

PELAGIUS AS THE BOGEYMAN OF CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Romans 9:18, "[God] has mercy upon whomever he wills, and he hardens the heart of whomever he wills", is a piece of Scripture, referring to the hardening of Pharaoh's heart in Ex.10:1, that has caused generations of Christians to ask whether if God predestines someone to be evil, that person can still be held responsible. In his *Exposition of some propositions from the Epistle to the Romans*, Augustine solves the problem as follows: "[Pharaoh] could not be blamed for the fact that he did not obey at that time, since with a hardened heart he could not obey, but he had become liable to punishment because his heart had been hardened by his earlier unbelief". Jansenius, the staunch defender of strict Augustinianism against scholastics and Jesuits, describes how this quote is used against Augustine, "because he (Pharaoh) was hardened and deprived of sufficient grace".¹

To understand this, we must take a look at the medieval dissecting table on which the relationship between God and human beings was cut into neatly arranged pieces. Modern theologians need solid guides like F. Diekamp to obtain a map of this labyrinth.² Metaphysics and psychology were combined and applied to the analysis of inner human changes that occur in the context of conversion and sanctification. This led to a far reaching differentiation of the operations of grace that aimed to specify the biblical and patristic language about humanity's new creation. The road to salvation was thought of as winding along a chain of operations of grace, interacting with human actions.³

One important distinction here was that between actual grace and habitual grace. The former is incidental, the latter is permanent. In the Pelagian controversy, Augustine was mainly preoccupied with what was later to be called actual grace. Therefore his opinions about actual grace chiefly interest the historian of his heritage in Jansenism. Indeed Jansenius has nothing much to say on the subject of habitual grace.⁴ One aspect of actual grace is the pair sufficient grace and

¹ C. JANSENIUS, *Augustinus*, Rothomagi 1643, III p.148.

² F. DIEKAMP, *Katholische Dogmatik nach den Grundsätzen des heiligen Thomas II*, Münster 1939, p.400-418.

³ TRE 13, „Gnade IV“, p.486.

⁴ N. ABERCROMBIE, *The Origins of Jansenism*, Oxford 1936, p.31.

efficacious grace. The former grants to a human being the capacity of being saved, the latter makes that capacity effective.

Now in his chapter on Pharaoh's hardened heart, Jansenius begins by showing that certain people who are seeking to undermine Augustine's authority use the quote from his *Exposition of some propositions from the Epistle to the Romans* to demonstrate a supposed lack of logic on the part of the great church father: he seems to argue, they say, that the sins of those who are hardened, that is the sins of those who are deprived of sufficient grace, are not the kind of sins that can be considered as causing guilt. This could only be the case, they say, if these people lack the power to avoid these sins and consequently are not free. But it is absurd that people who are hardened and blinded should be unfree and not guilty in the evil acts they commit, because they cannot be blamed. It is absurd to think that they should be deprived of sufficient grace. So one should not follow Augustine here, they conclude.

One person who interpreted and dismissed Augustine in this way, Jansenius says, was the Jesuit Gabriel Vázquez.⁵ Other people like Bellarminus were not so far off the mark and in any case they were concerned that Augustine should not seem to be teaching something absurd. But the words of this passage mean something else than they appear to say, Jansenius says. First of all, the hardened do indeed have a complete lack of sufficient grace. But that does not mean that their evil deeds are not sins and that they cannot be held responsible. In Augustine's teaching it is unheard of, says Jansenius, that anyone should act badly without sinning. In another work, *On the Profit of Believing*, Augustine clearly states this: "Every deed that is not done right, is a sin".⁶ People who are hardened because of their infidelity and impiety, thereby begin to earn punishment and continue to act badly by that punishment. In fact in his *Exposition of some propositions from the Epistle to the Romans*, quoted in his *Revisions*⁷, Augustine already emphasised God's role in the process: those who are chosen by God receive the gift of faith and those who are damned by God develop infidelity and impiety. But this is Augustine's earlier position: Impiety earns punishment through its unbelief, and hardening completes this by acting badly. Infidelity earns a first

⁵ Cf. E. ISERLOH, J. GLAZIK, H. JEDIN, *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte* IV, Freiburg 1985, p. 567.

