

Exegetical traditions in ancient philosophy, Judaism and Christianity : their origins and cultural background (second part)

Autor(en): **Alekniene, Tatjana / Karfík, Filip / Mali, Franz**

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TATJANA ALEKNIENĖ, FILIP KARFÍK, FRANZ MALI

Exegetical traditions in ancient philosophy, Judaism and Christianity

Their origins and cultural background (second part)

In the present issue of the *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie and Theologie*, we have published the second set of papers that emerged from the research project “Exegetical traditions in ancient philosophy, Judaism and Christianity: their origins and cultural background” (for details on this project and the first set of papers see *FZPhTh* 65 [2018] 1).

The papers collected in this volume focus on the exegetical strategies used by ancient Christian writers interpreting Jewish and Christian Scriptures as well as Greek pagan literature. The first two papers investigate the dispute over the interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures between Jews and Christians. Ingrida Guidauskienė examines Paul’s use of the term νόμος in the occurrences where it denotes the Decalogue as the essence of the Torah. The author elaborates on Paul’s interpretation of the Ten Commandments in terms of an inward personal relationship with one’s neighbor and God. Patrick Andrist adduces two witnesses to the Jewish-Christian dispute over the exegesis of Hebrew Scriptures: Origen and the author of the *Dialogus Athanasii et Zachaei*. In his *Contra Celsum*, Origen mentions his own clashes with Jewish interpreters, while the *Dialogus* stages an imaginary dispute of this kind. Origen is no doubt a firsthand witness, but even the *Dialogus* seems to reflect the exegetical practices of both sides, as some parallels with the Midrash and Targum exegesis indicate. The third paper illustrates one of Augustine’s ways of interpreting the Old and New Testaments. Starting from the question as to know what exactly the term *doctrina* in the title of Augustine’s *De doctrina christiana* means, Darius Alekna discloses the prehistory of this word in Latin literature and lists the various meanings it covers in Latin translations of the Bible. He concludes that the contents of the *De doctrina christiana* correspond to these meanings and thus argues for the unity of this work. John Cassian and Eucherius of Lyon, two younger contemporaries of Augustine, represent two different approaches to the interpretation of the Exodus story within the context of their ascetic writings. As the paper by Mante Lenkaitytė-Ostermann shows, Cassian offers a thoroughly allegorical exegesis of the Exodus as the monk’s ascetic journey to the perfect life in his *Conferences*. Eucherius, in his *De laude eremi*, displays a multilayered exegesis of the same story, considering both its historical and typological meanings and referring these meanings to the divine economy, baptismal symbolism and

ascetic life. Marcin Magdziarz, for his part, investigates the use of quotations from Greek pagan literature by the author of the *De trinitate* that was formerly attributed to Didymus the Blind. The author of this apparently much later treatise – conveying post-Nicene theology and peppered with late neo-Platonic vocabulary – is strikingly generous with these quotes and displays knowledge of Greek literature that ranges from Homer to Porphyry. The question is what the purpose of these quotes is in a Christian theological treatise. While some of them serve as a literary device, others contribute to the theological argument.

The publication of the second set of papers issued from the conference held on 2–3 September 2016 in Vilnius has brought the above-mentioned research project to its completion. It achieved its goal in producing a series of case studies that explore the variety of exegetical methods and scopes in different cultural and linguistic areas of the ancient world, as well as the interaction between these areas.