

Co-editor Katarina Waldner offers yet another example of how much is to be gained from employing a spatio-temporal heuristic in ‘When the city cries: the spacetime of persecution in Eusebius’ *Martyrs of Palestine*’. Eusebius’ writing takes on a whole new worldview-constructing dimension when we realise how he has fashioned individual trauma as universally Christian by manipulating temporality and location.

Finally, Jennifer Otto, in ‘Making martyrs Mennonite’, looks at the ways in which seventeenth-century Anabaptists selectively retold early Christian martyrdom accounts so as to bolster their own understanding of their denomination’s place in Christian history. By noting (but not emphasising) dates and by vetting each early Christian martyrdom story through Mennonite doctrines, the *Martyrs Mirror* helps give the impression of a singular, Mennonite, Christian reality.

One remarkable feature of these essays is the skill, fruitfulness and (generally speaking) clarity that each displays – not only does each essay have unique subject matter to introduce, each must also quadrangulate time, space, desire and martyrdom. For as complex as these articles’ concepts are, each essay manages to be eminently readable and thought-provoking. There are significant typographical and grammatical errors that occasionally obscure the authors’ intended meaning (Hartmann’s essay suffers most) but aside from that small quibble, this is ultimately a tremendously valuable book which I suspect every martyrdom scholar will delight in.

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Pelagius. Commentaries on the thirteen Epistles of Paul with the Libellus fidei. Introduced and translated by Thomas P. Scheck. (Ancient Christian Writers, 76.) Pp. viii + 451. New York–Mahwah, NJ: Newman Press, 2022. \$49.95. 978 0 8091 0659 2 JEH (74) 2023; doi:10.1017/S0022046922002482

Thomas Scheck’s translation of late antique commentaries on Scripture has exhibited lasting quality, performed a great service and made substantial contributions to English-language scholarship on early Christian biblical interpretation. His translation of Origen’s *Commentary on Romans* (Washington, DC 2001, 2002) has established itself as a great treasure for students of Origen’s theology and exegesis. Scheck’s study of the commentary’s lasting impact within the Christian tradition (*Origen and the history of justification: the legacy of Origen’s Commentary on Romans*, South Bend, IN 2008) helps modern scholars to understand the significance of Rufinus of Aquileia’s Latin translation of it from the Pelagian controversy up through contemporary exegesis. As a natural extension of these studies and building upon the work of earlier scholars such as Alexander Souter (*The character and history of Pelagius’ Commentary on the Epistles of Paul*, London 1916), Theodore de Bruyn (*Pelagius’s Commentary on St Paul’s Epistle to the Romans*, Oxford 1993) and B. R. Rees (*Pelagius: life and letters*, Woodbridge–Rochester, NY 1998), among others, Scheck has now provided translations of Pelagius’ commentaries on all thirteen of the Pauline Epistles (c. 406–9). Also included in this new instalment in the *Ancient Christian Writers* series is a translation of Pelagius’ statement of faith (the *libellus fidei*) written in the spring of 417.

In the introduction to this volume, Scheck offers a historical account of the Pelagian controversy, the putative problems with so-called 'Pelagianism', as well as the commentary's textual transmission, theological contents and legacy within the Christian tradition. Scheck commends Pelagius' interest in Greek Christian theology such as in the texts Rufinus made available in his own extensive efforts of translation (for example, Origen's *Commentary on Romans*); situates Pelagius' theology of grace and freedom as more traditional than Augustine's novel theology of grace and predestination; questions the veracity of Augustine's characterisation of Pelagius in the face of what remains extant of the latter's writings; and suggests that, as with Origen and Origenism, a substantial distance stands between the beliefs and teachings of the historical person of Pelagius and the 'Pelagianism' Augustine constructed as a theological foil. Scheck's discussion of the legacy of Pelagius' *Commentary* in the Christian tradition focuses primarily on the debate between Erasmus and Luther and on the eventual settlement by the Roman Catholic Church on a chastened Augustinianism at the Council of Trent.

