

for courses in Augustine's early thought, as reference works for students and researchers of Augustine, and for general readers with an interest in Augustine's early thought.

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***Intertextualität in den Mönchsviten des Athanasios und des Hieronymus: Eremiten zum Dialog bestellt.* By Shakira-Tasmin Prädicow. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020. 174 pp. \$103.99 hardcover.**

This book is a revision of a doctoral dissertation written under Dr. Heinz-Günther Nesselrath of the University of Göttingen. It argues that Athanasius's *Life of Antony* (251–356) is to be recognized as the central pre-text for the three monastic lives authored by St. Jerome, namely the lives of Paulus, Hilarion, and Malchus. By way of background to the study, we recall that St. Athanasius (298–373) is the author of the most important document of early monasticism, the *Life of Antony*, who is generally regarded as the father of Christian monasticism. Athanasius wrote this life in Greek around 357, shortly after the death of the famous hermit in 356. The work was intended to show monks in foreign parts the life of Antony as the perfect model of the ascetical life. A few years after its publication, Athanasius's work was translated into Latin by Evagrius of Antioch, not later than 375. St. Jerome mentions both the original Greek work and the Latin version, since Evagrius was his friend (cf. *De Viris Illustribus* 87, 88, 125).

Prädicow argues that Jerome uses individual elements from Athanasius's *Life of Antony* and imitates them but also produces variations from them. Based upon the elements Athanasius has provided, Jerome develops three new descriptions of exemplary ascetic lives, those of Paulus, Hilarion, and Malchus. Jerome's commitment to Athanasius's biography as his pre-text determines the various forms his hagiographical opus takes. One can sketch the following topics as affected by the textual elements deriving from Athanasius. (1) Jerome creates a similar starting point and decision-making situation in which care for one's family is given up and left to God. In addition, there are ascetic undertakings and faith struggles that take primacy in the ascetic's life. (2) Jerome offers in writing an ideal of perfection that celebrates the athlete of virtue and orients the reader to the role models in order to strengthen and establish faith and Christian discipleship. (3) Jerome offers the desert as a place of refuge for the sensual temptations that need to be tamed by means of solitary asceticism with the aim of minimizing demands on food, shelter, and amenities. (4) Jerome presents life situations in which wonderful occurrences prove the divine omnipotence and also the monk's closeness to God (visions, healings, acts of deliverance). (5) Jerome describes a prophetically heralded end of life, where concern for the mortal remains is met with a Christian burial. With these biographical and hagiographical elements in place, Jerome establishes the ideals of a life dedicated to Christian discipleship and sexual renunciation.

In the first part of the book, Prädicow very briefly traces the beginning of the monastic movement and locates its inspiration in the teaching of Jesus (Mark 16:17–18; Luke 11:20; Matt. 10:8–10, 39). The author briefly studies monasticism's later cultural

environment. He introduces both Athanasius's *Life of Antony* and Jerome's reception of the work, treating also Jerome's own attempts at living a desert-based asceticism (cf. Jerome's Epistle 14 to Heliodorus). Prädicow then examines Jerome's three lives and studies their intertextuality with Athanasius (using both Latin and Greek texts). The author frames Jerome's literary works using the terms *imitatio* and *variatio*. These are understood to be purely functional and as a complementary pair. *Imitatio* determines the motifs, themes, problems, and figures through repetitive paraphrase and allows them to be identified in this way. On the basis of this constant frame of reference, *variatio* shows different meanings so that the changes in motifs, topics, problems, and figures become clear. To me, this balance between "imitation" and "variation" appears to be a constructive and plausible approach to studying Jerome's literary corpus. Part 2 of the book presents the evidence for Jerome's *imitatio* of Athanasius's *Life of Antony* in his lives of Paulus, Hilarion and Malchus. Part 3 of the book takes up the concept of *variatio*.

Prädicow concludes that Jerome's literary debut in his three monastic lives is particularly extraordinary because he responds to his pre-text, to which he owes something decisive, with a series of variations that enable him to separate the monastic ideal from the single type provided by Athanasius (i.e., that of Antony). Jerome moves the ideal forward towards a pluralistic series of equally valuable exponents of the monastic form of life. The diverse models Jerome provides show that holy men can be portrayed, for instance, without a description of battles against demons (Paulus, Malchus), without reports about contentious doctrines (Paulus, Hilarion, Malchus), without information about miracles (Paulus, Malchus), and even without a description of the ascent toward virtue (Paulus). In order to be able to represent the variety of possible testimonies of faith in these three very different life histories, Jerome does not let his pre-text in Athanasius unduly narrow the playing field of his saints' stories. He does not limit his literary field to the epigonal transformation of a prototype. And this proves Jerome's literary vitality and gives to his readers results that no one could have expected.

My past experience in studying St. Jerome's Latin exegesis of scripture leads to a similar conclusion. Jerome's exegesis is often accused of being plagiarism because he was heavily informed by his Greek models, especially Origen. Yet, careful study shows that despite all the defects—of which Jerome was fully aware—he used the very best authorities at his command and approached his task with a well-furnished mind and a perfectly trained pen. Jerome possessed his own vital intellect and a real Christian faith. Jerome never disguised that his works were compilations, heavily indebted to Greek models, but the whole of his own efforts has passed through his mind and bears the stamp of his peculiar genius and originality. Thus, Prädicow's framework of *imitatio* and *variatio* appears to be a useful one.

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