

INTRODUCTION

During the Fifteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies (Oxford, August 2007), Prof. Dr. Mathijs Lamberigts (Leuven, Belgium) organised a workshop on Rom. 2:14 in the patristic era. Participants in this workshop were Prof. Dr. Josef Lössl (Cardiff University, UK), Prof. Dr. Jonathan Yates (Villanova, USA), Dra. Marleen Verschoren (Nijmegen, The Netherlands), Drs. Anthony Dupont (Leuven, Belgium). The elaborated versions of the papers they delivered during this workshop are gathered here. Prof. Dr. Marianne Djuth (Toronto, Canada) complements this workshop collection with a contribution on a related topic.

Rom. 2:14: "*Gentes quae legem non habent, naturaliter quae legis sunt faciunt; hi legem non habentes, ipsi sibi sunt lex.*"

This pericope touches the core of several much debated topics in the Pelagian controversy. Rom. 2:14 opens the debate on the possibility of the salvation and justification before and without the law of man in general, and more specific of the *gentes*. It is interwoven with soteriological-patristical questions on the state of the pagans and the matter of the natural law, the goodness of creation and the natural capacities of man, the relation between grace and freedom, Adam and Christ, Jews and gentiles. This is only a small selection of theological topics related to Rom. 2:14, that are not only restricted to the Pelagian controversy but extend to the whole range of patristic thinking and writing. This issue of *Augustiniana* on the one hand focuses on the protagonists of the Pelagian controversy and their interpretation of Rom. 2:14. On the other hand it discusses the controversy within the broader context of the *Ideengeschichte* around Rom. 2:14.

Josef Lössl deals with the pre-controversial development of the theology of Rom. 2:14 in *Keeping Closely to Paul. The 'Early' Use and Exegesis of Romans 2:14-16. Some Examples*. In a first move Lössl situates the pericope within the context of Paul's letter to the Romans, especially regarding the themes of the relation between Jews and gentiles, the inscription of the law in the (gentile) hearts. Lössl explains how Rom. 2:14 illustrates that Paul considered the law of nature as a natural equivalent of the Jewish Law, implying that gentiles, just as Jews, will have to undergo judgement day. Lössl also links it with First and early Second century sources (Epistle of Barnabas, Clement, and Philo of Alexandria). Subsequently, Lössl sketches

the development of an early exegesis of Rom. 2:14. In Clement, Tertullian and Origen, there is at first sight a considerable development away from the text of Paul. Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria give a different explanation of the verse. Tertullian tends to read it in a rather negative way: Jews and pagans share the same basis to be judged, or to be condemned. Tertullian generally rejects Greek philosophy. If Greek philosophers succeeded in finding God, this was a matter of pure coincidence and only due to the fact that God placed truth in nature. The knowledge of God that Greek philosophers could reach by nature is, however, not sufficient, as faith remains necessary. Clement has a more positive attitude. Jews and gentiles have an equally valid way to reach God. He is convinced that Greek philosophers could attain knowledge of God by studying nature. These are, however, the Greeks of the past. In the present God cannot be found without faith. Origen continues this appreciating approach of non-Christians. All people can come to know God – by nature, by the law, by faith. In his overview, Lössl shows that – despite the earlier supposition that Clement, Tertullian and Origen would deviate from Paul – the early patristic exegesis of Rom. 2:14 remained surprisingly close to what Paul meant, the equality in judgment for Jews and gentiles.

With his diachronic analytical essay entitled *Romans 2:14-15 in the Latin Tradition Before the Pelagian Controversies*, Jonathan Yates samples the various ways and contexts in which these verses were employed by Latin Christian authors in the half-century prior to 411 AD. Yates' essay begins with a brief summary of questions that continue to puzzle exegetes of this section of Paul's Letter to the Romans. Yates then transitions to a survey of the Patristic data. Except for the first sub-section, which is dedicated to Rufinus of Aquileia's translation of Origen, this survey runs in chronological order and incorporates excerpts from the work of Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrosiaster, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine and Pelagius. The ideas of the so-called, but still highly problematic, "Budapest anonymous" are treated in an excursus. This essay demonstrates that, despite substantial variation both among and between the authors surveyed, all of them unquestionably accept that some form of Natural Law must exist – even if several of them are just as sure that mankind has "forgotten" most of its tenets, at least to some degree. These authors are also in general agreement in rejecting the notion that a person may experience justification (solely) by keeping the parts of Natural Law that are (or remain) known to him. Yates also shows that it was quite common for Latin authors of this period to connect Natural Law and a negative

formulation of the Golden Rule. Probably the most obvious point of disagreement among these authors concerns the precise identity of the *gentes*: some of these authors are sure that Paul is referring to pagans – either pre- or post-Christian – while others prefer to read the term as a reference to Christian gentiles over against Christian Jews.

