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TERESIA HAINTHALER

FAUSTUS, ABBOT OF LÉRINS AND BISHOP OF RIEZ, AND HIS CHRISTOLOGY¹

LIFE AND AFTERMATH

The life

Faustus² was born in Britain, according to Sidonius and Avitus of Vienne³; when in the first half of the sixth century he is characterized

1. With the expression of my great appreciation for Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa's impressive patristic research, which is still available for me in his legacy of preprints sent to Fr. Alois Grillmeier SJ and used in vol. I of *Christ in Christian Tradition*.

2. Important for Faustus: G. WEIGEL, *Faustus of Riez. An Historical Introduction*, Diss. Pontif. Universitas Gregoriana, Philadelphia, 1938. See also B. KRUSCH, « De Fausto episcopo Reiensis », MGH.AA 8, 1887, pp. LIV-LXI; A. ENGELBRECHT, *De vita et scriptis Fausti episcopi Reiensis*, CSEL 21, Prague, Vienna, Leipzig, 1891, pp. v-XXXIII; A. KOCH, *Der beilige Faustus, Bischof von Riez. Eine dogmengeschichtliche Monographie*, Mergentheim, 1895; P. VIARD, « Fauste de Riez », *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* 5, 1964, col. 113-118; E. GRIFFE, *La Gaule chrétienne à l'époque romaine I*, Paris, 1964; M. SIMONETTI, « Faustus of Riez », *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity* 2, 2014, pp. 23-24; R. J. H. COLLINS, « Faustus von Reji », *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 11, 1983, pp. 63-67; R. NÜRNBERG, *Askese als sozialer Impuls. Monastisch-asketische Spiritualität als Wurzel und Triebfeder sozialer Ideen und Aktivitäten der Kirche in Südgallien im 5. Jahrhundert*, Hereditas 2, Bonn, 1988, pp. 222-244 (III. « Mönchs-Bischof in pastoralem und sozialem Einsatz – Faustus von Riez »; N. does not know Weigel); C. M. KASPER, *Theologie und Askese. Die Spiritualität des Inselmönchtums von Lérins im 5. Jahrhundert*, Beiträge zur Geschichte des alten Mönchtums und des Benediktinerordens 40, Münster, 1991; ID., « Faustus von Riez (Reji) », *Lexikon der antiken christlichen Literatur*, 2002³, pp. 264-265; F.-M. KAUFMANN, *Studien zu Sidonius Apollinaris*, Frankfurt, 1995, esp. pp. 304-306 (prosopographical notes); V. H. DRECOLL, « Faustus von Reji », *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 4th ed., 3, 2000, col. 52-53; R. W. MATHISEN, *Ruricius of Limoges and friends: A collection of letters from Visigothic Gaul*, Translated Texts for Historians 30, Liverpool, 1999.

3. Sidonius Apollin., *Ep.* IX 9,6 (to Faustus), MGH.AA 8, p. 157,7: *Britannis tuis*. Avitus of Vienne, *Ep. ad Gundobadum regem*, PL 59, 219; MGH.AA 6/2, p. 30,1: *orru Britannum, habitaculo Regiensen*.

by the African bishops Possessor (517-520 in Constantinople) and Facundus of Hermiane, as *natione Gallus* or called *Faustus Gallus*⁴ this is a reference to his lifelong activity in Gaul. Britain presumably refers to England, not Bretagne⁵, according to earlier proposals. He entered the monastery of Lérins when its founder Honoratus, the later Bishop of Lyons, was still the abbot⁶; there he made acquaintance with Caprasius, Lupus, Hilarius and Maximus⁷.

In view of this information his birth was dated at the beginning of the fifth century (around 403/4 according to Weigel or 405 according to Griffe). Faustus reached Gaul as a very young boy (and settled perhaps in Riez, according to Weigel, or in Lyons, according to others)⁸; at least he had good relationship to Lyons in later times as it is testified by invitations to give homilies at special feastdays; in these sermons he spoke of *Lugdunus nostra, ecclesia nostra*⁹. He was interested in philosophy already in his early years, according to Sidonius¹⁰; perhaps he received some education in rhetoric and philosophy in Lyons¹¹. After abbot Maximus became bishop of Riez in 433, Faustus was his successor as abbot of Lérins. More than 20 years, from 433 (or 434) till around 460, Faustus guided the monastery of Lérins. According to Clemens Kasper it was mostly the merit of Faustus that monasticism became an institution at Lérins, and it was under his leadership that Lérins became

4. Possessor ep. Afr., *Relatio* = Coll. Avell., ep. 230, CSEL 35/2, p. 695, 16-17: *Fausti cuiusdam natione Galli Reginae ciuitatis episcopi*; the letter is written in 520. Pope Hormisdas simply took over this designation for Faustus in his reply to Possessor of 13 August 520, ep. 231, p. 699, 6-7: *hi uero, quos uos de Fausti cuiusdam Galli antistitis dictis. Facundus Hermian., Contra Mocianum Scholasticum* (CPL 867), CCL 90A, p. 400; PL 67, 855: *Faustus Gallus*.

5. Already A. Engelbrecht, CSEL 21, p. VI; A. KOCH, *Der heilige Faustus*, pp. 8-9; similarly G. WEIGEL, *Faustus*, pp. 9-11; cf. F.-M. KAUFMANN, *Studien*, p. 304.

6. Supposed that Honoratus took over the episcopacy in Arles in 426, according to G. WEIGEL, *Faustus*, p. 22, Faustus could have joined Lérins about 423/424.

7. See Sidonius, *Euchariston ad Faustum episcopum* = *Carm.* 16, 104-114, ed. C. Luetjohann, MGH.AA 8, p. 241.

8. Cf. the reflection of G. WEIGEL, *Faustus*, pp. 12-13, that the departure of Roman legions from England in 407 might have caused the exodus of Faustus' family to Gaul. The mother of Faustus lived in Riez when her son was bishop there (*ibid.*, p. 13).

9. Cf. E. GRIFFE, *Gaule chrétienne* II, p. 263, n. 72, and p. 334 for the relation to Lyons; R. NÜRNBERG, *Askese*, p. 222, who refers to the sermons *Hom.* 11, CCL 101, pp. 131-134; *Hom.* 55, CCL 101A, pp. 639-644; see also the homily mentioned by Sidonius, *Ep.* IX, 3,5, MGH.AA 8, p. 152.

10. So Sidonius, *Ep.* IX, 9, ed. C. Luetjohann, MGH.AA 8, p. 158; G. WEIGEL, *Faustus*, p. 15. Sidonius addresses Faustus with *domine papa* (p. 159,7).

11. Cf. R. NÜRNBERG, *Askese*, p. 222 with n. 5 and reference to E. GRIFFE, *Gaule chrétienne* II, pp. 263 and 334.