⁶ nam omne factum, si recte factum non est peccatum est, CSEL 25,1, ch. 12, par. 27, p. 35, line 1.

⁷ I, 22,3, CSEL 36, p.109, line 17f.

punishment and hardening another. In several books Augustine stressed that the hardened and blinded truly earned punishment, Jansenius says.

In his *On Nature and Grace*, to name just one other work, Augustine gives an example that is comparable to that of Pharaoh. Jansenius says: "After this book (= *On the Profit of Believing*), Augustine frequently stated explicitly that the hardened and the blinded do really and properly sin. For in the book *On Nature and Grace*, when he had said that the person who is blind because the light of truth has deserted him, 'falls more than is necessary',⁸ which is nothing else than what he had said about Pharaoh, 'that he could not obey'⁹, he immediately adds, 'and yet by this very punishment – that is, by their blindness of heart, which supervenes on the withdrawal of the light of wisdom – they fell into more grievous sins still'¹⁰. After several more quotations, Jansenius concludes: "Thus there should be no doubt at all that Augustine regarded those deeds to which persons who are deprived of God's grace are condemned, as a rightful punishment for their hardening and blindness, as genuine sins."

He who wants to understand this passage properly, Jansenius says, must be reminded of certain principles. The first, taught constantly by Augustine, is that Adam was created with the highest freedom of will and indifference towards good and evil. In that state he could remain good with the help of sufficient grace, without which he could do nothing. And this grace was available to him at a mere wink of his will. Since his will was not yet attacked by concupiscence, his "velle" implied his "posse". But after the Fall, we do not have that experience any more, Jansenius says. And he refers to his own first book on the state of the first man and of the angels (the first book of the *Augustinus*), for further explanation.

Jansenius' second point is that Augustine, as he admits himself in *On the Predestination of the Saints*, had been in error concerning the doctrine of grace.¹¹ This was the case when he wrote the disputed

⁸ plus necesse est cadat; the quotation is imprecise. The context reads: materiam peccati dicit esse vindictam, si ad hoc peccator infirmatus est, ut plura peccaret, nec cogitat praevindicatorum legis quam digne lux deserat veritatis; qua desertus utique caecus et **plus necesse est offendat et cadendo** vexetur vexatus que non surgat, ut ideo tantum audiat vocem legis, quo ammoneatur implorare gratiam salvatoris. Cap. 22, par. 24, CSEL 60, p. 249, line 11.

⁹ Cf. Augustine's *Exposition of some propositions from the Epistle to the Romans* par. 54, CSEL 84, p. 37, line 25.

¹⁰ Idem note 8, p. 249.

¹¹ Chapters 3 and 4 = 7-8.

passage in his *Exposition of some propositions from the Epistle to the Romans*: like the later Semi-Pelagians he thought that faith was not so much a gift of grace as a human achievement that needed the mere assistance of divine grace to take effect. These two points are indispensable for a correct interpretation of the passage. In the same work Augustine says: "Free will was in the first man in a perfect way, but before grace there is no free will in us not to sin, but only to want not to sin."¹² The will itself is inefficacious. Humans more or less have the "velle", but they need grace to attain to the "posse". So we have the freedom to want and to believe, but not to implement. Here the words of Romans 9:16 are relevant: "It does not depend on the one who wills or who runs, but on God who has mercy". Some people think that Paul professes the complete removal of free will here. That is not so, Augustine says: the will only needs the assistance of grace. The example of Pharaoh presents an adverse example of this. For that man's heart was hardened so that he did not, and indeed could not, obey the commandments of God. However this was not the result of [an act of] his free will, but it was a punishment for his preceding will as an unbeliever, which was rewarded by the incapacity to obey in the same way as the will to believe [is rewarded] by the power to act. The choice between faith and unbelief is the key issue at the outset.

