
The relation between Augustine and Manichaeism has received considerate scholarly attention during the last years. A number of studies concentrated on his debates or controversies with Manichaean opponents, such as Felix, Fortunatus and Secundinus. Against another opponent, the Manichaean bishop Faustus of Milevis, Augustine wrote his voluminous *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*. In recent years Faustus’ written legacy and influences on Augustine have been discussed by several scholars.¹

As the title of Massie’s study indicates, the *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* is his focal point as well. Yet, this Belgian Jesuit scholar is not primarily interested in Faustus and his thoughts, but in Augustine’s theology of Judaism. Massie believes this theology can most easily be recognized in the expressions ‘prophetic people’ (*peuple prophétique*) and ‘witnessing nation’ (*nation témoin*), terms which Augustine forged while composing his *Contra Faustum*. Massie’s Paris dissertation analyses the way the notion of ‘prophetic nation’ is related to Augustine’s hermeneutics of Scripture and how it led to a ‘typology of testimony’.

Augustine’s work *Contra Faustum* is the refutation of a number of capitula—controversies on Scriptural passages—of the Manichaean bishop. Massie analyses Faustus’ ideas on the Jewish people, their prophets and the Old Testament first. This analysis provides us with a vast contribution to the debate on Faustus in particular and Western Manichaeism in general. The first chapter starts with an overview of consensus on Faustus’ capitula. It is extensive, though does not yet include Jason BeDuhn’s hypothesis of

a sceptical Faustus first presented in 2009. This intriguing but deviant hypothesis has not received wide recognition and was published shortly before Massie presented his original doctoral dissertation in 2010. Perhaps the omission of both this study and the ensuing discussion of its value is therefore understandable.

Massie considers Faustus’ Manichaean rejection of the Catholic prophetic argument to be the central theme of Faustus’ work. To understand this rejection chapter two first studies Manichaean prophetology. Manichaens recognized true prophets by their message of light. This message is understood as a *gnosis*, encompassing the saving truth of the three times, the two primordial natures, their current mixed state, and the Manichaean eschatology. The second chapter continues by analysing to what extent this prophetology is present in Faustus’ *capitula*. Massie argues that Faustus claimed that prophets of truth could be recognised by their message of *gnosis* and their *uita honesta, prudentia* and *virtus*.

Through his literal exegesis Faustus demonstrated that, contrary to the Jewish patriarchs and prophets, Jesus had met these criteria. To support his ideas Faustus provided a tripartite taxonomy of prophets: the Hebrew prophets, bringing the Law of Moses; the pagan prophets, bringing the natural law; and the prophets of Truth, bringing the Manichaean law of light. Within this taxonomy the law of light is superior, the law of the Hebrews inferior. This Manichaean tripartite division is an intriguing notion. Not only is it unique to Faustus’ *capitula*, it is also based on Rom. 2:14-15 and 8:2. Faustus’ use of these and other elements of Pauline belief makes Massie conclude that this Pauline language had become Faustus’ own religious language. Faustus’ *capitula* show that African Manichaens accepted the Manichaean prophetology known from other sources. Furthermore it seems that Faustus expanded the Scriptural arguments that could be used to defend it.

From chapter three onwards Massie returns to Augustine’s theology on the Jewish people. The third chapter he starts by discussing the Jewish people in Augustine’s writings before *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*. In those

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