

## **Das theologische Profil des Julian von Toledo: Das Leben und Wirken eines westgotischen Bischofs des siebten Jahrhunderts.**

By **Stefan Pabst**. Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 165.

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The timeliness of a book is marked as much by the questions it is capable of resolving as by the moment at which it addresses them. In this sense, the work we are now discussing is undoubtedly timely. On the one hand, the work of Julian of Toledo has been critically edited in a spasmodic manner and only recently has the process been completed. In this sense, it was absolutely necessary to undertake a comprehensive study of it now. It was equally urgent to give value to a work that has been studied most of the time in the shadow of the work of Isidore of Seville, whose brilliance seemed to obscure any other figure in Visigothic historical and theological culture. The title of the work seems to announce essentially the study of Julian's theological profile, however, in the development of the work it becomes evident that Julian's political and ecclesiastical figure is inseparable from his theological personality. The status of counter-power that the bishop of Toledo held in the political environment of the Visigothic court helps to understand the figure of Julian himself. The role of the Visigothic king is hardly understandable without the support he receives from the Church, where the councils constitute an instrument of government and a tool of legitimization behind which the figure of the metropolitan is always to be found. In the first part of the book, Pabst has contextualized the understanding of Julian's figure. The aim is to understand his work not in the immediate context, but in a long cultural tradition that goes back to the previous century. It is a well-constructed part, but it only acquires a true understanding when the author approaches the analysis of the works of the bishop of Toledo.

In this sense, it is quite reasonable that the following section of the book does not deal with the theological production. In any case, the first texts dealt with, *Ars grammatica* and *Epistula ad MODOENUM*, are equivocal in terms of authorship. The author acknowledges that Julian's involvement in the formative program of the diocese of Toledo is not verifiable, although he maintains his study of the book. He seems to have even less doubts about the authorship of the letter to MODOENUM, of which he includes a translation in appendix. The text would demonstrate the author's interest in poetry and its level at the time. Both works would also demonstrate the balance between classical and Christian tradition in his intellectual construction. This classical tradition is also evident in Julian's historical production, the cycle of four texts in which his account of the history of King Wamba, the rebellion of Paulus and the attempted secession of the Narbonensis is articulated. The historical cycle of King Wamba is additionally linked to the biographical genre, which Julian also cultivates in his brief portrait of HILDEFONSUS (Elogium ILDEPHONSI), bishop of Toledo between 657 and 667. Although not all four texts are original, there are reworkings and borrowings; Julian shows an undoubted mastery of the historiographical genre, as well as evidence of his political commitment, especially in relation to the sacral character of kingship that had already concerned Isidore, for which his proposal of a late redaction of the text is important.

Nevertheless, the weight of the study of Julian's theological work and episcopal dedication occupies the bulk of the volume: three fundamental treaties (*De comprobatione sextae aetatis*, *Antikeimena*, *Prognosticum futuri saeculi*) and an apologetic text written in relation to the condemnation of Monotheletism at the third council of

Constantinople, and transmitted together with the acts of the Council of Toledo in 688 (*Apologeticum de tribus capitulis*). The author critically analyzes the first of the treatises, the *Comprobatione*, especially in its categorization as an anti-Jewish work, preferring to place it in a context of concern for the correct measurement of the times that were to properly place the coming of the Messiah and his triumphant return. In fact, the author considers that the essential aim of the text is to prove the messiahship of Jesus. Interestingly, the work, recalled by Julian's biographer Felix, seems to have had little impact in the immediate aftermath. This little impact contrasts with the impact of *Prognosticum futuri saeculi*, the first systematic treatise on Christian eschatology. The author, deeply influenced by Augustine in this text, gives a detailed description of the structure of the work and of the explanatory keys that help to understand its later impact. There is no doubt that the text is closely related to the previous one, although the author has not treated them consecutively in his work. In addition to the need to fix the order of the times, which presided over the *Comprobatione*, there is now the need to accept that the present world will not last forever. Julian also wants the text to serve to teach the faithful these truths. The text is intended to be disseminated among bishops as a pedagogical one, something that undoubtedly contributed to its medieval dissemination. The pedagogical character is equally unquestionable in the case of *Antikeimena*. Julian's least studied text, the last to receive a critical edition, constructed to resolve the apparent contradictions of the sacred texts and a precious example of the exegetical level of the Visigothic theologians and of our author in particular.

And if the previous texts show Julian's high theological profile, the *Apologeticum* shows his capacity as a polemicist and his energy in defending the orthodoxy of the Visigothic Church and its Christological positions, which Rome questioned. The profound analysis of this chapter (235–299), far beyond Julian's theological thought, constitutes an invaluable review of the never-resolved controversy of the communion between Toledo and the bishop of Rome. This assessment sums up, in a way, an exquisite work in method and care in form, where history and theology go hand in hand to unravel a work and a period that has received scarce attention in recent historiography.

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***Wohltätigkeit im antiken und spätantiken Christentum.*** Edited by Andreas Müller. Patristic Series, Vol. 16. Leuven, Belgium: Peeters Publishers, 2021. viii + 158 pp. €60.00 hardback.

This edited volume on aspects of charity and the understanding of charitable behaviors in early and late antique Christianity presents a multidisciplinary approach to the topic, representative of the creative scholarly work undertaken by the Patristic Working Group in their most recent biennial conference. The reader is treated to the spectrum of work,