But as I said, Jansenius continues, Augustine was in error here. He reduces the whole range of good works to one thing that he regards as a merit of our free will, namely faith, and he reduces the range of evil works to unbelief. He regards those good and evil works as gifts and punishments of God respectively, as consequences of grace or hardening, but not as deeds of our own.

Now let us look at the disputed passage again, Jansenius says. The argument runs like this: "[Pharaoh] could not be blamed for the fact that he did not obey at that time, since with a hardened heart he could not obey, but he had become liable to punishment because his heart had been hardened by his earlier unbelief". His sin was not the disobedience, but the fact that he had made himself unfree to want the good. This is what it means, says Jansenius, but Augustine revised this earlier opinion later, when he held that after the Fall, the human will is equally unfree to believe as to act, and that he needs to receive both the motivation and the power to act from the Spirit of faith and love. Both the previous unbelief and the hardening are now seen as

¹² Liberum.... arbitrium perfecte fuit in primo homine, in nobis autem ante gratiam non est liberum arbitrium, ut non peccemus, sed tantum ut peccare nolumus, CSEL 84, p. 8, line 18.

consequences of original sin. And it seems clear that Jansenius regards the later Augustine as the true and orthodox Augustine.

In this chapter, Jansenius sets out to defend Augustine's authority over against Jesuit theologians like Vázquez, who do not want the great father to be the sole authority in faith and especially morals. Other names which are frequently mentioned are Molina, Lessius and Suarez.¹³ Jansenius lists several possible links between them and the Pelagians. Thus Suarez is said to "hallucinate gravely" about Pelagianism on the one hand¹⁴, and to smell of Semi-Pelagianism himself.¹⁵ Molina turns the chief principles of Augustine's doctrine against the Pelagians upside down.¹⁶ Vázquez rejects Augustine's teaching on human nature and the propagation of original sin and he behaves like a Pelagian.¹⁷ On the subject of grace, Lessius hallucinates more enormously than the Semi-Pelagians ever did.¹⁸

The 223 pages of the first part of the *Augustinus* are devoted to an historical study of the Pelagian heresy, in fact of Pelagianism and the doctrine of the Massilienses or Semi-Pelagians, two schools of thought that are not connected historically but which both object to a number of Augustine's convictions. In the practice of systematic theology both currents were more or less treated as one, as the name "Semi-Pelagians" indicates. This name is first found in the Formula of Concord of 1577. Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism are related to each other as follows:

9] 2. We reject also the error of the gross Pelagians, who taught that man by his own powers, without the grace of the Holy Ghost, can turn himself to God, believe the Gospel, be obedient from the heart to God's Law, and thus merit the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

10] 3. We reject also the error of the Semi-Pelagians, who teach that man by his own powers can make a beginning of his conversion, but without the grace of the Holy Ghost cannot complete it.

It is curious that this term of Lutheran origin should have been adopted in the catholic camp as well. This happened in the early 1580s.¹⁹ It obviously was a useful expression.

¹³ Cf. II, 72.

¹⁴ I, 128, 130.

¹⁵ I, 208.

¹⁶ II, 34.

¹⁷ II, 15, 77, 85, 91-93.

¹⁸ III, 88.

¹⁹ M. JACQUIN, "A quelle date apparait le terme 'Semipélagien'?", RSPTh 1, 1907, p. 506-508.

