Review
Reviewed Work(s): Il diavolo e i suoi angeli, testi e tradizioni (secoli I-III) by Adele Monaci Castagno
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Adele Monaci Castagno, *Il diavolo e i suoi angeli, testi e tradizioni (secoli I-III)* (Biblioteca Patristica 28). Fiesole: Nardini Editore, 1996; pb., 507 pp.; L.58,000; ISBN 88-404-2019-3.

The Italian paperback series "Biblioteca Patristica" includes not merely useful editions of important texts, but also anthologies based on a central theme. For example, there is a collection of pagan reactions to the rising Christian faith (nr. 2), of visions and revelations (nr. 8), and of testimonia on Christians and the Roman army (nr. 9). After two recent volumes dedicated to the Antichrist (nrs. 20-21), we are now offered a collection of early texts on the devil himself, compiled by Adele Monaci Castagno (MC). This is a welcome addition, if only because as a central central character in Christian thought the devil should not be missing in the series.

The anthology presents the earliest Christian texts after the New Testament that speak about the devil and his helpers. Starting with testimonies and remarks by the Apostolic Fathers (such as Ignatius of Antioch and the letter of Barnabas), the volume continues with texts from the Greek Apologists, and, interestingly, Gnostic traditions. Great names like Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Cyprian are given due attention. The last author included in the book is Origen, to whom more than a hundred pages are devoted (almost a quarter of the part devoted to texts). For each author

or anonymous writing MC gives the relevant portions of the text with an Italian translation on the opposite page, preceded by a brief introduction and followed by ample explanatory notes. The volume opens with a general introduction of over a hundred pages, sketching the preceding history of the theme in the Scriptures and Pseudepigrapha, as well as summarizing the later developments illustrated in the collection itself. Finally, there are three indexes and 19 pages of bibliography.

The thematic and chronological arrangement of the book enables readers to gain a quick overview of Christian ideas on the subject. Perhaps more importantly, it allows them to see how these ideas gradually developed from small and diverse beginnings into a coherent theological system. As MC shows, in this complex process there is a constant interaction between Christian ideas and the world in which they take shape: the ever changing cultural backgrounds lead to corresponding, varying needs of the church. For example, the notion of a hierarchy of devils, with Satan at the top, is still absent from many of the earliest texts. Moreover Christian thought on the devil, MC argues, should not be considered as the result of discussions by specialists and church officials only, but also bears the mark of more widely spread religious ideas and fears. The editor's points are well illustrated by her inclusion of texts from traditions which later came to be labeled as "apocryphal" or "heterodox." Thus we find the Valentinian school and the Acts of Peter placed next to Justinus and Perpetua.

The present anthology steers a convincing middle course between a theological and a historical approach, providing a convenient and rewarding access to texts on a theme which has proved to be "crucial" for Western thought. MC's introduction may prove somewhat too long for many users, but this is only a minor point of criticism, given the many virtues of the book.

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