The translation itself is clear and consistent. It follows Souter's critical edition (Cambridge 1926) while still appreciating the reservations Hermann Frede (Freiburg 1973) and de Bruyn have raised over Souter's handling of Pelagius' biblical text (pp. 19–21). Accordingly, Scheck replicates Souter's use of square brackets for enclosing text omitted by certain manuscripts but thought to be original to Pelagius on account of style. Words in italics capture words from the biblical text Pelagius repeats in his own comments. Scheck has also opted to embolden chapter and verse numbers (e.g., **1:1** ... **1:2**) to make it easier for readers to track with Pelagius' often fast-paced style of commentary. Scheck's use of 'Either:' and 'Or:' nicely sets apart Pelagius's regular provision of multiple potential readings or interpretations. In a show of commendable discipline as a translator, Scheck provides Latin terms parenthetically in the main text only where some kind of play on words might otherwise be missed.

Following the translation of Pelagius' commentary upon all thirteen of the Pauline Epistles, Scheck provides in a concise appendix an introduction and translation of Pelagius' *Libellus fidei* based upon the critical edition of the text constructed by Peter J. Van Egmond (*Augustiniana* 2007).

This translation contains many praiseworthy characteristics. Scheck effectively organises what is the emerging consensus concerning the orthodoxy of Pelagius' interpretation of Paul and his theology of grace and freedom as well as the inauspicious character of Augustine's criticism. In the introduction, appendix and end-notes, Scheck engages a number of questions that will be of interest to theologically-inclined readers. Scheck has again provided a readable translation that, along with the notes, shows deep familiarity with not only the texts of Pelagius, but also the tradition of interpretation dating back to Augustine.

While the translation is exemplary and the scholarship learned, this reviewer was also left with some questions. First, is there a middle way to be had between the Pelagius Augustine comes to lament and the Pelagius modern scholarship seeks to celebrate? Scheck is unswervingly charitable to Pelagius, but the unwarranted criticisms by Augustine, the debate over the actuality of so-called 'Pelagianism' and the tried legacy Pelagius would experience in the Church seems to have led not only to caution but to what at times reads like special pleading and

defensiveness. Scheck reserves the highest praise for Ali Bonner's recent book, *The myth of Pelagianism* (Oxford 2018), but as in the case of Bonner, a more balanced interpretation is not only available but seems to be more suitable. Second, might the surge in the genre of biblical commentaries in the fourth century have served as a more informative context within which to situate Pelagius' major contribution? Scheck's notes on the text attest to the significance of other commentaries being written in the second half of the fourth century, but Scheck does little in his introductory framing of Pelagius' commentaries to speak to the significance of that broader phenomenon due to the focus placed on the Pelagian controversy he considers to be an unfortunate and undignified response to Pelagius' traditional theology. Third, is a volume like this the place to pursue what appears to be a thinly veiled anti-Protestant polemic of the sort described by scholars such as Jonathan Z. Smith as a disturbingly common trend in scholarship on early Christianity? Scheck's endorsement of Pelagius over against the perceived excesses of Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings and their supporters in the Christian tradition seems to be energised by a severely anti-Protestant edge, as Scheck critiques the likes of Martin Luther and John Calvin (for example, pp. 32–5, 353) as Augustinian extremists. A final question of lesser significance: might there have been a clearer way to delineate the biblical verses than by mere quotation marks? The combination of this convention with the use of endnotes can slow down the reading process, though opting for footnotes would not be worth losing the quantity or quality of the learned notes Scheck has provided for his readers.

As has become customary, Scheck's translations and commentary will make a lasting contribution, in this case to the study of late antique biblical commentaries, the reception of Paul and the life, thought and legacy of Pelagius.

NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

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The historian as detective. Uncovering Irish pasts. Essays in honour of Raymond Gillespie.

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This handsome book is a treasure trove of nuggets focused on Irish historical conundrums ranging in date from the fifth century to the end of the twentieth. It comprises seventy essays, each of them about 1,000 words in length, dealing with specific episodes or queries. The array of topics covered reflects the eclectic interests of the scholar in whose honour this grand *Festschrift* has been published. Raymond Gillespie has been one of the most prolific of historians on early modern Ireland and this book stands as eloquent testimony to the influences he exerted through his publications, his teaching and his interaction with colleagues. The idea of 'the historian as detective' is not a new one, but the editors use it as their organising principle to bring together an enormous team of investigators who solve some knotty cases from Ireland's past. The vast majority of the essays are comprised of micro-histories, though there are a couple of fictionalised narratives thrown in for good measure. What the best of them have in common is that they reveal how historians employ a range of strategies to find answers to puzzling