Now we return to Pharaoh's hardened heart. We find at least two works that are attributed to Pelagius that occupy themselves with the question, namely *On the hardening of Pharaoh's heart* and his *Commentary on Romans*. Jansenius did not discuss the first work because it was only published in 1947. But he was one of the first scholars to identify the pauline commentary as Pelagian.²⁰ The first work, *On the hardening of Pharaoh's heart*, is now no longer ascribed to Pelagius. So we turn to the *Commentary on Romans*. Here we read:

17 For concerning Pharaoh the Scripture says: *I have raised you up for this very purpose, to show my power in you, and to proclaim my name in the whole earth.*' This passage... is explained by different interpreters in two ways. Either: Since each one will be punished when the measure and limit of his sins is complete, as in the case of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah (cf. Gen. 19:24-5). Pharaoh accordingly had already exceeded his limit and God wished to make an example of him for the others, as of one already doomed to die, so that the people of God might come to know God's justice and power, and neither dare to sin nor fear their enemies. The same sort of thing that happened to Pharaoh happens when a doctor, seeking the causes of sickness, discovers a remedy in the course of torturing someone already condemned to death for many crimes; or when a judge, though he could punish a guilty man immediately, afflicts him with various torments to rouse the fear of all. Or: He was hardened by God's patience, for after a plague from God ended Pharaoh became harder, and although God knew that Pharaoh had not repented, he wished nevertheless to show his forbearance even towards him.

We note that there is no question of predestination by God, only of his foreknowledge. Of these two interpretations, the first one goes back to Ambrosiaster²¹ and the second one to Origen²² whom Pelagius had read well. If we agree that the passage about Pharaoh in Romans is in fact about a kind of predestination, Origen managed to turn the interpretation around to foreknowledge. Greeks disliked predestination. So did Pelagius. Indeed, according to Jansenius, Origen is the origin of Pelagianism.²³ This conviction is worked out in several chapters. First, Jansenius expounds Origen's opinion on free will and

²⁰ A. SOUTER, *Texts and Studies IX*, 1, Cambridge 1931, p. 10

²¹ CSEL LXXXI, p. 325, 8-19

²² C. P. HAMMOND Bammel, *Der Römerbriefkommentar des Origenes, Buch 7-10*, Freiburg 1998, p. 624, 116-131; cf. W. J. P. BOYD, "Origen on Pharaoh's hardened heart", *Texte und Untersuchungen* 92, *Studia Patristica VII*, 1, Berlin 1966, p. 434-442.

²³ I, 45, 46, 48, 63, 75, 83 (Origenes totius erroris fons), 84, 91.

its "natural possibility". I quote Jansenius²⁴: ".....among all those who preceded Pelagius I found no abler architect of the whole Pelagian heresy than Origen, who was of much use to the ancient interpreters of the holy Scriptures and defenders of the faith not because of his productive genius, but because of his unbridled freedom of reasoning severely damaged the purity of the doctrine of the Church."

For through his writings, especially *peri archôn*, Origen was the origin of several heresies that infested the Church a few centuries after his death. Thus he could indeed be called a cesspit of errors. But there is none that he did not only sketch, but also shape and express more exactly in nearly all drafts and colours, than the Pelagian heresy. You will not find it at all easy to find a single dogma which Pelagius and Julian hurled at the Church (with one exception), no single interpretation of Scripture which supports this heresy, or Origen has given it its initial shape, so much so that they sometimes use the same words to prejudice the truth. Because this seems incredible to many people and to understand the secrets of this error it is of great importance and worth while to dwell on this a bit longer. In order not to spend too much time on the collisions between individual points of Pelagian and Origenist doctrine, we have reduced all this to five chapters, Jansenius says: 1. the free will and its natural possibility; 2. the law of nature and that of Moses; 3. On grace and merit; 4. On predestination; [5. On the corruption of Scripture].

A key concept in the first chapter is "freedom". Origen often addresses this quality and shows himself an admirer of the philosophical concept of freedom. Jansenius illustrates this with quotations from *peri archôn* and his commentary on Romans and concludes that the Pelagians have their opinions on this matter from Origen. A passage from the third chapter is revealing: "But no error is more deadly and killing for grace, than that it is given to human [acts] which precede.. In the books *Peri Archon* Origen ventilates the merits of human action over against grace, and all gifts of God depend on free will". Only those who are worthy, those who have earned it, receive the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit.

