

## ABSTRACTS

### I. PAPERS FROM THE CONFERENCE “PORT-ROYAL AND INTERPRETATION OF THE SCRIPTURES”

Gilbert DAHAN

*Le Maistre de Sacy and the Vulgate*

As indicated in all of its editions, Le Maistre de Sacy effected his French translation of the Bible from the Latin Vulgate. He used a text deriving from the 1592 Sixto-Clementine edition (whose interpolations he keeps), but he verifies it with another printing. The translation is accompanied by explanatory notes in which he refers to the original Hebrew and Greek texts. The notes help us to clarify his translation options and evaluate his knowledge of the biblical languages; from tests done on Isaiah and the Book of Acts, we can say that Le Maistre de Sacy is a good Hellenist but does not seem to have mastered Hebrew.

Keywords: Bible ; Translation

Jean-Robert ARMOGATHE

*Antoine Arnauld and the Mons version of the New Testament*

From 1668 until his death in 1694, Antoine Arnauld devoted hundreds of pages to defending the French translation of the New Testament published in Mons. He successively attacked and refuted Fr. Maimbourg (1668-1669), Dr Mallet (1676-1680) and Fr. Richard Simon (1690-1694). At once meticulous, erudite and violent, his defence did not succeed in justifying all of the choices made by the translators, who placed great emphasis on doctrinal explanation.

Keywords: Antoine Arnauld ; Mons version of the New Testament

Annie NOBLESSE-ROCHER

*Protestant exegesis in biblical commentaries of Jansenius*

In his two commentaries of 1639 and 1641, *Pentateuchus* and *Tetrateuchus*, Jansenius quotes a certain number of names of Protestant exegetes and, while challenging them, uses their interpretations of biblical texts, either to better define the literal, philological or archaeological meaning of the text, or to enter into debate with them on central theological questions such as the Last Supper. An examination of these quotations shows his great knowledge of Protestant Hebraists and his predilection for a frontal debate with John Calvin and his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

Keywords: Cornelius Jansenius; Protestant exegesis

Élisabeth VUILLEMIN

*The fashion for “moral writings” and the “great explanations” of four Sapiential books*

This article examines the link between seventeenth-century taste for moral writings and the “great explanations”, commentaries which accompany the Port-Royal translation in certain editions of the Bible. The study focuses on four Sapiential books, *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, *Wisdom* and *Ecclesiasticus*. For the commentators of Port-Royal, *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiasticus* are explicitly considered as “divine morals”, while *Ecclesiastes* and *Wisdom*, without being called “morals”, are associated with the same group. The writing style of the commentaries sometimes seems to come close to that of moral writings. Finally, the authors of these commentaries testify to concrete moral reflections which trouble them on their place in the society of their time.

Keywords: Moral writings; Sapiential books

Victoire MALENFER

*“That his word is stable and never deceives.” Poetic exegesis to the aid of invention in Racine’s biblical poetry*

In *Esther*, *Athalie*, and the *Cantiques spirituels* written for Saint-Cyr, Racine mobilises a very vast set of biblical verses whose juxtaposition, both dense and erudite, does not resemble cento poetry. The choice and the arrangement of scriptural references place the playwright in the lineage of his masters and betray very recognisable interpretative choices. Racine

makes a poetic gesture of interpretation and uses the synthesising power of his verses to affirm the relevance of a figurative reading of the Bible. By insisting on the reliability and stability of the divine word, he gives to his audiences and to actresses the overarching vision of God who abolishes time, and connects every event in holy history to the plan of salvation fulfilled by Christ.

Keywords: Jean Racine ; Bible.

Denis DONETZKOFF  
*Saint-Cyran and Origen*

Although it is true that Saint Augustine's influence on Port-Royal was profound and lasting in all matters of grace, a careful reading of Saint-Cyran's work shows, not without surprise, that another Father reveals himself as the latter's master in the reading that the prisoner of Vincennes makes of Scripture: Origen. The spiritual and allegorical reading of the Bible by the Alexandrian reveals itself through the massive use in the correspondence, the *Considérations* and the *Pensées sur le sacerdoce* of "Figures", the only ones capable of allowing understanding of the mystery which every word of the Word of God remains.

Keywords: Abbé of Saint-Cyran ; Origen

Hubert AUPETIT  
*Contradictions of Scripture, scrivening of contradictions: the narrative resolution of Les Pensées*

Contradiction haunts Pascal, as much for its effectiveness in mathematical reasoning as for the problems it poses in philosophy and in the interpretation of Scripture. After coming up against the impossibility of making his contradictions rationally signify in *Abrégé de la vie de Jésus-Christ* and *Écrits sur la grâce*, Pascal transforms the Bible into a method of thought. Where the anthropological investigation of happiness in the *Pensées* is held up faced with human contradictions, the scriptural narrative activity allows us to continue: first by the reference to original sin, which grants contraries through the notion of double nature ; then by figurative thought, which articulates the two natures to one other and thus allows us to pass from carnal life to spiritual life, according to the programme traced

out by Saint Paul in the Corinthians, protecting us from certain excesses of interpretation.