Marleen Verschoren's contribution, *Lex in cordibus scripta and conscientia (Romans 2:15) according to Augustine*, combines the notions of *lex naturalis*, *lex in cordibus scripta* with Augustine's early thinking on *conscientia*. Augustine links his notion of *conscientia* explicitly with *ratio*. The natural law, which resonates in the human conscience, was given to human kind in paradise and does not have a content different from the mosaic law: *caritas*, the golden rule. Verschoren argues that this Augustinian *conscientia* is not a 'secular' self consciousness, but always a consciousness of God.

In his article, *The relation between pagani, gentes and infideles in Augustine's Sermones ad Populum: A case study of Augustine's doctrine of grace*, Anthony Dupont investigates the *gratia*-position of pagans, gentiles and non believers in the *sermones ad populum*, a source much neglected in Augustine research. The anti-pagan sermons reject vehemently what Augustine considers the 'earthly' orientation of pagans, bringing on pride. The underlying discourse of these sermons is the insufficiency of the human *natura* to reach salvation, the need of Christ as *mediator* and as *gratia*. Augustine, however, is also positive about *pagani*, in the sense that he always keeps open the possibility that they would convert. This conversion requires grace. Exactly this grace is conveyed to (converted) gentiles, distinguishing them from (non-converted) Jews, who did not recognize Christ and proudly assumed that the works of the Law are sufficient. Christian Jews and converted gentiles on the other hand form a unity, in and by (the cornerstone) Christ as grace giver, a main theme in the Epiphany sermons. Dupont subsequently enlarges the framework of his study by investigating the position of the *infideles* in the sermons and pointing out the strong link Augustine perceives between *fides* and *iustitia*. All these elements bring Dupont to the conclusion that Augustine remains dogmatically strict in his sermons – virtues and salvation are not available for non-Christians – but that eventually a positive pastoral attitude towards pagans and gentiles emerges in his sermons.

Mathijs Lamberigts directs the exegesis of Rom. 2:14 to the heat of the (second) Pelagian controversy in *Julian of Aeclanum on*

Natural Law in the Light of Romans 2:14. Julian of Aeclanum argues in his *Ad Turbantium* (419), sharply reacting against Augustine, in favour of the existence of genuine pagan virtues. According to Julian, creation as such is already grace and humanity *in se* is created good. Human *ratio*, the human soul, is virtuous on itself and is *imago Dei*. Consequently, the Jewish Law actually is not necessary for salvation, since humanity has by its nature the capacities to obey God. This implies that gentiles, not having received the Law, do not have a valid excuse for not listening to God's commands. A second consequence is that Christian faith – at least theoretically – is not a condition to be just, e.g. in case of the pagan and old testamentic *iusti*. Julian however admits that it is almost impossible *de facto* to attain *iustitia* without Christ's help. The case of the pagan *iusti* illustrates, or so Julian contends, that all man are created with a good nature, since they are born with a rational soul. Moreover, God wishes to see the whole of humanity saved, justified. Julian is convinced of the natural goodness of humanity because he refuses to accept the existence of a natural evil – this is how he interprets Augustine's concept of *peccatum originale*.

Marianne Djuth offers an analysis of the significance of a Christian philosophy and its relation to pagan philosophy in Augustine's *Contra Iulianum* in *Augustine versus Julian of Eclanum on the Love of Wisdom*. This topic is interwoven with a lot of key points in the discussion on Rom. 2:14. Djuth takes Goulven Madec's plea for continuity in Augustine's thinking – namely the recurring of the so-called 'early' theme of philosophy in the later writings – as a point of departure to analyse the concept of *philosophia Christiana* as a love of *sapientia*. Countering Julian of Eclanum, Augustine distinguishes an authentic from an inauthentic Christian philosophy, the inauthenticity of which lies in disregarding the necessity of incarnation and redemption. According to Augustine, Julian is guilty of this disregard because he rejects the effects of original sin and asserts that human beings have the ability to resist evil and choose good without needing the irresistible grace. Augustine observes that the dangers of carnal concupiscence are even recognized by some pagan philosophers, despite their ignorance of Christ. In the end, the Christian philosophy, the pursuit of Christian wisdom that Augustine enhances is one that balances faith and reason.

Anthony DUPONT