

Paola Marone, *L'esegesi biblica di Ottato di Milevi*, (Studi e proposte, 5), Roma: Università La Sapienza, 2008, 889581407X, 9788895814070, 208 p.

Paola Marone studies the *Aduersus Donatistas* of Optatus of Milevis from the exegetical point of view. Although Optatus did not specifically intend to compose an exegetical study, this writing clearly reveals that interpreting Scripture was an integral part of anti-Donatist literature. In reacting against Parmenian, and in line with Cyprian, Optatus opted (similar to Parmenian) for allegorical exegesis, the framework within which Optatus engaged the debate with the Donatists. For this reason Optatus' reading of Scripture is aimed at collecting material which is relevant for the historical and theological/ecclesial context of fourth century Africa. The author first sketches the historical, ideological and literal context and offers a *status quaestionis* of the research regarding *Aduersus Donatistas*. Subsequently she compares the specific forms of exegesis of Parmenian, Optatus and Cyprian and analyses Optatus' particular way of quoting Scripture in general and in his *Aduersus Donatistas* in particular. Additionally, the present volume offers an overview of the general structure of Optatus' oeuvre and of his Biblical vocabulary.

Anthony DUPONT

Le Nain de Tillemont, Louis Sébastien, translated, introduced and annotated by Frederick Van Fleteren, in collaboration with George C. Berthold, *The Life of Augustine. Part One: Childhood to episcopal consecration (354-396)*, (Collectanea augustiniana), [Original title: *Vie de saint Augustin, Mémoire ecclésiastique*, vol. XIII], 2010, New York, Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, Frankfurt am Main, Oxford, Wien: Lang, 978-1-4331-0284-4, XVIII + 367 p.

Le Nain de Tillemont, Louis Sébastien, translated, introduced and annotated by Frederick Van Fleteren, *The Life of Augustine of Hippo. Part Two: The Donatist Controversy (396-411)*, (Collectanea augustiniana), [Original title: *Vie de saint Augustin, Mémoire ecclésiastique*, vol. XIII], 2012, New York, Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, Frankfurt am Main, Oxford, Wien: Lang, 978-1-4331-0285-1, XX + 388 p.

Louis Sébastien Le Nain de Tillemont (1637-1698), belonging to the Jansenist circles of Port-Royal, was an eminent historian. He composed two influential historical overviews: a history of the Roman emperors (*Histoire des empereurs et autres princes qui ont régné pendant les six premiers siècles de l'Église*) and of the Church in the first six centuries (*Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles*). These studies are well documented, very detailed and are considered to be part of the start of historical critical surveys based on an analysis of all available sources. In theological studies in the seventeenth century in general and within the Jansenist circles of Port-Royal and Leuven in particular, the study of Augustine of Hippo played a crucial role. This is testified by the fact that the ca. 1200 pages counting thirteenth volume of his *Mémoire ecclésiastique* is dedicated to this Church Father. Tillemont brought together all available sources to reconstruct a historical and intellectual biography of Augustine. This monumental study is regarded to be the first modern biography of Augustine and is (besides, amongst others, the contemporary and also massive biography of Augustine by Serge Lancel) one of the most extensive (modern) biographies of Augustine, quoted even today. Frederick Van Fleteren, an internationally recognised scholar in the field of Augustine, intends to open this meritorious and historically interesting *Life of Augustine* for a contemporary international audience by translating Tillemont's biography into English. The English translation consists of three parts – each divided in chronologically ordered articles (and complementary notes): Childhood to Episcopal consecration (354-396), Donatist controversy (397-411), Pelagian controversy (412-430). The first two parts are available. Van Fleteren succeeded in translating Tillemont's biography of the bishop of Hippo in fluent English prose, accessible both to specialists and amateurs of Augustine. In a time of on the one hand very specialised studies and on the other hand very general overviews, an accurate, comprehensive biographical survey like Tillemont's *Vie de saint Augustin* remains to be an important research tool and source of inspiration. Combined with contemporary historical-critical hermeneutics and research instruments, it is an essential asset for each library devoted to Augustine, Patristic theology and Late Antique thinking, now made accessible by the translation efforts of Van Fleteren.

Anthony DUPONT