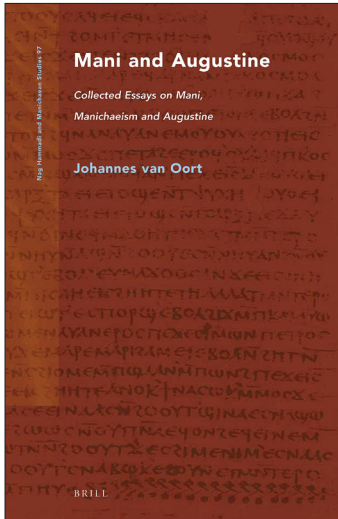


MANI AND AUGUSTINE



VAN OORT, JOHANNES (2020).
*Mani and Augustine. Collected
 Essays on Mani, Manichaeism and
 Augustine.* Nag Hammadi and
 Manichaeism Studies 97. Leiden
 & Boston: Brill. 612 pp., 149,00 €
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NOT ONLY IS THE NAME JOHANNES VAN OORT traditionally mentioned when it comes to discuss about Manichaeism, its founder Mani and reactions from outside to both of them, van Oort's name stands for expertise and quality of research into this religion and its main representative. It is therefore all the more very welcome that his thematically relevant publications, which were scattered over time as well as across various specialist journals and collections of essays, are now available in one volume. To scholars and students who are at least somehow familiar with van Oort's oeuvre it is needless to highlight that a considerable share of the forty-six contributions,

among which two have not been previously published, gathered in the book under review are dedicated to Augustine's relations with, attitude towards and, above all, harsh criticism of Mani and Manichaeism, for all the other readers it might increase their interest in this fine treasure trove with in-depth insights into a religion rivalling early Christianity and Augustine as a prominent Christian figure to turn against it.

The book comes with a short preface (pp. xi–xii), a list of abbreviations (pp. xiii–xvii), indices of Manichaean sources (pp. 559–566), of Augustine's works (pp. 567–578), of Biblical texts (pp. 579–583), of other sources (pp. 584–587), of ancient and modern names (pp. 588–602), and of terms and concepts (pp. 603–612), which facilitate navigation in the massive volume and help to pinpoint certain aspects and specific texts. Although the book lacks a comprehensive bibliography – readers are advised to shuffle through the individual articles for reference titles and specialized literature –, it offers a “Bibliography of Manichaean Sources” in Greek, Coptic, Latin and Syriac, but also in Arabic, Chinese, Iranian and Turkish, too (pp. 555–558); and this is a real treat for scholars involved in the field of Gnosticism and Manichaeism.

The forty-four contributions are organised as follows: there are three major parts dedicated to (1) “Mani and Manichaeism” (with nine articles), (2) “Augustine and Manichaeism” (with eighteen articles) and (3) “Mani, Manichaeism and Augustine in Reviews” (with fourteen reviews on books about “Mani and Manichaeism” and five about “Augustine and Manichaeism”). Readers might be surprised that a collection of essays does not only comprise thematic articles but includes reviews, too. However, in the case of Johannes van Oort reviews represent both, a critical and intense analysis of the books under review *and* a meticulous interaction with the theses of the authors. In addition, some reviews represent “review articles” or articles on their own due to their length and their focus.

Others might be better called “short histories of research”, such as van Oort's *New Directions in Manichaean Research: An Introduction to Manichaica Selecta* (pp. 447–463), which is an encounter with relevant publications in the field of Manichaeism and “is reprinted here with some changes, and a few additions and elucidations”, which are partly added in square brackets (p. 447, n. *). Others are “real” reviews in the shape most readers are familiar with, like the one of Wießner, Gernot and Klimkeit, Hans-Joachim (eds.) (1992). *Studia Manichaica. 11. Internationaler Kongress zum Manichäismus (6.-10. August 1989, St. Augustin/Bonn)*. Studies in Oriental Religions 23. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz (pp. 464–466), first published in *Vigiliae Christianae*, 47, 1993, pp. 294–296, but here “slightly revised”. His review article of David BeDuhn, Jason (2010). *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma, I: Conversion and Apostasy, 373–388 C.E.* Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press (see pp. 509–532) might serve as an example case: van Oort highlights the “Main Achievements

of BeDuhn's Study" (pp. 518-523), before he pinpoints his own criticism of certain aspects the study has to offer (e.g., a lack of textual evidence for BeDuhn's description of Bishop Faustus); and does not only utter his criticism, he argues for it in detail by referring to the relevant textual passages and discusses them.

The order of the contributions is well chosen. The first part starts with *Mani and Manichaeism: A General Introduction* (pp. 3-18) with a separate bibliography at its very end in order to open up the subject proper, before van Oort plunges into certain details (e.g., about *The Paraclete Mani as the Apostle of Jesus Christ and the Origins of a New Church* [pp. 21-36] or *Jewish Elements in the Cologne Mani Codex* [pp. 37-46], just to mention the next two articles to follow). The same is true for part two that opens with *Augustine and Manichaeism: An Introductory Overview* (pp. 135-149), before certain individual aspects of Augustine and his attitude towards and criticism of Manichaeism are highlighted. It is not surprising that after all five articles are dedicated to Augustine's *Confessions* (nos. 15 to 19) and offer a close reading of relevant passages in order to highlight Augustine's knowledge of and attitude towards Manichaeism. Moreover, two essays (nos. 26 and 27) focus on "Manichaean women", in other words on their role and importance in Augustine's life and works and in a Pseudo-Augustinian testimony (*Testimonium de Manichaeis sectatoribus*), a "rather unknown and understudied" text that "has come down to us in two Latin manuscripts" only (p. 433) and the textual tradition might mirror "apparent changes" that represent "a later downplay of the presence and, thus, conceivably, of the importance of Manichaean women" (p. 441), while in its probable original form the *Testimonium* allowed them to play "a major role" (p. 442).

Johannes van Oort has published significant monographs on both, Augustine and Mani/Manichaeism, and edited respective conference volumes.¹ His many specialized articles in the two fields are scattered among periodicals of diverse disciplines that are not always easy to access. Thus, the present collection of essays and reviews serves as a welcome and valuable tool for research (and might also help to have a first introduction to the two areas masterfully combined with each other by van Oort). This piece of first-class investigations is nicely produced, well edited and its essays are – partly – updated or at least slightly modified. All in all, the volume will serve as a significant reference point for everyone who is seriously interested in Mani, Manichaeism and Augustine's fight against that religion.

1. See, for instance van Oort, 1990; 2013; 2020.

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