opinion on the authorship of *Definitiones* and that he seems to doubt Celestius' work that was quoted in Diospolis.

¹⁵⁶ Some modern authors want to pin all responsibility on Celestius. Celestius wrote for instance many works, according to Ferguson, and he quickly became "magister et totius ductor exercitus"; JEROME, *Epistula* 133,5, CSEL 56,249. Moreover, he was very eloquent and he was a competent dialectic, who used these talents to propagate Pelagian ideas. According to the author, Pelagianism was rather quickly systematized into an organised and coherent intellectual religion. This has been the work of Celestius. See J. FERGUSON, *Pelagius*, p. 48-49.70; ID., *In Defence of Pelagius*, p. 116. De Plinval also

Although, according to Augustine, Celestius and Pelagius spread the same ideas, we do think that each of these Pelagians emphasized their own interests. In our opinion, Celestius put more stress on the reason of infant baptism, the role of Adam and on the denial of the original sin¹⁵⁷, while Pelagius put more stress on the tension between grace and free will¹⁵⁸.

CONCLUSION

What do we actually know now about Celestius? We will summarize the results of our study in broad lines. Celestius was probably born around 380 to a noble family. His nationality is unknown. He studied law. We dare not acknowledge, whether Pelagius' disciple was a eunuch. He did write a couple of letters to his parents in his youth. Celestius probably met Pelagius in Rome. In this town he also met the priest Rufinus.

From Rome, Celestius and Pelagius went to North Africa. Whether they stopped in Sicily during this journey, is not very clear. Then Celestius arrived in Carthage and tried to become a priest. In this town he was

writes very negatively about Pelagius' disciple. Celestius is presented as the scapegoat of the whole Pelagian movement. The author gives the impression that he wants to praise Pelagius at the expense of Celestius. See G. DE PLINVAL, *Pélage*, p. 254-255; ID., *La crise pélagienne* I, p. 10-11. We have some difficulties with the opinions of Ferguson and De Plinval. First of all, there is in our opinion no absolute certainty that Jerome had Celestius in mind in *Epistula* 133,5. In any case, his name is not mentioned. (The editor is also not sure whether Celestius is meant here or not. See CSEL 56,249, footnote with v. 13). Both authors also regard Celestius as the scapegoat of the whole Pelagian controversy. Were they guided by Mercator's biased description? Augustine does talk about Celestius in a more thoughtful way. According to the Church Father, Pelagius as well as Celestius are responsible for the heretical movement. The Church Father is also careful in attributing works to Celestius. In our opinion, de Plinval and Ferguson do Augustine wrong by praising Pelagius at the expense of Celestius. Hereby we do not want to minimize Celestius' contribution to the spread of Pelagian ideas, but we can hardly agree with the extreme opinions of Ferguson and particularly of de Plinval. These authors seem to make fun of an important source as Augustine. Moreover, we have the impression that Ferguson took de Plinval as his guide.

¹⁵⁷ This conclusion is based on the 6 theses of 411 and on the *Libellus fidei* of Celestius. It is not important here whether Celestius is responsible for the theses of 411 himself or whether he is not; maybe he did preach them. Modern authors also emphasize the personal contribution of Celestius to Pelagianism, namely the denial of the original sin. As for instance F. KLASSEN, *Die innere Entwicklung des Pelagianismus*, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1882, p. 13; E. TESELLE, *Rufinus the Syrian*, p. 76.

¹⁵⁸ We only rely on the *libellus* containing the charges from Diospolis and on his *Libellus fidei*, because it is not a part of this study to present Pelagius' opinion entirely. Therefore our presentation is probably not balanced enough.

charged before the bishop Aurelius by the deacon Paulinus of Milan. At the synod of 411, Celestius had to justify himself for six theses that were attributed to him by Paulinus. Where Paulinus found these accusations, is not clear to us. In any case, we think that Celestius' responsibility for these theses may not be exaggerated. The synod of Carthage rejected Celestius. In our opinion, this was later seen as a condemnation. It is possible that Celestius wrote a *Libellus brevissimus* as a result of this trial.

After his rejection, Celestius left Carthage. Whether he stayed in Sicily in 414, is not sure. It is also not certain whether Pelagius' disciple was in Rhodes. It is, however, certain that he was ordained before the summer of 416 in Ephesus. Celestius also turned up in Constantinople, whence he was banished by bishop Atticus.

We doubt whether the work *Definitiones* is written by Celestius. Although Augustine is convinced that the style and contents of the work correspond with another work that was certainly written by Celestius, he hesitates to attribute the *Definitiones* to Celestius.

In 415, Pelagius had to justify himself during the synod of Diospolis for a whole series of theses, among which were the theses of 411 and a number of charges from a work of Celestius. Pelagius distanced himself from all the theses that were not taught by him and condemned them. Thereupon the synod cleared him. We may not regard Pelagius' attitude as a split with his disciple Celestius. Moreover, we pointed out that it is not yet certain that the work from which Diospolis draw, was indeed written by Celestius. In our opinion, Augustine shows some hesitation. That would put Pelagius' attitude towards the charges from this work in another light: maybe he rightly doubted the authorship of these theses! But we only put this forward as a hypothesis.

As a reaction to the acquittal of Pelagius in Diospolis, Celestius and his master were condemned in 416 in Africa by the councils of Carthage and Milevis. Then Pope Innocent was asked to support the position of the Africans, whatever happened: in 417, the Pope condemned Pelagius, Celestius and their followers. Thereupon, Celestius went to Rome to offer Pope Zosimus, the successor of Pope Innocent, a *Libellus fidei*. Pelagius also sent a *Libellus fidei*. Then Zosimus called a synod which declared Celestius orthodox. Pelagius was also declared innocent. Africa was informed about this decision, but reacted immediately: the Pelagians remained condemned. Again the Pope wrote a letter to the Africans. It is, however, not clear whether he surrendered.

In 418, the Pelagians incurred some heavy blows. First of all, there was the condemnation by the Emperor Honorius on April 30th. On May 1st, the council of Carthage issued 9 canons against the Pelagians.

Celestius probably fled from Rome at this moment. In the summer of 418, Zosimus published his *Tractoria*, in which he definitely condemned the Pelagians. After the condemnations of 418, Celestius again appeared in Rome in 423/424, where he fruitlessly tried to receive a revision of his trial. Thereupon, he was also noticed in Constantinople in 429, but without playing an important role in the Pelagian movement. The Emperor Theodosius banished him and the patriarch Nestorius wrote him a letter of consolation. Then Celestius disappeared. His name was mentioned for the last time at the council of Ephesus.

As a conclusion, we paid attention to the relation between Celestius and Pelagius. This proved that the Pelagian movement is the work of many people and that we may not minimize Pelagius' contribution at the expense of Celestius. The latter used his talents to support and spread the Pelagian doctrine. But in our opinion, it is a bit exaggerated if one wants to attribute the final responsibility of the whole Pelagian movement to him.

Therefore we think we may conclude that thanks to Celestius' talents and diligence, the responsibility for numerous facts and many documents, often anonymous, are attributed to him in the "Wirkungsgeschichte". Our study wanted to prove that this is often wrongly done. In a certain sense Celestius remains a "stranger".

Hasselt

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