

## PELAGIUS AND AUGUSTINE: MORE THAN A DOCTRINAL CONTROVERSY

Every year, the *Swiss Group of Patristic Studies* (*Groupe Suisse d'Études patristiques* [GSEP] / *Schweizerische Patristische Arbeitsgemeinschaft* [SPAG]), in cooperation with the Doctoral Programme of the West-Swiss Universities (cf. [www.unifr.ch/patr](http://www.unifr.ch/patr)), organizes a one-day seminar dedicated to a particular theme in the field of Patristics and Ancient Christianity. On the occasion of Prof. Dr. Otto Wermelinger's (University of Fribourg) retirement, a conference on "Pelagius and Augustine" was held at Fribourg, November 29, 2008.

During his long academic career Otto Wermelinger has persistently worked on the Augustine-Pelagius controversy. O. Wermelinger's major contribution to the subject is his doctoral thesis, the importance of which is widely acclaimed up till today: "Rom und Pelagius: Die theologische Position der römischen Bischöfe im pelagianischen Streit in den Jahren 411-432" (Stuttgart 1975). In order to pay homage to O. Wermelinger's lifelong academic interest, and to evaluate different directions that Pelagian research has taken since, the organizers have invited some of the most prominent students in the field, Mathijs Lamberigts (Leuven), Winrich Löhr (Heidelberg), Paul Mattei (Lyon) and Dorothea Weber (Vienna). The papers of the first three contributors are published here.

Since O. Wermelinger's monograph the Pelagian studies have seen several important publications, such as the article on Pelagius and Pelagianism in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* by F.G. Nuvolone and A. Solignac,<sup>1</sup> the Pelagian controversy's chronological study by Y.-M. Duval,<sup>2</sup> and the groundbreaking monograph of J.-M. Salamito<sup>3</sup> dealing with the social background of the Pelagius-Augustine debate. The time has come for a fresh look at the complex Pelagian question, including the impact of Pelagius' thought in the Gallic church, and for its reexamination on the background of the most recent research. Thus W. Löhr addresses influence of the actors' social background on the personal relationship between Pelagius and Augustine, P. Mattei

<sup>1</sup> F.G. Nuvolone, A. Solignac, Art. Pélage et pélagianisme, *DSp* 12/2 (Paris 1986) col. 2889-2942.

<sup>2</sup> Y.-M. Duval, Pélage en son temps: Données chronologiques nouvelles pour une présentation nouvelle, *Studia Patristica* 38, Leuven 2001, 95-118.

<sup>3</sup> J.-M. Salamito, Les virtuoses et la multitude: Aspects sociaux de la controverse entre Augustin et les pélagiens. Grenoble 2005.

claims "to shake off the old dogmatic patterns" cast upon Faustus of Riez, for a long time classified among the so-called Semipelagians, while M. Lamberigts investigates in detail the controversy between Julian of Eclanum, the first to have systematized the Pelagian thought, and Augustine, the argument of which is based on the appeal to the approved doctors of the Church.

By taking into consideration not only the initial controversy between the two protagonists, Pelagius and Augustine, but also investigating its impact on the writings of Julian of Eclanum and Faustus of Riez in the following decades, the contributions published here reflect the complexity of the Pelagian question.

I am mostly grateful to the Editorial Board of the Journal *AUGUSTINIANA*, and its Editor in Chief Gerd Van Riel, who have accepted to publish the articles in this most reputable review.

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