But where did Origen get his ideas from? From pagan philosophy. "Although we ought to weigh the Pelagian error by its own weight, and to reduce it to the first source from which it springs, you will understand that it has been concocted from nothing else than from the doctrines of the pagan philosophers. And the outfit of the whole heresy is nothing else but pure and clear pythagorean, stoic and

²⁴ I, 149 etc.

aristotelian philosophy, as Tertullian once said about heretics generally and one can say about no people more truly, with Jerome, than about the Pelagians: 'the philosophers are the patriarchs of the heretics'. It is not difficult to demonstrate this from the individual hinges of the Pelagian error. The first doctrinal opinion that Pelagius preached by which he began to disturb the Church..... was that about reaching perfect justification, including sinlessness and *apatheia*...."²⁵ Jansenius traces this back to pythagorean and stoic philosophy.

The second point is that they want to attain to all virtues by the sole possibility and indifference of the free will. This stems from the philosophers too: Cicero and Seneca are quoted. The latter says: "There is one good thing, which is the cause and support of a happy life: to believe in oneself". "This statement summarizes the whole venom of Pelagian impiety", says Jansenius. "For on this philosophical basis the whole hulk directed against Christ's grace has been constructed". Naturally, Jansenius follows Augustine here, who in his epistle 186 wrote: "That they do not stumble over the stumbling stone, for example by defending nature and free will with much rhetoric, just like the philosophers of this world, who tried hard to be considered or to consider themselves to effectuate a happy life for themselves by their own will."²⁶

The third point is original sin. Here Pelagius bases himself on Aristotle. There is no question of the transmission of sin from parents to offspring, for Pelagius and Julian wanted to liberate little children from all guilt and punishment.

The fourth point is that of pure nature, *pura natura*. This concept was invented in the sixteenth century to answer the question: in how far is the sinful human being still able to do what is morally good without the help of grace? The term "pure nature" indicates a fictitious state of humanity before the Fall, in which human beings were created without original righteousness or participation in divine nature. Jansenius sees the Pelagians as the originators of this concept.²⁷ The Louvain theologian Ruard Tapper²⁸ and in his trail Jan-

²⁵ I, 154 etc.

²⁶ ne offendant in lapidem offensionis uelut argute defendendo naturam et liberum arbitrium quem ad modum philosophi huius mundi, qui uehementer egerunt, ut putarentur uel putarent sibi beatam uitam uirtute propriae uoluntatis efficere, CSEL 57, par. 11, p. 77, line 1.

²⁷ I, 147-148.

²⁸ Cf. M. SCHRAMA, "Ruard Tapper und die Möglichkeit gute Werke zu verrichten, 'non omnia opera hominis mala'", in: M. LAMBERIGTS, *L'Augustinisme à l'ancienne faculté de théologie de Louvain*, Leuven 1994, p. 63-98, esp. p. 82-83.

senius²⁹ explain it as follows: it means "that the state in which human beings are now born is no different from the state of pure nature than someone who has been stripped differs from someone who is naked; the latter is obviously without the clothes he never had, the former had them, but he lost them. For if you only substract sin, whereas [in fact] the integrity of the first and supernatural make up was lost, you get the state of pure nature instead of the state in which we are actually born."³⁰ Pure nature is a state in which there is "a natural possibility or freedom of choice between good and bad."³¹

Jansenius sees a direct connection between the doctrine of pure nature and the positive view, especially of Julian, on desire or concupiscence as if it were a natural good.³² According to J. H. Walgrave, he himself regards the *libido* which accompanies seminal emissions as a sign of the corruption of human nature.³³ The word *concupiscentia* stems from Romans 6:12 and 7:7 and the Epistle of James 1:14; the term *libido* stems from Cicero, and Hortensius as quoted by Augustine. Other terms are *cupiditas*, *voluptas*, *delectatio*.³⁴ Concupiscence can be subdivided in: desire of the flesh, desire of the eyes and pride.³⁵ In any case, Jansenius derives the concept of *natura pura* from the influence of pagan philosophy also. Modern research tends to think that both Augustine and Pelagius make use of philosophy: the former of neoplatonic dualism and the latter of a stoic concept of freedom.³⁶

