

This thorough reading of Revelation led Campbell ultimately to break with the current interpretative consensus. As he himself puts it, Revelation's narrative is not, as is usually assumed, 'a rhetorical position fundamentally at loggerheads, politically or religiously, with the ancient Roman status quo, but instead manifestations of a distinctly inner-Jewish debate, conducted on the basis of rival readings of the Old Testament current at the time. Consequently, a provisional reconstruction of the cognitive and rhetorical situation that gave rise to Revelation would suggest a context linked to the synagogues of the Jewish Diaspora'. (25)

Hermeneutically significant is Revelation's ever present use of antithesis, because 1. we are dealing, here, with a skilfully woven part of the compositional web; 2. the numerous antithetical phrases, figures and images are carefully interlinked within the narrative; 3. these very motifs, with their positive and negative poles, both regulate and punctuate the developing narrative.

To give one example of careful thematic reading: Revelation uses the variable but always fourfold formula 'peoples, multitudes, nations and languages' (5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15) to denote humanity as a whole, so it is almost synonymous with universality. However, the formula never recurs in identical fashion twice and this is more than simply matter of form. Allowing for two shifts in meaning, it has three distinct nuances in all. The first is positive, the second is neutral, the third and final nuance is negative. By highlighting these nuances, Campbell shows that the formula in question undergoes a very subtle evolution as Revelation's plot moves forward.

In conclusion, Campbell's 'thematic approach' proves to be an account of how the different elements of the book of Revelation fit together into a meaningful whole. Even if not everyone will be convinced in all respects, particularly concerning the questioning of the relevance of historical information for the exegesis of chapters 2-3 or the proposed identification of Babylon and Jerusalem, this book provides many fresh insights. What Campbell offers is a complete and coherent biblical theology of Revelation, undoubtedly useful to theological students, teachers and researchers, so that contemporary readers become competent readers.

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Ancient Christian Interpretations of "Violent Texts" in the Apocalypse

Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus / Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments 92

Joseph Verheyden, Andreas Merkt, Tobias Nicklas (eds)

Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011; 313 pp, hb, € 69,95, ISBN 978-3-647-53976-8

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses Werk für Spezialisten enthält sehr unterschiedliche Beiträge. Einige der dreizehn Aufsätze (auf Deutsch und Englisch) konzentrieren sich auf die Schriften von Kirchenvätern wie Origenes, Victorinus, Lactantius und Tyconius zum Thema Gewalt im Buch der Offenbarung, andere wiederum nicht. Es ist zu begrüßen, dass Wissenschaftler aus ganz Europa an diesem Werk beteiligt sind.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage qui rassemble des contributions très diverses s'adresse aux spécialistes. Une partie des treize contributions, en allemand et en anglais, traitent de ce que les pères de l'Église comme Origène, Victorin, Lactance et Tyconius ont écrit concernant la violence dans l'Apocalypse. Il est appréciable qu'on ait fait ici appel à des auteurs de toute l'Europe.

SUMMARY

This is a book for the specialists which contains very diverse contributions. Some of the thirteen essays (in German and English) do focus on what church fathers such as Origen, Victorinus, Lactantius and Tyconius wrote about the violence in Revelation, others do not. It is good that scholars from all over Europe are involved.

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This book presents itself as a collection of studies written in preparation for a commentary on the Book of Revelation based on the Fathers of the Church, the *Novum Testamentum Patristicum* project. We already have the series Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (IVP) and the Blackwell Bible Commentaries which focus on the reception history of the Bible, but it seems that *NTP* will provide more complete overviews of what the Fathers wrote.

Anyway, the essays in the present book, written by scholars from many countries, are a rather mixed collection and not many deal with the three elements Revelation, Fathers and violence. There are thirteen essays, seven in English and six in German. Luca Arcari (Italy) opens with an essay on the Jewish background of the war scenes in Revelation. He introduces the Book of Enoch, the War Scroll (1QM) and 2 Baruch, thus sketching the general milieu in which Revelation may have originated, but fails to establish any direct links between these texts and Revelation. Tobias Nicklas (Germany) dialogues with Charles E. Hill on the reception of Revelation

in the second century. He shows great appreciation of Hill's *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* – an appreciation shared by this reviewer – but disagrees with some of Hill's specific conclusions regarding the knowledge of Revelation in the second century.