Keywords: Blaise Pascal; Figurative

Pierre DESCOTES

*The Port-Royal Bible and patristic exegesis: the example of John's Gospel*

This article studies the use of the Church Fathers in the Port-Royal Bible, from two excerpts from the Gospel of John: the prologue (specifically John 1: 1-14) and the Nicodemus pericope (John 3). It will be a question of determining which type of commentary we are dealing with: does the systematic use of John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria and Augustine of Hippo by the commentator make his commentary a simple anthology, or are we dealing with an original commentary which modifies, more or less substantially, the sources from which it draws its inspiration? This work will moreover make it possible to recall some essential features of patristic exegesis, and particularly its circumstantial character, which distance sometimes has us forget.

Keywords: Exegesis; Preaching

Simon ICARD

*Figuristic Port-Royal*

Modifying from the inside the patristic tradition of spiritual interpretation of the Scriptures, Port-Royal developed a figuristic practice associated with the belief in the general obscuring of the truth in the Church as end times approached. This cautious and controlled figurism is no less apocalyptic: it deciphers the tumults of history in the light of the Scriptures, enlightens the elected on the accomplishment of prophecies regarding the end of time, participates in providential obscuring of the truth by blinding the damned, identifies the persecution of Port-Royal with the ultimate combat of its last defenders. Eighteenth-century Jansenist figurism has an ambivalent relationship with Port-Royal figurism.

Keywords: Port-Royal; Figurism.

Charles-Antoine FOGIELMAN

*Providens locutus est de resurrectione Christi: prophetic inspiration and figures of Christ in the Greek and Latin Fathers*

The figuristic exegesis of members of the Port-Royal movement, such as Duguet or d'Étemare, does not have as its dominant reference, as one might expect, the hermeneutics of Saint Augustine. A review of the main interpretative schools of the patristic period, and of what figuristic authors retained from each, show that, because of a greater interest in apocalyptic texts, partly under the influence of Protestant millennialists, the Augustinian balance between Alexandrian allegorism and Antiochian historicism was called into question in favour of a redevelopment of the methods of interpretation of Origen and his followers, and of an emphasis, within Augustine's doctrine, on those points which he inherited from the Alexandrian school.

Keywords: Origen; Hermeneutics.

Leonhard HELL

*A golden key? The Règles pour l'intelligence des Saintes Ecritures [by Jacques-Joseph Duguet?]*

*Règles pour l'intelligence des Saintes Ecritures* that were published in Paris by Estienne in 1716 without mentioning the name of an author, are nowadays mostly attributed to Jacques-Joseph Duguet (1649-1733). Contrary to this general title, it is essentially a collection of instructions for a correct interpretation of the Old Testament as a constant reference to Christ and to the Church. However, this traditional reading, practiced since the time of the Fathers of the Church, no longer represents the consensus at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The debates which surrounded this work, as extensive as they are passionate, bear witness to this. But even in contemporary biblical hermeneutics, the same questions appear to be anything but resolved.

Keywords: Jacques-Joseph Duguet; Figurism

## II. ADDITIONS TO THE CONFERENCE

Simon ICARD

*Jansenius, exegete, or the art of theological silence*

From 1630 to 1636, Jansenius led two undertakings at once: his public classes as professor of holy Scripture at Louvain University and the clandestine writing of *Augustinus*. Although falling under different genres, these two discourses match each other as if reflected in a mirror: on the one hand, Jansenius intended to explain the Bible in taking Augustine as the ultimate authority, on the other hand, he intended to present the latter's evangelical doctrine of grace. Yet the theological system developed in *Augustinus* is absent from his comments on Scripture. The cautious silence of Jansenius shows the complex relationship between exegesis and dogmatic theology in the seventeenth century.

Keywords: Cornelius Jansenius; Exegesis.

Hubert AUPETIT

*"Going" to charity: the figurative dynamics of the Pensées*

The analysis of an enigmatic sentence from the bundle of the *Pensées* called "Loi figurative", "*All that tends not to Charity is figurative*", allows to understand the dynamic meaning that Pascal gives to the notion of figure. It explains the movement from the anthropological part to the religious part of the classification in titled bundles as passed on to us by the copies. Charity here is no longer theological virtue nor a means to gain salvation, but a supernatural culmination of an earthly journey guided by a rigorous figurative thought leading from amusement to conversion. For that, Pascal comes back to the *tupos* of Saint Paul in order to remedy the rhetorical excesses of Augustinian *figura*. This article takes the opportunity to make a theoretical point about the ill-used notion of figure.

Keywords: Blaise Pascal; Figurative