What sources did Jansenius use for his description of Pelagianism? No doubt his main source was his own reading of the works of Augustine. But the issue of Pelagianism had of course been continually alive in the Augustinian tradition. Jansenius mentions little secondary literature; e.g. Bellarminus is one of a few authors only. And certainly no Protestants. Yet a major work written during the Arminian controversy by Gerardus Johannes Vossius, for which that author himself got into trouble, appeared in 1618 (a revised edition was published posthumously in 1655): *Historiae de controversiis, quas Pelagius eiusque reliquiae moverunt, libri septem*, Lugduni

²⁹ I, 148 E.1.

³⁰ Idem. Cf. J. WALGRAVE, "L'Augustinus de Jansénius", in: J. VAN BAVEL et M. SCHRAMA, *Jansénius et le jansénisme dans les Pays-Bas. Mélanges Lucien Ceyssens*, Leuven 1982, p. 27-38, esp. p. 31.

³¹ I, 97 B2

³² I, 154 E2

³³ Cf. WALGRAVE p. 34.

³⁴ II, 129-130.

³⁵ II, 132.

³⁶ G. Greshake, *Gnade als konkrete Freiheit*, Mainz 1972, p. 230f.

Batavorum: excudit Joannes Patius, 1618.³⁷ The year before, a more modestly sized book entitled *De Pelagianis et Semi-Pelagianis* had appeared. The author was one Joannes Latius or Jan de Laet, who is regarded as the first scholar who attempted to gather together the fragments of Pelagius' work.³⁸ Latius' book was published Hardervici: ex off. Th. Henrici imp. J. Jansonii, 1617. It is worth investigating whether Jansenius had read these books, especially Vossius, whose is the more thorough work. In his own work, he writes rather scathingly about Calvin and the Calvinists. If they happen to agree with Augustine, it should be accepted as the truth; if they disagree, their error ought to be corrected.³⁹

In a first chapter, Latius gives a bio-bibliography of Pelagianism. Secondly, he discusses five scriptural arguments of the Pelagians against original sin and, as in all his chapters, Augustine's replies to them. Thirdly he gives fourteen arguments of the Pelagians based on reason. Fourth come six successive points of "the perverted teaching of the Pelagians against original sin". Fifth are the opinions of the Pelagians on free will. Sixth, five arguments of the Pelagians for free will. Seventh, three opinions of the Pelagians on grace. Eight, three arguments of the Pelagians in favour of their opinion. Nine, four points on human perfection during this life [as taught by the Pelagians]. Ten, some more arguments of the Pelagians. This concludes Book One; Book Two is about the Semi-Pelagians and followed by some essays on Pelagianism. Latius strikes us as someone very methodical, who is concerned to give a brief systematic exposition of the Pelagian vis-à-vis the strict Augustinian position especially on grace and nature, on predestination and original sin. It seems likely that he wrote this book in connection with the religious dispute in the Netherlands in those days

Vossius' book is much larger, but still not by far as comprehensive as Jansenius' *Augustinus*. What strikes us immediately, is that Vossius quotes a much wider variety of, Greek and Latin, church fathers than Jansenius, who only quotes Augustine and every now and then another Latin father. Vossius' dossier is indeed very rich. Unlike Jansenius, Vossius e.g. discusses the fact that in the matter of predestination, it was the older Augustine who departed from the standard Greek tradition. But Vossius sides unconditionally with Augustine and his definitions of the warring parties are still

³⁷ Cp. J. LÖSSL, *Julian von Aeclanum*, Leiden 2001, p. 2ff

³⁸ Cp. J. LÖSSL, *Op.cit.*, p.2.