Ilaria Ramelli (Italy) is the first author to stay close to the volume's theme as she analyses Origen's handling of the violence in Revelation. She shows how his allegorisation enables Origen to see the violence as positive, viz. as the purification of humanity. Andreas Merkt (Germany) analyses the different ways in which the constituent parts of the *Passio Perpetuae* receive Revelation. He introduces the *Passio* well and shows how it claims an authority for itself equal to that of the writings of the emerging New Testament. Konrad Huber (Austria) introduces Victorinus of Pettau, the famous first commentator on Revelation, and his work, with special attention to Rev 1:9-20 – not a violent text! Martin Hasitschka (Austria) follows on with Victorinus' interpretation of Rev 19-21 – another passage without much violence – and Jerome's reception of it. Jan Dochhorn (Denmark) studies Lactantius' eschatology, a fascinating construct which only vaguely builds on Revelation – amazing for such an early author who died in AD 325.

Then follow three essays in which violence is actually a topic: (1) Christopher Rowland and Ian Boxall (UK) tell us what Tyconius and the English theologian Bede made of Rev 4:1 and 8:2 – 11:18; both linked Revelation directly to their own situations. (2) Pieter de Villiers (South Africa) introduces the enigmatic author Oecumenius and his commentary on Revelation, which has the violent Roman Empire as its main character and God as merely responding to its violence. (3) Eugenia Scarvelis Constantinou (USA) discusses the commentary of Andrew of Caesarea; her introduction and presentation are good.

Yet in the last three essays the theme of violence is lost from view once again. (1) Harald Buchinger (Austria) contributes the longest essay (51 pages), describing the use of Revelation in the liturgy and iconography of the Church. Going far beyond the patristic era, he finds that the violent texts were largely ignored. (2) Julia Eva Wannenmacher (Germany) describes Joachim of Fiore, hardly a church father. She assumes rather much, such as a distinction between the real Joachim and Pseudo-Joachim, and the essay's English is so poor that it is at times hard to understand. (3) Stefan Alkier (Germany) presents his own, all too brief exegesis of Revelation in intertextual perspective. Turning to violence he argues that 'The violence of the Book of Revelation is not an invention of this book, but a real experience of all mankind; the power of God is the foundation of the hope that violence will come to an end. There is no passage in the Book of Revelation that instructs the human witnesses of Jesus and God to kill anybody or to fight against people who do not believe...' (293)

This is a highly specialised collection; although the present reviewer teaches on Revelation he lacks the

expertise in patristics to evaluate some of the contributions. Regrettably the volume lacks an index of biblical texts, which will limit its usefulness.

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The Holy Trinity. Understanding God's Life

Stephen R. Holmes

Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2012, xv + 231 pp,
£19.99, pb; ISBN 978-1-842-27741-6

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Holmes argumentiert auf rein historischer Basis, dass momentane Ansprüche auf eine trinitarische Renaissance fehlgeleitet und falsch sind. Stattdessen würden gegenwärtige Lehren zur Dreieinigkeit in Wirklichkeit von traditionellen Überlieferungen abweichen, indem sie die Schrift in ihrer Gesamtheit außer acht lassen, die Dreieinigkeit im Netz der Geschichte einfangen, eine volle Persönlichkeit jeder der drei göttlichen Personen zuschreiben und eine eindeutige Sprache verwenden. Die klassische Lehre der Dreieinigkeit entwickelte sich aus exegetischen Anliegen heraus und im Zusammenhang mit einem göttlichen Minimalismus, einer Doktrin, die nun in der Theologie der Gegenwart fehlt. Abgesehen vom filioque sprachen Ost und West unisono bis zum 19. Jahrhundert, als Änderungen der Lehre eintraten.

SUMMARY

Holmes argues on purely historical grounds that recent claims to trinitarian revival are misguided and mistaken. Instead, contemporary doctrines of the Trinity actually deviate from traditional accounts by failing to account for all of Scripture, entangling the Trinity in history, ascribing a full personality to each divine person, and the use of univocal language. The classical doctrine of the Trinity developed out of exegetical concerns and within the context of divine simplicity, a doctrine now missing in contemporary theology. Besides the filioque, East and West spoke with one voice up until the nineteenth century when changes to the doctrine began.

RÉSUMÉ

En se fondant simplement sur l'histoire de la théologie, Holmes soutient que les tendances récentes que l'on présente comme participant à un renouveau trinitaire sont en fait mal orientées et erronées. Au contraire, les approches nouvelles de la doctrine de la Trinité s'écartent en fait de la tradition en ce qu'elles ne prennent pas en compte l'ensemble des Écritures. Elles errent par un accent indu sur une conception plus « personnaliste » de Dieu en opposition avec la tradition métaphysique, par la manière dont elles lient la Trinité à son engagement dans l'histoire, ou par une confiance trop optimiste dans la capacité du langage humain à se référer à Dieu, parfois de manière univoque. La doctrine classique de la Trinité a été élaborée sur