³⁹ III,255.

formulated very much from an Augustinian perspective. This is how Vossius describes the Pelagian conflict: “The controversy was properly this, whether anyone by his natural powers can fulfill the Law, be justified and obtain salvation, as Pelagius held, or whether he only comes to believe by his own powers and begins to do good works, as Julian [of Aeclanum] thought, or finally, whether through his natural power, by the beginnings of faith and imperfect desire of the good, he disposes himself for the first [bit of] grace, as Cassian and the Semi-Pelagians believed”.⁴⁰ Elsewhere, he categorizes the different parties as follows: there are those who deny an absolute predestination, but recognize prevenient grace. Then we have the Semi-Pelagians, who deny prevenient grace, but preach that we need grace as such. Then the Pelagians, who think that grace is not necessary, but nevertheless useful. “For the Pelagians were not Pelagians because they denied the absolute decree and prevenient grace, but because they denied the necessity of grace... The Semi-Pelagians are called that, not because they resist an absolute predestination, but because they do not recognize prevenient grace”.⁴¹ In their own day, the Pelagians were proscribed by imperial authority, but the Semi-Pelagians were regarded as catholics and were permitted to teach the people.

Finally, how do Jansenius and Vossius compare? Jansenius does not seem to acknowledge any help from Vossius’ book. He had his own dossier of quotations, mostly from Augustine, but hardly from other church fathers – certainly not of Greek fathers. Moreover, he is somewhat scathing about the efforts of the Calvinists to understand Pelagius. Remarkably however, Jansenius uses a much wider variety of patristic quotations in his controversy with Voetius⁴² and in his own commentaries on Scripture.⁴³ This raises the question whether after all the *Augustinus* is not rather a work of controversy about the Doctor’s doctrine of grace than a work of positive theology.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Vossius p. 627.

⁴¹ Idem, p. 646-647.

⁴² Cp. M. Lamberigts, “Voetius versus Jansenius”, in: J. VAN OORT etc., *De onbekende Voetius*, Kampen 1989, p. 148-167.

⁴³ Cp. e.g. *Tetrateuchus sive commentarius in sancta Jesu Christi Evangelia*, editio ultima, Bruxellis 1755; the preface to the commentary on Matthew alone refers to passages in Papias (in Eusebius), Irenaeus, Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Augustine, Jerome, Epiphanius, Theophylactus, John Chrysostom – which seems to show that Jansenius must have had an extensive knowledge of both the Greek and Latin fathers.

⁴⁴ The thesis that the *Augustinus* was a work of positive theology has been defended by e. g. L. Ceyssens.

Jean Orcibal in his *Jansénius d'Ypres* (1585-1638) says: "Rien n'indique qu'il ait connu les pages de l'arminien Gérard I. Vossius..."⁴⁵ And what was Vossius' motivation to write his book on Pelagius and his followers? In his "Letter to the reader", written in 1618, he speaks of the "sad schism"⁴⁶ and the "controversies about predestination which have sprung up in the Netherlands".⁴⁷ Accusations of Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism were hurled from pulpits and lecterns.⁴⁸ Vossius' book is an attempt to clearly define the different positions and then to demonstrate that he and his companions were neither Pelagians nor Semi-Pelagians.⁴⁹

Two seventeenth century key studies on Pelagianism were written by Dutchmen. One, Gerardus Vossius, a protestant of Arminian conviction, wrote to demonstrate that he was not a Pelagian or a Semi-Pelagian. The other, Cornelis Jansenius, a roman catholic, wrote to demonstrate that his mainly Jesuit opponents were (Semi-)Pelagians. Neither of them read the other man's work (unless Jansenius did read Vossius and neither admits it nor uses the work). Yet both were condemned for their books by the highest authorities of their churches.

Hilversum

Martien PARMENTIER

⁴⁵ Paris 1989, p. 17 note 12.

⁴⁶ *Epistola ad lectorem* [11]

⁴⁷ Idem [12]

⁴⁸ Idem [15]

⁴⁹ Idem [16]